

# Three ways to be a better team member

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Chances are good you work in a team. Unless you run a department of one (you being the one), your daily life probably includes dealing with other people. People doing a similar job to yours. People who rely on you to get your part done. Or simply people you need to work in conjunction with so everything doesn't fall apart. Whether you're in a team of 20 or a team of five, you need to work well together.



Jessica Edgson

Many people believe teamwork relies on good leadership. That your manager should be the one to organise and encourage the team to work together like a well-oiled machine. But that's not really the case. In order for teamwork to happen smoothly and seamlessly, every team member needs to pull their weight. Here Jessica Edgson from digital marketing agency, [Rogerwilco](#), shares her thoughts on what to do if you find yourself in a team.

## Keep the lines of communication open

This is not only important for managers but for team members. You don't need to be besties with everyone but you do need to be able to communicate with them in order to work together. Which means you can't scowl every time someone asks you a question or sigh every time someone goes on a little too long. And you definitely shouldn't cut someone off when they're in the middle of pitching an idea to you. As much as you may want to put your earphones back in and end the conversation, you have to give people a chance to have their say and respond in a positive manner.

## Offer to help when stress levels are rising

If your workload is light and you notice a colleague is five seconds away from a mental breakdown, offer to take something off their plate. And not just work you want to do. If you're at a senior level and an intern is overworked, ask them what you can do to help, even though their work is not something you generally do. In fact, it will likely take you a lot less time to complete the task, so you have capacity to do twice as much. Don't let another team member struggle when you have time. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat can wait. You're at work to work, after all. It shouldn't matter whether you're doing your own tasks or someone else's.

## Don't gossip about other team members

You may be a lot closer to one of your teammates than the others. And you both may have the same issue with another team member. But that doesn't mean you should go off and speak about them behind their back. You may think you're being subtle but it's often more noticeable than people think and it will create a divide in the team. Of course, people need to vent. And you want to do so with someone who understands. So, if you really have to rant about another team member, meet your colleague for a drink and do it after hours. And then leave that animosity at home. Speaking badly about someone behind their back will likely show up in your daily dealings with that person. And that's obviously really bad for teamwork.

When push comes to shove, you want to be able to count on your teammates. Therefore you have to make sure they can count on you as well.

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