

### WHAT IS A TEAM?

A team is a group of people working together with a common purpose or towards a common goal.

#### EXAMPLE

A rugby team is made up of 15 individual players. Each player has their own skill or talent – a lock has quite different skills from a winger, for example. However, to be a winning team, all these individuals need to work together. Every team member plays an important part in helping the team reach its goals.

In your job you may be part of several teams, such as a team of personal trainers, a health and safety team, or one of several people who report to the same supervisor.

### DIFFERENT ROLES IN A TEAM

When individuals work together as a team, each person will have a different role, based on their skills and experience. A netball team has roles such as goal shooter, goal keeper, wing attack and so on.

Most teams will have a leader. In a sports team this person will be called the captain; in a work team they may be called the team leader, team supervisor or manager, depending on the team.

#### EXAMPLE

A social club committee might have these roles:

- A chairperson: someone who is good at leading and encouraging other people
- A treasurer: someone who is good with money, handling subscriptions and paying bills
- A secretary: someone who is good at writing down decisions and organising meetings
- Other team members: people who may be 'specialists' in planning functions, getting new members, managing food and drink supplies and so on



### HOW TO BE A GOOD TEAM PLAYER

#### Understand your role

You can contribute best to a team when you are clear about:

- What its goals are
- What you are expected to do

If you are not sure what your role is, ask the team leader, supervisor, captain or chairperson. They will have a clear idea of what they expect each team member to do.

You are a valuable team member when you:

- Know what the team is trying to achieve
- Know what each team member is responsible for
- Know what **you** are responsible for
- Do what is expected of you
- Work positively and co-operatively with other team members

Working with other people requires a bit of give and take. You may have to compromise on what you would like to do, or the way you do something, to meet the goals of the whole team.

A team can only function well if the individual members can move forward together. Think of any team you belong to as 'we' or 'us', not 'they' or 'them'.



### Stay focused

Being focused means sticking to what you have to do, and letting other people get on with their jobs.

Other team members will expect you to take responsibility for completing your tasks, on time and to the standard required. That's how the whole team meets its goals.

If you have a problem along the way, ask for help. If you see someone else struggling with their tasks, offer to help, but only if it doesn't put you behind in what you are expected to do.

### Show respect

Showing respect means acknowledging the role of other team members in reaching your goals.

You can show your respect by:

- Listening politely when others are speaking or showing you what to do
- Not interrupting other team members – let everyone have a turn to contribute
- When you contribute, speak politely and positively, and stick to the topic
- Accepting that others have different roles from you (for example, someone else may be the team leader even though you would have liked to be the leader)
- Congratulating other team members when they do things well

To be a winning team, all the individuals need to work together.

### Follow the rules

Being part of a team means you sometimes have to compromise. You can't always do things your own way.

A team is a group of individuals with a shared objective. It is also shares values, behaviours and standards. They are what bind everyone together. When individuals don't follow the rules and standards, the team can lose its focus and start to fall apart.

Make sure you know the rules for any team you belong to.

## EXAMPLE

A sports team may have these rules:

1. Members must attend the weekly practice sessions.
2. Members must wear the complete and correct uniform.
3. Members must not swear at or insult each other, their coach, their opposition or people watching their games.
4. Members must arrive one hour before their game.

If one or two members start arriving late, or shout at each other, others can get upset and everyone starts to focus on the problems, not on winning games.

### Deal with any problems quickly

A good team is one that works and communicates well together. You can help deal with any problems by:

- Accepting that one person is the leader, and has been put in this role for a reason – do what they ask of you
- Acknowledging that all team members have something to offer, such as specialist knowledge or skills – you don't have to like people, but you should respect what they have to offer
- Following any rules relating to behaviour, tasks, timeframes and so on
- Making sure you know what your tasks and timeframes are, and what you should leave to others
- Completing your tasks on time – let the leader worry about other team members
- Staying positive – your attitude just might rub off on others
- Dealing with problems quickly and directly, by fronting up to the people involved, rather than muttering behind their back. If you are being bullied or threatened, raise it with someone in authority



## KEY POINTS

- A team is a group of people working together with a common purpose or towards a common goal.
- A good team is one that works and communicates well together.
- You can contribute best when you are clear about what the team's goals are and what you are expected to do.
- Working with other people requires a bit of give and take. You may have to compromise on what **you** would like to do, to meet the goals of the whole team.
- Other team members will expect you to take responsibility for completing your tasks, on time.
- Accept that others have different roles from you.
- Congratulate other team members when they do things well.
- Make sure you know the rules for any team you belong to.
- Deal with problems quickly.

## WORDS TO REMEMBER

- Acknowledge** Allow, accept, realise
- Attitude** Outlook, thoughts, position
- Authority** Power, influence, say-so
- Compromise** Give and take, find middle ground, concede
- Cooperate** Help, work together, lend a hand
- Contribute** Put in, give, add to
- Focus** Concentrate, give full attention to
- Goal** Target, objective, aim, purpose
- Respect** Value, honour
- Role** Job, task, responsibility

*Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini*

*My strength is not the strength of one but the strength of many*

Look at the list below. Put a tick beside any of these problems that you have seen in a team at work or in your life outside of work:

- People not listening to the leader
- More than one person wanting to be the leader
- People doing what they think needs to be done without making sure that it meets the team objective
- People all talking at once when objectives or processes are being discussed
- Some team members not finishing their tasks on time, or to the required standard, and holding up everyone else
- Team members talking about other members behind their backs
- Team members not respecting the leader

These are some of the common problems that can happen in a team situation. They all result in unhappy people and objectives not being achieved on time.

If you turn the negatives above into positives, you will be a great team member in a great team!

This fact sheet will be useful when you are being assessed for **Unit Standards 9681** *Contribute within a group/team that has an objective* (Level 3, 3 credits) or **9677** *Participate in a group/team which has an objective(s)* (Level 2, 3 credits), or whenever you are part of a team in your workplace.

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