

Information Pack

Unit 334

Understanding and Developing Relationships in the Workplace



INTRODUCTION

The aim of this unit is to develop knowledge and understanding of managing and developing relationships in the workplace.

Developing and managing good working relationships will not only make you more engaged and committed to your organisation, but it can also open doors to key projects, career advancement, and raises. Although we should try to build and maintain good working relationships with everyone, there are certain relationships that deserve extra attention. For example, you will likely benefit from developing good relationships with key stakeholders in your organization. These are the people who have a stake in your success or failure. Forming a bond with these people will help you to ensure that your projects and career stay on track.

SAMPLE

GUIDANCE

This document is prepared to break the unit material down into bite size chunks. You will see sub-headings that will coincide with the learning outcomes, specific to this unit. Therein you will encounter the following structures;

Purpose

Explains *why* you need to study the current section of material. Quite often learners are put off by material which does not initially seem to be relevant to a topic or profession. Once you understand the importance of new learning or theory you will embrace the concepts more readily.

Theory

Conveys new material to you in a straightforward fashion. To support the treatments in this section you are strongly advised to follow the given hyperlinks, which may be useful documents or applications on the web.

Example

The examples/worked examples are presented in a knowledge-building order. Make sure you follow them all through. If you are feeling confident then you might like to treat an example as a question, in which case cover it up and have a go yourself. Many of the examples given resemble assignment questions which will come your way, so follow them through diligently.

Question

Questions should not be avoided if you are determined to learn. Please do take the time to tackle each of the given questions, in the order in which they are presented. The order is important, as further knowledge and confidence is built upon previous knowledge and confidence. As an Online Learner it is important that the answers to questions are immediately available to you. Contact your Unit Tutor if you need help.

Challenge

You can really cement your new knowledge by undertaking the challenges. A challenge could be to download software and perform an exercise. An alternative challenge might involve a practical activity or other form of research.

Video

Videos on the web can be very useful supplements to your distance learning efforts. Wherever an online video(s) will help you then it will be hyperlinked at the appropriate point.

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Purpose

Building Relationships in the Workplace

How good are the relationships that you have with your colleagues? According to the Gallup Organisation, people who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs. And it does not have to be a best friend: Gallup found that people who simply had a good friend in the workplace are more likely to be satisfied.

Human beings are naturally social creatures – we crave friendship and positive interactions, just as we do food and water. So, it makes sense that the better our relationships are at work, the happier and more productive we will be.

Good working relationships give us several other benefits: our work becomes more enjoyable, people are more likely to go along with changes that we want to implement, and we are more innovative and creative. What is more, good relationships give us freedom: instead of spending time and energy overcoming the problems associated with negative relationships, we can focus on opportunities.

Good relationships are also often necessary if we hope to develop our careers. After all, if your boss does not trust you, it is unlikely that they will consider you for new opportunities or promotions. Whether it is with our colleagues, customers, or key stakeholders, we all want to be on good terms with the people we work with.

Defining a Good Relationship

There are several characteristics that make up good, healthy working relationships:

- **Trust** – this is the foundation of every good relationship. When you trust your team and colleagues, you form a powerful bond that helps you to work and communicate more effectively. If you trust the people you work with, you can be open and honest in your thoughts and actions, and you do not have to waste time and energy 'watching your back'.
- **Mutual respect** – when you respect the people you work with, you value their input and ideas, and they value yours. Working together, you can develop solutions based on your collective insight, wisdom and creativity.

- **Mindfulness** – this means taking responsibility for your words and actions. Those who are mindful are careful about what they say, and they do not let their own negative emotions impact the people around them.
- **Welcoming diversity** – people with good relationships not only accept diverse opinions, but they welcome them. For instance, when your friends and colleagues offer different opinions from yours, you take the time to consider what they have to say and factor their insights into your decision-making.
- **Open communication** – we communicate all day, whether we're sending emails and instant messages or meeting face-to-face. The better and more effectively you communicate with those around you, the richer your relationships will be. All good relationships depend on open, honest communication.

Where to Build Good Relationships

Although we should try to build and maintain good working relationships with everyone, there are certain relationships that deserve extra attention.

For instance, you'll likely benefit from developing good relationships with key stakeholders in your organization. These are the people who have a stake in your success or failure. Forming a bond with these people will help you to ensure that your projects and career stay on track.

Clients and customers are another group who deserve extra attention. Think of the last time you had to deal with an unhappy customer. It was probably challenging and draining. Although you may not be able to keep everyone happy 100 percent of the time, maintaining honest, trusting relationships with your customers can help you to ensure that if things do go wrong, damage is kept to a minimum. Good relationships with clients and customers can also lead to extra sales, career advancement, and a more rewarding life.

How to Build Good Work Relationships

So, what can you do to build better relationships at work? Here are some key things to focus on.

Develop your people skills

Good relationships start with good people skills. For instance, how well you collaborate, communicate and deal with conflict. Taking an honest look at your personal skills will help