

## The 7 Characteristics of a Team Player



Team player qualities are essential for effective teams to foster collaboration, communication, and a shared sense of purpose among team members, ultimately driving the success of the team to achieve top-notch results.

What's the bottom line?

**Teamwork is everyone's responsibility** – and good team members can apply some simple team player skills to become great.

## What Is a Team Player?

A team player is someone who actively contributes to the group.

Rooted in the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, team players take ownership of the team's success and challenges. They adapt the 7 team player qualities to their work in order to stand out. The following points outline these essential characteristics of a team player and why they are important.

## 7 Team Player Qualities and Characteristics

### 1. They Understand Their Role

Team members are very clear about the specific expectations related to their roles. The expectations these organizations have for their people are not something they are willing to leave to chance. No matter what type of job each person has (or at what level they sit in the business hierarchy), they are expected to engage and contribute as vital members of the team.

## **2. They Embrace Collaboration**

Team players understand they're expected to join others in making important decisions and contributing new ideas.

Change is the norm in business today, and team players do the following to foster success:

- Give even more of their talent and energy
- Communicate effectively with others
- Gain support for ideas
- Create collaborative relationships across the organization

## **3. They Hold Themselves Accountable**

Team players have an enormous effect on a team's dynamic and performance. Individuals are ultimately responsible for deciding whether the team will be dysfunctional, functional, or high-performing.

## **4. They Are Committed to Their Team**

At a fundamental level, every team needs competent and committed people. If team issues aren't addressed early, the entire team will suffer. Team players are aware of those needs and willing to provide their support.

## **5. They Are Flexible**

When talented individuals with different approaches, ideas, and skills are brought together on a team, some conflict is inevitable. Team members are flexible and collaborative. The most effective team members actively seek out and include others in making critical decisions and solving problems creatively. They understand that having diverse opinions leads to optimal solutions.

## **6. They Are Strategic and Future-Focused**

Great team players approach their work strategically and anticipate the actions they can take that will add value to the overall business.

Team members are innovative, entrepreneurial, and enterprising. They imagine how their roles might look in the future, how their jobs might change, and what their customers will need down the line.

## **7. They Back Up Goals with Action**

Team players are conscientious in how they think and feel about their roles and how their actions support the team's goals. Team members have a [plan for developing their skills](#) in areas that might not be natural strengths. They regularly think about their goals and support them with consistent actions.

## How To Improve as a Team Player

Sometimes, insecurity, jealousy, and old habits interfere with teamwork. Whether these issues entail focusing on the past, monopolizing the spotlight, or being a power-driven competitor, challenges arise.

Leaders must prepare to identify and appropriately address any obstacles to their team members' skills or commitment. Here are three guiding tips to help your team overcome challenges and improve as team players.

### 1. Practice Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills for identifying, understanding, and influencing emotions in yourself and others. Emotional intelligence is responsible for [58% of professional success](#) and is a powerful tool driving team effectiveness and relationships.

The following are five components that encompass emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness
- Internal motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills
- Self-regulation

Learn more about [how to develop emotional intelligence in the workplace](#).

### 2. Be Open to Others' Work Styles

Encourage team members to learn and stay aware of one another's work styles. For example, while some individuals prefer emails or Slack messages, others might choose a phone call or video chat.

As a leader, you can:

- Facilitate work style discussions during team meetings. Have team members share their work styles and discuss how each person can accommodate those preferences.
- Instruct each team member to complete a form with their work style details. Allow everyone access to these forms so they can periodically refer to them.

### 3. Encourage Feedback

Though many may feel feedback has a negative connotation, it is essential for producing strong outcomes and fostering great team player qualities.

Gallup reports that when team members receive meaningful feedback, they're [four times more likely to be engaged](#). Help team members provide feedback to one another.

You can achieve [meaningful feedback](#) by encouraging the team to focus on three key points:

- **Frequency:** Feedback is most effective when provided immediately after an action.
- **Focus:** Feedback should be relevant to a person's contributions and purpose.
- **Future-Oriented Outlook:** Offer insight into how someone's actions will impact the future. This insight establishes more context around the feedback.