

# TIP SHEET: REGENERATING POSITIVE WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Building and maintaining positive work relationships is an important facet of workplace success. Coronavirus (COVID-19) has changed many things about the workplace, including dynamics with your supervisor and among co-workers. Now is an excellent opportunity to focus on reconstructing positive relationships within your team and organization.

## PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Your behavior is the foundation upon which positive relationships are created. The following principles of business etiquette should define all your business relationships:

- Respect
- Courtesy
- Collaboration
- Non-aggression

It is important to establish and maintain good working relationships with clients/customers, superiors, peers and subordinates. By being mindful and consistently applying the principles of business etiquette, you increase your opportunities for success and make your workplace a more pleasant place.

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF POSITIVE WORK RELATIONSHIPS

### IN YOUR NETWORK

- Be a good listener. Use verbal and nonverbal cues to demonstrate you are focused on what the other person has to say.
- Think before you speak. Consider what you want to communicate and choose your words carefully. Be mindful of how you speak—don't raise your voice, use harsh tones or use profanity. Speak like a professional and you will be perceived as one.
- Don't interrupt.
- Avoid miscommunication—clarify by summarizing and repeating back what you heard. Ask questions if you don't understand.
- Aim for face-to-face communications as opposed to voicemail or email.
- Be diplomatic.
- Emphasize the use of courtesy and respect in all communications.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Approach conflict as situation-related as opposed to person-related. Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Be positive and goal oriented. Offer solutions and suggestions for fixing the problem.
- Be clear and specific. Don't say, "John, I can't do anything with this report. It's all wrong. Fix it!" Instead say, "John, the Q1 data was used but we need Q2 data, can you make that change to the report today?"
- Be proactive instead of reactive. Respond with solutions rather than complaints.
- Be slow to anger, particularly regarding insignificant issues. Being perceived as cool-headed and rational adds value to your responses.

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- Keep an open mind. Listen to the other person's point of view without interrupting or arguing and strive for a win-win solution.
- Accept feedback—whether positive or negative—with poise and without becoming defensive. It speaks volumes about your professionalism.
- Never criticize a coworker or employee in front of others.
- If you find yourself in a disagreement with someone, don't air out your differences in public. Find a private location to discuss the issue.

## SUPPORT & APPRECIATION

- On group projects be sure to credit and compliment everyone who contributed.
- Speak well of your coworkers and acknowledge their accomplishments.
- Never take credit for someone else efforts.
- Acknowledge coworkers' birthdays, promotions, engagements, weddings, new children or the death of a loved one. Such thoughtfulness leaves a lasting impression.

Don't forget to use expressions of appreciation, which are too often forgotten in the workplace. Used on a daily basis, they can contribute to a positive work environment and include:

- Please.
- Thank you.
- Good job!
- Great idea.
- Pardon me.
- I'm sorry.