

Team-building is an excellent way to boost service center productivity. Effective teams require a manager who can articulate the purpose or objective of the team and can coach the team to success, reports the February issue of *Customer Service Newsletter*. But effective teams also require good team players who understand how to integrate their personal goals with those of the team.

Being a good team member requires a fine balance between self-appreciation and appreciation of others. The following material from Ron Willingham of Integrity Systems Inc. (www.integritysystems.com), adapted from his book *Integrity Service* (Free Press, 2005), would make a useful handout for a training session or staff meeting focusing on teamwork or team-building.

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Measuring your team-value attitudes

Being a good team player doesn't mean giving up your individuality or putting yourself in a totally subservient role, says Ron Willingham, author of *Integrity Service* (Free Press, 2005). But it does mean being able to share the glory with other team members and having a healthy balance between self-value and appreciation of others.

A healthy self-appreciation

Here are some healthy self-value attitudes. See how many of them you share:

- “I can depend on myself.”
- “I keep my commitments.”
- “I allow myself to feel good about my achievements.”
- “I'm comfortable with my values.”
- “I allow my results and actions to speak for themselves.”
- “I allow myself to be rewarded when rewards are due.”
- “I set goals with a quiet air of confidence that I will reach them.”
- “I know that I will succeed to the extent that I help my team or organization succeed.”
- “I measure my own success by the value that I create for others.”
- “I have a quiet confidence about my abilities because of my strong, positive values.”

Appreciating other team members

Good team players will have an equal measure of attitudes that express an appreciation for the value of others, says Willingham. For instance:

- “I look for strengths in you.”
- “I see potential in you.”
- “I want to understand you.”

- “I want you to succeed.”
- “I can look past your flaws and focus on your good traits.”
- “I want to lift you up.”
- “I'm interested in your well-being.”
- “I value your ideas.”
- “I listen to you.”
- “I give you credit when credit is due.”

Putting attitudes into action

Practice putting these attitudes into effect in your own work and in your interactions with other members of your customer service team, says Willingham. He suggests that every day you take one item from each list, put them on an index card, and write down an action for each that puts the thought into practice. Over the course of the day see how often you can put those thoughts into action.

Practicing teamwork with others

What does it take on a day-to-day basis to be a good customer service team member? Willingham offers the following “action guides” for team synergy.

- Stay focused on and discuss with others your common goal of creating value for customers.
- Listen to your associates without bias. Understand them and what they are saying.
- Look for strengths in each of your other team members and point them out.
- Look for strengths in yourself and point them out to yourself.
- Appreciate the opportunities and livelihood that your job provides you.

“As you practice these action guides in your everyday life,” says Willingham, “you'll enjoy the magic of greater influence, appreciation from others, and self-respect for your own skills.”