

Short Quiz On Team Member Behavior - What Would You Do?

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Team members are often in the dark on the behavior expected of them while working with others.

Here Are 9 Important But Common Situations That Team Members Are Likely To Encounter Throughout Their Project.

Choose the answer that best represents the behavior you expect from your team members or coworkers.

The answers are provided at the end of the quiz.

Quiz

1. What should a team member do if she believes that she cannot meet an already committed date?

- a. Work it out with the team leader and propose potential solutions
- b. Get help from her manager

- c. Work it out with the person with whom she has made the commitment
- d. Say nothing until she is 100% sure that the committed date will be missed
- e. Say nothing and do the best she can

2. Team member A repeatedly says that he is on schedule to deliver a critical-path item to member B who has a dependency on that item. But the item is delivered three days late. This puts the critical-path schedule three days behind. What should member B do?

- a. Maintain his original duration commitment which means that the schedule will remain three days late
- b. Notify his manager
- c. Escalate to member A's manager
- d. Reasonably work with anyone and everyone to bring the team back on schedule
- e. Bad mouth member A at every opportunity

3. What should a team member do if he has bad news to share?

- a. Share it as soon as possible
- b. Share it discretely, as appropriate
- c. Share it in as few words as possible
- d. Delay as long as you can to buy time in case things improve
- e. a, b and c

4. A team member periodically does something helpful and noteworthy for the team leader, another team member or for the team itself. In terms of recognition, what should the team member do?

- a. Share the good deed with the team at the next available opportunity
- b. Inform his manager
- c. Remain humble and say and do nothing
- d. Request the benefitting party to inform his manager

5. When it comes to commitments and accountability, who within the team should be treated differently—a bit more special—than any other person or group? Who should be cut a bit more slack when problems arise?

- a. Client

- b. Contractor
- c. Vendor
- d. Company employees
- e. No one should be treated a bit more special

6. When a team member has made a noteworthy mistake, what should she do?

- a. Admit she made a mistake
- b. State what she plans to do to correct the mistake
- c. State what she will do to prevent the mistake from occurring again
- d. Do not allow the mistake to haunt her
- e. All of the above

7. What should a team member do to maintain a positive attitude when he works around some really negative people?

- a. Leave the organization
- b. Decide to maintain a positive attitude
- c. Confront the negative behavior at every opportunity
- d. Occasionally confront the negative behavior when the timing and conditions feel appropriate
- e. b and d

8. A team member should ask questions rather than assume. But doing so can cause that person to sense that others perceive them as stupid. What should the team member do?

- a. Let others ask the questions
- b. Make the best assumptions you can
- c. Test the waters with one question before asking more questions
- d. Ask the questions
- e. Obtain the person's permission to ask questions

9. What can a team member do to discourage her meeting invitees from arriving late and leaving early?

- a. Yell at them

- b. Lock the meeting-room door
- c. Adopt the 10-minute rule
- d. Fine them \$1 per minute they are late or leave early (money collected to be used on team snacks)
- e. All the above

Answers

I have promoted answers that my experience suggests represent the behaviors of the best teams—high performance teams. It's possible, that for some scenarios, you don't agree with my answer or you may not favor any of the options from which you can select. If your answer is different than my recommendation, it doesn't necessarily mean that either of us is wrong. We may come from different company and country cultures that may influence our answer. We also may have had different experiences. But bear in mind that, if you and I don't agree on the best answer, all the more reason that that scenario should be discussed within your team to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of what is expected of them.

1. **The answer is c.** Work with the dependent party to resolve the issue without causing harm to other members of the team. If problems result, immediately include the team leader in the discussion and propose potential solutions to remedy, or at least minimize, the harm that may occur. The team member may also need to inform her manager and, if needed, secure the appropriate support from her manager.
2. **The answer is d.** Member B is responsible for doing what is reasonable to work at restoring the critical-path schedule to its original commitment. Member B should be creative and open to ideas and obtain help if it is necessary and available. The first priority is not placing blame, but to resolve the problem so that the overall team does not suffer. To that end, the team leader should typically be informed of the situation and may be instrumental in working with all affected parties to repair the situation. If appropriate, member A, who originally caused the delivery to be late, can be included in the resolution.
3. **The answer is e.** We all find ourselves having to deliver bad news from time to time. It's never fun but it's part of the job. Always deliver bad news as soon as reasonably possible, with the appropriate level of discretion and using as few words as possible. "As soon as reasonably possible" means that, in most cases, you attempt to resolve the problem before involving others—especially higher-ups. If you believe that the

bad news must be shared, do so quickly. The sooner the problem is addressed, the less harm may be incurred. Make sure you do not blindsides anyone when relaying bad news. No one wants to be surprised by hearing about a problem from a third party or at an inopportune time. As for using few words, if the person you are updating needs more information, she will ask.

4. **The answer is b.** The team member should inform his manager about his noteworthy deed. It's not only okay to toot your horn to your manager, it's essential. If you don't then your manager can never acknowledge and praise you for your admirable behavior, nor will you experience any appropriate benefit in your next performance review. However, do not run each time to notify your manager. Instead, use weekly or monthly status reports to your manager to include these types of items. Truly noteworthy and unique events can be communicated right away. Note, however, do not toot your horn to your coworkers—doing so can show you in a less than favorable light.
5. **The answer is e.** All individuals and groups are needed to ensure that the team's mission is completed successfully. If any of these stakeholders are having difficulty meeting their commitments, they must be appropriately worked with to ensure the issue is satisfactorily resolved. History shows that once one group or person is treated differently or so-called "special," it's typically that group that becomes the Achilles' heel of the team.
6. **The answer is e.** When you make a mistake—and we all do—it is recommended to admit that you made the mistake. Doing so can take the wind away from some people's proverbial sails and allow people to focus on solving rather than the blame game. Now state what you plan to do to correct the mistake—this is called being accountable. Next state what you plan to do so the same problem does not reoccur—this is called being a professional. Lastly, do not carry guilt with you about the mistake. Learn from the experience and move on.
7. **The answer is e.** Don't allow others to define you. You choose your own attitude; nobody chooses it for you. A positive attitude can be contagious but so can a negative one. People will look forward to being around and working with you if you have a positive attitude. If others' negative behavior is undermining your ability to achieve your commitments, then you must take action. However, if the person with the negative attitude has no influence within your domain of responsibility, then you

can choose to do nothing. If you are around the person frequently, you may choose to encourage a change in her attitude or at least try to better understand what is behind it.

8. **The answer is d.** Ask the questions. Better to have the misperception of looking stupid than proving stupid because you failed to ask the necessary questions. Do what you believe is the right thing to do. When you ask questions and listen to what people have to say, you learn things that you otherwise would not know. What other people think about you should never be more important than what you think about yourself.
9. **The answer is c.** Schedule all meetings to begin at 10 minutes after the hour so that attendees can arrive on time from their last meeting. Allowing at least 10 minutes between meetings gives attendees time to travel, make calls or check email, and relax for a moment. Additionally, end all meetings 10 minutes before the hour, or earlier, so that attendees have time to get to their next meeting on time that will likely start on the hour.

This quiz and its answers, when openly discussed among the team leader and team members, provide a venue to ensuring that these expectations are clearly articulated across the team.

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