

Teamwork Basics

In class, we discussed many of the crucial elements of effective team building. One of the many important elements was the ability to encourage team communication. Below are some reminders of those discussions.



STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE TEAM COMMUNICATION

Accept opposing views. Be willing to accept and maintain opposing points of view. Remember, the fact that not everyone sees the world as you do is an asset, not a liability!

Communicate clearly. Clearly communicate your ideas so that others understand. Ask the group, "Am I making any sense?" or "Do you understand what I am saying?"

Listen completely. Listen completely to the comments of others. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification to be

sure you understand. Paraphrasing ("Is this what you mean...") and summarizing ("We have two different ideas to think about, specifically...") helps good listening occur.

Criticize ideas, not people. Criticize the content of different ideas without criticizing the people behind the ideas. "Your solution could create a safety hazard" is a much different remark than, "Your solution is dumb." Accept criticism. Accept criticism from others on an intellectual rather than a personal basis. Remember, they are criticizing your idea, not you. Share your ideas and opinions. Sometimes this may feel risky, but have confidence in your contributions

and your value to the group. Invite everyone to participate. Help your group make good decisions by making sure everyone has had a chance to give an opinion and that the group has listened carefully to all points of view.

Stay on the subject. Keep the group on track by not bringing up unrelated topics. If you have a concern that may get the group off the subject, hold onto it until the present discussion is finished. Thank people. Thank people for their efforts and contributions. Leave disagreements in the room. Leave disagreements in the meeting room. At the same time, don't bring work disagreements into the meeting unless they are either on the agenda or belong there.

CLAIMS EDUCATION

Claims Education Magazine™ is solely owned by:

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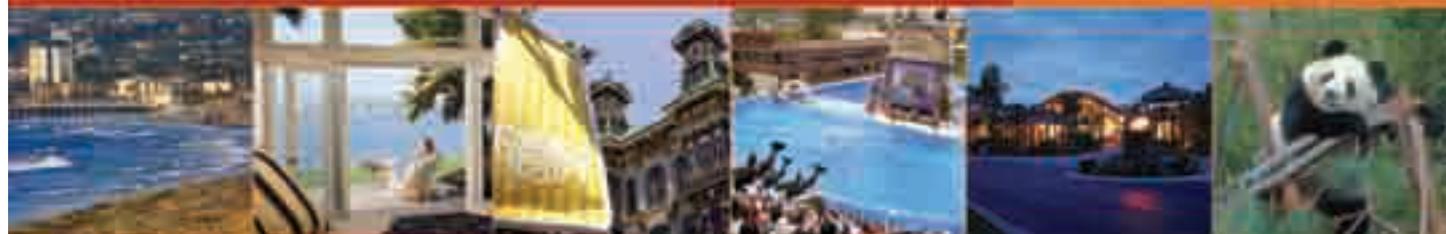
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