

Creating your team!

A gathering of people could be considered a group, but for group to work effectively together, they need to become a team. But how can you help your group become a team. The tips below will give you an idea of some key things to consider.

Ten Top Tips for creating the team

1. Be positive and open to the group experience.

There are many benefits to working in a team. You may gain new knowledge and the ability to work well with others is highly prized by employers. See group work as an opportunity to develop key skills and experience for your CV.

2. Take time to get to know your team

It is worth spending time introducing yourselves and/or discussing group work at the start. What are your strengths? What are your fears? A team that takes time to talk to each other first, will bond and work better.

3. Create a productive group environment

Find a good place to talk as a group. Is it somewhere you won't be disturbed or distracted too much? Can you all see and hear each other? Is everyone comfortable? Do you need any extra materials (pen, paper, flipchart etc.)? A good environment will help the team work better together.

4. Set your team ground rules

Ground rules are important! Everyone should feel safe, respected and able to voice their thoughts. People should attend meetings and apologise if they can't make it. Group members should stick to deadlines and be professional in all communication. Write down the rules and give everyone a copy!

5. Decide on your group working practices.

How often, when and where will you meet? How are you going to make decisions and allocate work? What will you do if you think someone is not contributing enough to the team effort? Effective teams sort this stuff out first!

6. Decide on your team/meeting roles.

It is usually helpful to have roles for your meetings. Common roles include: note-taker, time-keeper and meeting chair/facilitator. Roles can be set or rotate for each meeting. Roles can help keep meetings focussed and productive.

7. Check your understanding of the task

It is vital that you check that everybody has a clear understanding of the task before you start. People often interpret things in different ways and every group should allow time to discuss this at the outset of a project.

8. Establish your goal/aims

Every group needs to have a clear idea of the overall goal of the group. Group members may have lots of different ideas and it is important that you allow time to discuss this and decide on the best course of action. A team that is clear on goals will not waste time with confusion.

9. Get everyone's contact details

You should decide how the group is going to stay in touch (by email, phone, text etc.) and everyone should have each group member's contact details.

10. Agree your next meeting date/time

Finally, it is surprising how many groups forget this last, vital step. It might be useful to agree a regular slot that is convenient for everyone so you don't have to keep remembering new times and dates every week!