

Why do employers value team work?

In a recent survey, teamwork and communication skills ranked amongst the top five qualities sought by employers. Many companies are now focusing on team building as a way to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the belief that it will positively impact their bottom line. They recognise that team work brings about synergy - "the sum of the parts being greater than the whole" and if implemented correctly, teambuilding can make a company more productive, increase staff morale and foster innovation.

As a result, questions based on team building skills are now starting to feature strongly in interviews. To successfully answer these questions, it is first essential to understand the characteristics inherent in a successful team player.

What are the qualities of a good team player?

Although not an exhaustive list, all good team players share the following six characteristics:

Honest and open communicator:

Good communication is essential to success in the workplace. We have all had experiences of hearing the wrong message, assuming incorrectly, misinterpreting others' behaviors and feeling offended. That is why it is important to use clear communication, as well as active listening skills with fellow team members. Don't just seek to be understood, but also seek to understand.

Reliability:

It is important to be able to rely on fellow team members. When a commitment is given, work should be done to deadline and to a high standard. Consistency is crucial.

Positive Mindset:

To be a good team player, you have to be the type of person others want to be around. Good team players celebrate the successes and learn from the set backs. They recognise the importance of giving positive feedback and are open to receiving constructive criticism.

Flexibility:

Flexibility is an important trait when working with others. If you are rigid in your approach to new concepts or change, then others will be negatively impacted. A flexible team member can consider different points of views and compromise when needed.

Getting Involved:

Good team players are active participants. They are fully engaged in the work of the team and do not sit passively on the sidelines. Team members who function as active participants take the initiative to help make things happen, and they volunteer for assignments. They adopt a can-do approach.

Problem-solver:

Good team players are willing to deal with all kinds of problems in a solutions-oriented manner. Team players get problems out in the open for discussion and then collaborate with others to find solutions and form action plans.

Conclusion

In tougher economic times, where companies are leaner, teamwork and flexibility are seen as essential qualities in ensuring a company's survival and ultimate long term success. Being able to demonstrate these skills effectively in an interview should give you the edge required in the selection process and lead to a successful outcome in your job search.

About the Author

Laura McGrath is the owner of [Interview Techniques](http://www.interviewtechniques.ie), a leading provider of interview coaching services. She has spent the last 15 years in staffing and recruitment and is a regular contributor with *Irish Jobs* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

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