

BSBXTW301

Work in a team

Release 2

BSB Training Package
Release 5.0 Teamwork and
Communication Cross Sector

Learner guide

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Work in a team

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Aspire Version 1.2

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBXTW301 Work in a team*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at:
www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Icon	Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
	Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
	Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
	Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
	Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
	Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses appropriate communication practices when communicating with others• Cooperates and collaborates with team members
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans and implements routine tasks and workload making limited decisions on sequencing, timing and collaboration, seeking assistance in setting priorities• Uses digital technology to find, record or communicate information

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Identifying work tasks	1A Working in a team	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Prioritising work tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Contributing effectively to team goals	2A Contributing to teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Sharing knowledge and skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Working effectively with team members	3A Communicating clearly and respectfully	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Communicating with team leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Identifying and reporting issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1

Identifying work tasks

Most workplaces have staff organised in teams to support the achievement of business goals.

There are several different types and structures of teams, each with their own set of characteristics. As a team member, you should be given a clear explanation of your role and responsibilities, and the work tasks you will be required to perform. You will need to be organised and able to prioritise your tasks so they can be completed in a timely fashion.

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A Working in a team
- 1B Prioritising work tasks

1A

Working in a team

Teams are essential to organisations.

Organisations use teams in different ways depending on the objectives they want the team to achieve. To start your job in the best possible way, you must understand what a team looks like in your organisation and what function it performs. No matter how a team is structured, responsibilities and roles will differ across various departments in the organisation. Teams must always operate in line with the organisational requirements of the company, and this will impact on and drive the work of the team.

When you are first introduced to your team, it is important to know what your role is in achieving departmental and organisational goals.



The role of a team in the organisation

There are several definitions of what makes a team.

Definitions differ, but they have one thing in common: a team is a unit of two or more people who interact and work together towards a common goal. A group of people who work together do not always make a team. Team members must commit to the overall goals of the team and accept mutual accountability.

Organisations arrange for people to work in teams so they:

- can complete a project and accomplish specific objectives, such as designing a new product or rolling out a new process
- have a mix of skills and knowledge in the organisation, such as providing input and ideas to help make decisions
- obtain feedback on and improve work practices.

Organisational requirements impact the way the team operates. When you start a new job in an organisation, you are expected to become familiar with its requirements in order to perform your work and contribute to an effective team.

Types of teams

There are many different structures and types of teams.

Some of these are outlined in the following table.

Functional team

Permanent team in the organisation that reports to a supervisor (team leader, coordinator or manager) typically in a specific department of the organisation.

Self-managed team

Team without a manager that determines its own rules and expectations to achieve the objectives set by the business.

Cross-functional team

Composed of team members from different teams in the organisation who work together for a portion of their time to deal with a specific task or activity requiring a diverse range of skills and knowledge.

Task force team

This is a team that is assembled to complete a specific task, usually at a time of emergency.

Project team

Formed for an arranged period to complete a project. Projects have a start and end date with a set of clear goals to achieve within an agreed budget.

Virtual team

Team members work from different locations, making use of technology to connect and share tasks.

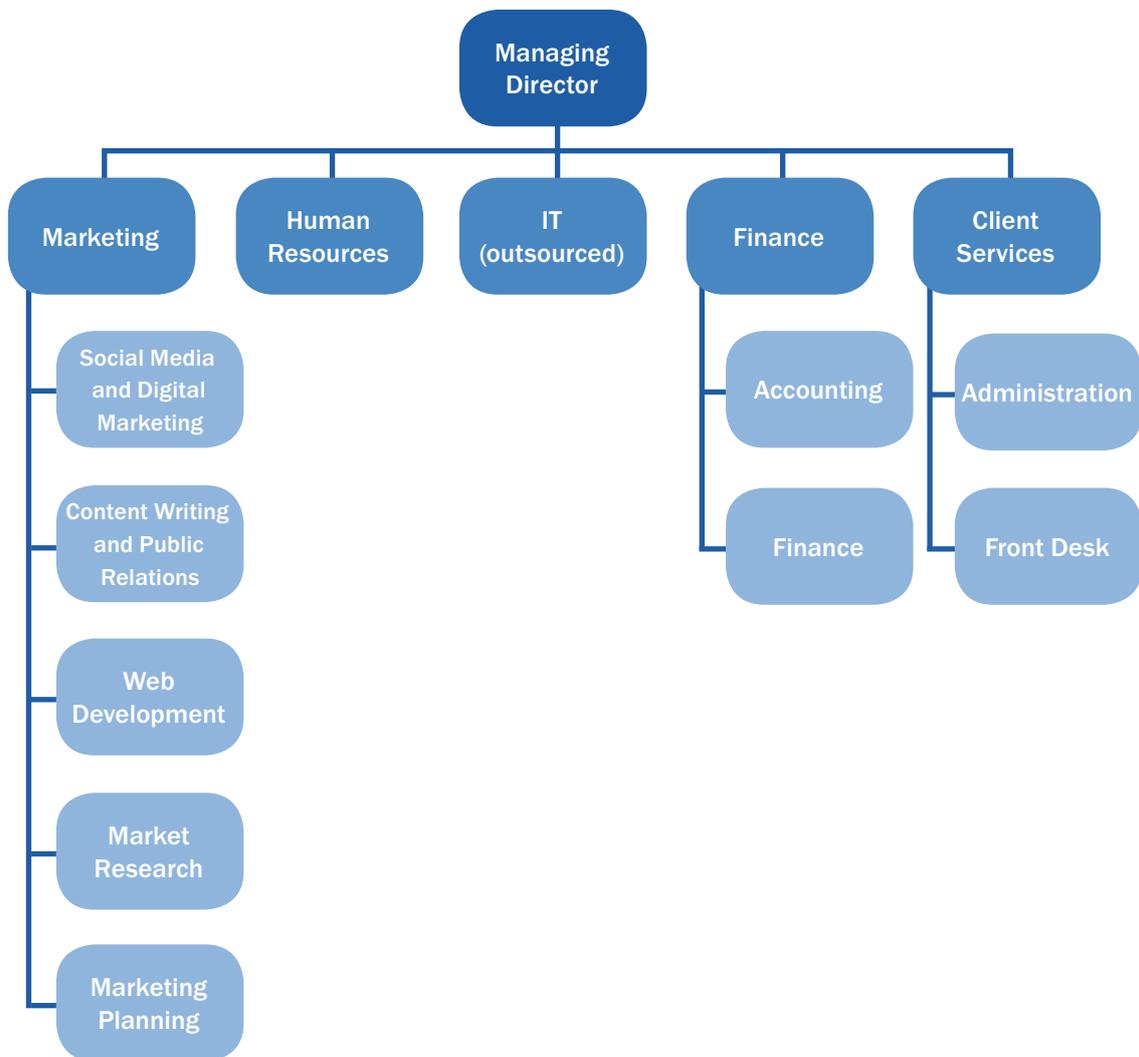
Outsourced team

This is a team that has been contracted by the organisation to perform a specific task, but it is not formally part of the organisation.

Organisational structure

The structure of an organisation outlines the reporting lines and the arrangement of different departments.

Most organisations have a structure that may look similar to a family tree. This example is a simple organisational chart for a marketing company where the teams work in a department of the organisation, such as the web development team.



In some organisations, each team member is assigned a specific role with responsibilities depending on the department they work for.

Area of organisation/functional area	Role
Research and development	Developing new products and services
Sales, marketing and communication	Sales and marketing activities (e.g. social media management and public relations)
Production	Manufacturing products
Customer service	Managing the customer experience from first enquiry, during and after purchase
Human resources	Recruitment, selection process and appointment of new employees and staff employment conditions, such as leave entitlements
IT	IT support, system networks and programming
Accounting and finance	Payroll, accounts and financial management
Training	Professional development of staff
Risk management	Identifying and managing risks in the organisation
Project management	Overseeing major projects undertaken by the organisation
Executive team	Responsible for the achievement of strategic goals and high-level decision-making

Characteristics of teams

Regardless of the type of team, a number of characteristics will define what a team is and how it operates.

Size

Research into ways teams operate states that team performance peaks when it is made up of five to 12 members. A team should be large enough to have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to perform the work task, but also small enough to be manageable. If the team is too large, performance and cohesiveness can suffer, and it can be split into sub-teams.

Diversity

Teams can be made of a diverse group of people. They are a mix of team members who differ in age, gender, skills, experience, social and cultural background, physical abilities and also in work arrangements, such as people who work remotely. Diversity can enrich the strengths in a team, but the potential of the diverse group must be managed in a way that is equitable and fair.

Norms

Teams need to agree on a set of behavioural standards (team norms) that all team members must follow. This can be done formally, using a team charter, or informally where the norms are not written, but are known to all team members. Norms may vary in content and scope. Examples include:

- Lunch is not be consumed at the work desk.
- The team respects the diversity of its members.
- Team members do not interrupt the work of other team members within certain periods of the day.
- Team members are accountable for their own mistakes.

Cohesiveness

Team cohesiveness is reflected in the mutual commitment to the group. A high level of cohesiveness influences work behaviours of the team, such as support, sharing, trust and coordination.

Cohesiveness is usually a positive factor in a team. However, it may also lead to 'groupthink', which happens when all team members think the same or stop challenging each other. Groupthink impairs creativity and innovation in a team.

Leadership

Most teams will have a formal leader that has been appointed by the organisation to coordinate, manage or lead the team. However, teams may have informal leaders; for example, an experienced team member who becomes an opinion leader, or a team member with a dominant personality who can shift team behaviours or stimulate ideas.

Role structure

When you join a team, you join a group of people who work together to achieve common goals set by the organisation.

The way a team interacts with each other will be determined by the leadership and influenced by team dynamics, such as different personalities.

Some of the key roles include the following titles:

- Team leader or supervisor – In charge of supervising and coordinating the team
- Team member – Performs work tasks set by the leader or supervisor

Each team member may perform one or more of the following formal or informal roles:

- coordination
- leadership
- task specialist
- interfacing with other teams, i.e. communicating with others outside the team
- socioemotional, i.e. supporting the emotional needs in the team.

In many cases, team members take on informal roles based on their personal attributes. For example:

- Innovator/initiator – Initiates ideas
- Information seeker/contributor – Researches data and information needed to improve team performance
- Challenger – Challenges the status quo in the team
- Energiser – Brings positive energy and motivation to the team
- Harmoniser – Helps reconcile conflicts
- Feedback giver – Provides key feedback to improve the work in the team
- Doer – Gets things done
- Leader – Inspires the rest of team, even if their official role is not team leader or coordinator

The enacted role refers to how a team member will eventually perform their role. This is the result of the following.

Expected role

The role that has been formally laid out in the position description and is expected by the organisation

Sent role

How the role is communicated to you by the team leader or manager and the rest of the team

Perceived role

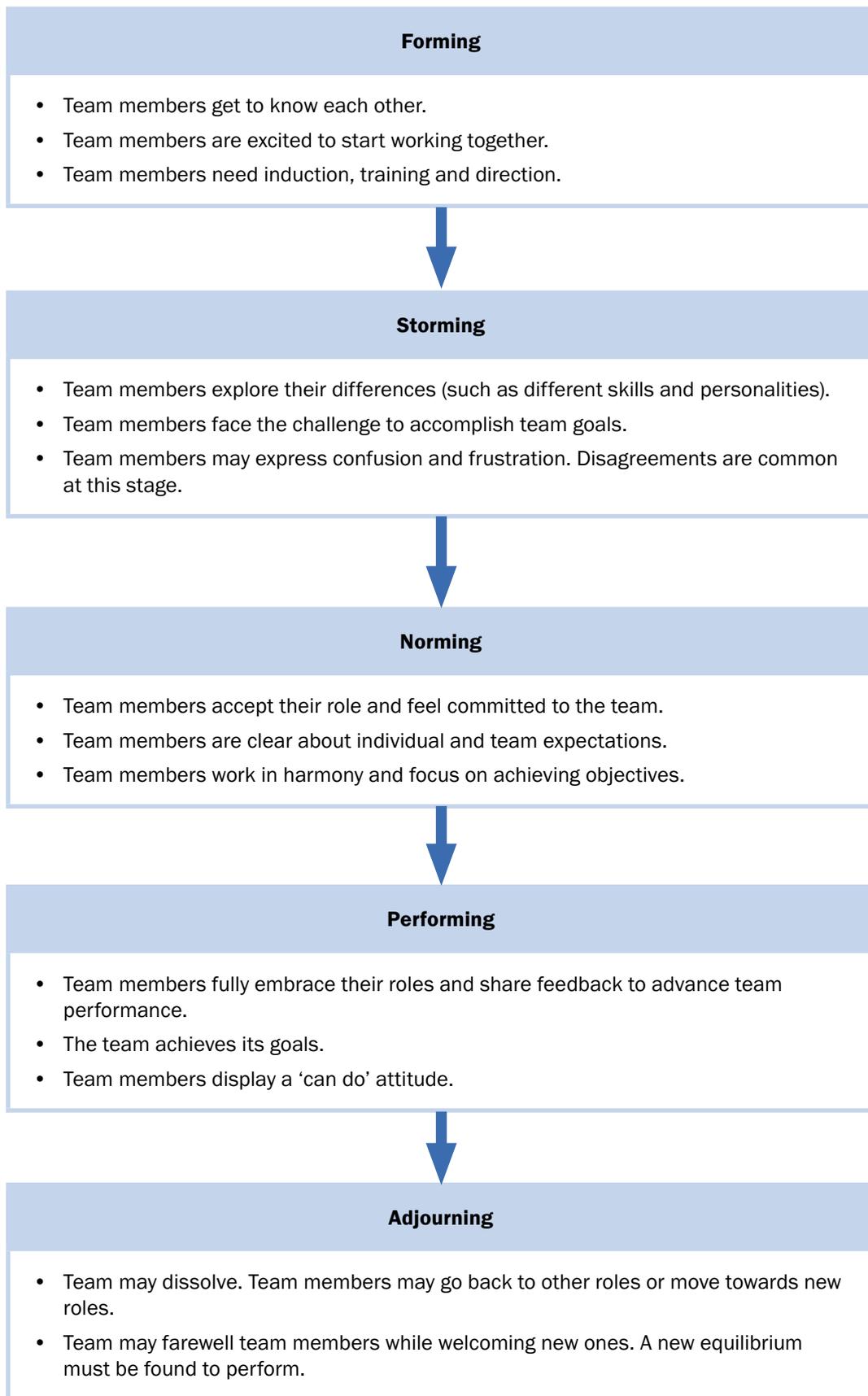
The role that you feel you should perform that builds on the expected role, but also takes into consideration the dynamics in the team

Stages of team development

Once a team is formed, it takes on specific characteristics and goes through different stages of development.

Some projects run for more than a year and some are quite short, such as a week or two. You may join the team at any given stage, and it will be helpful to think about the characteristics of the team and how long it has been together.

One popular model that shows how teams goes through stages is the Tuckman's stages of group development model.



Position description

A position description (PD) is an organisational document that defines the role of an employee, including their work tasks, and the expectations and responsibilities of their role.

A typical PD includes, at minimum, the following sections:

- description of the role, including role title, pay rates, reporting lines and work hours
- information about the company, such as its values or strategic goals
- purpose of the role – a general description of what the role does and what it is responsible for
- job duties and responsibilities – a list of what the work tasks and responsibilities of the role are
- essential skills and qualifications – any qualifications, training and/or experience needed to perform the role.

Example

Position description

Here is an example of a PD for a receptionist role.

Role title	Receptionist
Department	Client Services
Reports to	Client Service Manager
Direct reports	NA
Employment term	Full time, ongoing
Work hours	Monday to Friday 8am–5pm with 1-hour lunch break
Salary	\$46,000 per year
Location	Level 1 EFG Lane Melbourne 3000 VIC

Our company is Australian owned and is renowned for consistently delivering value to clients through innovative and successful marketing activities.

Our range of marketing services include:

- Branding and design
- Event marketing
- Social media marketing
- Web development
- Market research
- Content marketing
- Digital advertising
- Integrated marketing planning

We pride ourselves on always being at the forefront of marketing services and commit to giving our clients a profitable return on investment.

We work with integrity and honesty, value creativity and celebrate diversity.

Example

Purpose of the role

The purpose of the Receptionist role is to provide our clients with timely response to enquiries and basic administrative support.

Key responsibilities

- Open and close reception area
- Tidy and maintain reception area
- Meet and greet clients
- Provide excellent customer service
- Fully respond to enquiries: face to face, by telephone and over email
- Escalate enquiries as needed
- Manage the schedule of the Client Service Manager
- Coordinate meetings and organise catering for the Client Service Department
- Prepare correspondence and documents
- Data entry as instructed by the Client Service Manager
- Maintain operation, maintenance and security of record-keeping systems and software
- Ensure adequate supplies of consumables, such as stationery, printer supplies, and kitchen supplies for the Client Service Department
- Assist with equipment management and maintenance
- Participate in relevant training and development as required
- Other duties consistent with the position as required by the Client Service Manager

Skills and personal attributes

- Advanced written and verbal communication skills
- Professional personal presentation
- Information and record management
- Initiative
- Reliability and stress tolerance
- Good organisational skills
- Customer service focus
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to multitask

Professional experience and qualifications

- This is an entry-level position that does not require previous work experience in similar roles
- Certificate II in Business Administration or similar – Essential
- Advanced knowledge of MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint)

Work contract

New employees agree to follow the organisational requirements of the job.

You must carefully examine your contract of employment and the industry award under which you work (if relevant) to confirm the wages and conditions provided by the employer.

The contract of employment prepared by your employer includes:

- your duties
- work hours, including the days you will work
- where you will work
- your salary
- your employment status (full time, part time, etc.)
- your employment conditions (including leave and other entitlements)
- termination clause.

Workplace policies

A policy is a system of principles and guidelines that support decision-making and work practices in an organisation.

Policies and procedures are important because they outline the legislative and regulatory requirements that a business must follow. They also provide you with a set clear of expectations on how you should work and behave. Each department must refer to these documents to ensure consistency across the organisation. In the area of human resources and managing people, policies are essential for providing staff with clear guidelines if they need to question their work conditions or if there are issues or conflict with other employees.

Structure of a policy

- Title of the policy
- Purpose of the policy – a statement on what the policy aims to achieve
- Scope of the policy – what the policy covers and what it applies to
- Definitions – some key terminology used in the policy document that may need explanation
- Policy statement – a general description of the policy
- Procedures – how the policy should be applied
- Related policies and procedures – a list of policies and procedures addressing related issues, and any other relevant documents

Common workplace policies

Organisations have a set of workplace policies and procedures that provide employees with key information on how things work in the company and what is expected of them.

The following provides examples of common workplace policies you may come across.

Policy	Details
Work health and safety	Responsibilities and norms around health and safety in the workplace, such as what personal protective equipment (PPE) you may be required to wear when you work.
Anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity	Norms and responsibilities that ensure all employees are treated respectfully, equally and fairly no matter their age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, religious belief, etc.
Performance management	Details how you will be given feedback, how your work will be evaluated and the consequences of poor performance, as well as potential reward for high performance outcomes.
Dress code	How you are expected to dress at work, e.g. business attire Monday to Thursday and casual Fridays.
Quality management	Outlines quality standards of the organisation and the level of quality you are expected to implement in your work.
Communication guidelines	How to communicate with others internal and external to the organisation, including how to write and structure emails and how to represent the company on social media.
Standard operating procedures	How to perform a particular task or function. Includes step-by-step procedures and quality standards with measurement of performance.

Other policies that may affect your job role include:

- Use of company property, such as IT equipment or vehicles
- Leave applications
- Marketing guidelines, such as format and style guides for promotional information

Sample policies are available at: <http://aspirelr.link/business-victoria>.

Example

Workplace policy

The following is an example of an IT policy covering internet and email use.

Internet and email policy

Internet use

The internet is provided by the Company for business use. Limited private use is permitted as long as the private use does not interfere with a person's work and inappropriate sites are not accessed. This includes websites of a pornographic nature, or promoting gambling or illegal acts. Management has the right to access the system to check if private use is excessive or inappropriate.

Failure to comply with these instructions is an offence and will be subject to appropriate investigation. In serious cases, the penalty for an offence, or repeated offence, includes dismissal. Staff need to be aware that some forms of inappropriate internet use may lead to criminal prosecution.

Email use

Email facilities are provided for formal business correspondence.

Take care to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information. If emails need to be kept or archived, they should be backed up and stored offsite.

Limited private use of email is allowed as long as it doesn't interfere with or distract from an employee's work. However, management has the right to access incoming and outgoing emails to check if an employee's usage or involvement is excessive or inappropriate.

Non-essential email, including personal messages, should be deleted regularly to avoid congestion.

All emails sent must include the approved business disclaimer.

To protect the Company from the potential effects of misuse and abuse of email, the following instructions are for all users:

- No material is to be sent as an email that is defamatory, in breach of copyright or business confidentiality, or prejudicial to the good standing of the Company in the community or to its relationship with staff, customers, suppliers and any other person or business with whom it has a relationship.
- Emails must not contain material that amounts to gossip about colleagues or that could be deemed offensive, demeaning, persistently irritating, threatening or discriminatory, including material that involves the harassment of others or concerns personal relationships.
- The email records of other persons are not to be accessed except by management (or persons authorised by management) ensuring compliance with this policy, or by authorised staff who have been requested to attend to a fault, upgrade or similar situation.
- When using email, a person must not pretend to be another person or use another person's computer without permission.
- Excessive private use, including mass mailing, is not permitted.

Failure to comply with these instructions will be investigated. In serious cases, the penalty for breach of this policy may include dismissal.

Codes of conduct

A code of conduct provides guidelines on organisational values and what it expects from its employees.

A code of conduct generally includes:

- Ethical principles – A guide for employees on how to respect colleagues and customers.
- Standards – This may include both standards of practice (how the organisation operates) and standards of conduct (how employees conduct themselves when performing tasks).
- Values – Key values that are embraced and championed by the organisation.
- Accountability – How employees at all levels take responsibility for their actions.

Example

Code of conduct

The following is a sample code of conduct.

Code of Conduct Policy
<p>Purpose</p> <p>This policy affirms the Company's belief in responsible social and ethical behaviour from all employees. This policy clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of all employees.</p>
<p>Principles</p> <p>Our employees contribute to the success of our organisation and that of our clients. The Company strongly opposes any employee being deprived of their basic human rights.</p> <p>Our employees have an obligation to the business, our clients and themselves to observe high standards of integrity and fair dealing. Unlawful and unethical business practices undermine employee and client trust.</p>
<p>Policy</p> <p>This policy applies to all employees and provides the framework of principles for conducting business, dealing with other employees, clients and suppliers. The Code of Conduct does not replace legislation. If any part of it is in conflict with the law, legislation takes precedence.</p> <p>This policy requires employees to do the following at all times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Act and maintain a high standard of integrity and professionalism.• Be responsible and scrupulous in the proper use of Company information, funds, equipment and facilities.• Be considerate and respectful of the environment and others.• Exercise fairness, equality, courtesy, consideration and sensitivity in dealing with other employees, clients and suppliers.• Avoid apparent conflict of interest, promptly disclosing to a Senior Manager anything which may constitute a conflict of interest.• Promote the interests of the Company.• Perform duties with skill, honesty, care and diligence.• Abide by policies, procedures and lawful directions that relate to your employment with the Company and/or its clients.• Avoid the perception that any business transaction may be influenced by offering or accepting gifts.• Under no circumstances may employees offer or accept money. <p>Any employee who in good faith raises a complaint or discloses an alleged breach of the Code, whilst following correct reporting procedures, will not be disadvantaged or prejudiced. All reports will be dealt with in a timely and confidential manner.</p> <p>The Company expects cooperation from all employees in conducting themselves in a professional, ethical and socially acceptable manner of the highest standards.</p> <p>Any employee in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including employment termination.</p> <p>Should an employee have doubts about any aspect of the Code of Conduct, they must seek clarification from the Human Resource Manager.</p> <p>This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Company and any necessary changes will be implemented by the Human Resource Manager.</p>

Organisational culture

Work culture refers to how staff in an organisation behave, what they value and how they conduct business.

Understanding the organisational culture of your workplace is essential to working to the best of your abilities. In some organisations it is a written and formalised statement about the environment the business wants for its employees, such as high performance, collaboration and respect for each other. In a less formal workplace, the work culture is based on unwritten rules that help colleagues bond and carry out their work.

Many aspects of an organisation's environment contribute to the culture, such as leadership styles, values, interactions and relationships, behaviours and attitudes. A company's policies, procedures and codes of conduct provide direction and guidelines for staff so they can operate in a way that reinforces a positive work culture.

An organisational culture includes the elements outlined below.

Artefacts	Values	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceremonies and rituals, such as celebrating the birthday of a team member • Awards and symbols, such as a certificate for a job well done • Stories about past events and experiences told by existing employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical beliefs • Type of leadership from the top • Accountability for individual and corporate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumptions about what the organisational culture is from its employees • Actual behaviours and values that have not emerged or become visible

There are many different types of organisational culture and many are unique to the organisation. Here are four examples.

Market

↳ The organisation is result-driven and focused on achieving its goals.

Hierarchy

↳ The organisation has a very formalised, stable and top-heavy structure with senior management.

Adhocracy

↳ The organisation values an innovative and flexible work environment.

Clan

↳ Employees are very close to each other and feel part of a family.

Reputation

The reputation of an organisation is essential to its success and survival.

There have been some famous examples in the business world where companies have experienced issues and scandals that have permanently damaged their reputation. Lehman Brothers was the fourth largest investment bank in the US that went bankrupt during the Global Financial Crisis due to a loss of confidence from customers. BP lost credibility when it was responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, considered to be the largest marine oil spill in the world. Unethical behaviour can destroy a company because the company loses the support of its internal and external stakeholders.



How a company is seen internally by its employees and externally by its customers is based on past actions and how this might influence future behaviour. Many businesses spend large amounts of money maintaining and developing their reputation through marketing and promotional activities. They will invest a great deal of time and effort making sure that policies and codes of conduct reflect the reputational values that they want reinforced.

As an employee of an organisation, you become its ambassador. The way you behave and the way you perform your work can reflect positively or negatively on an organisation. This will be seen in the ways you interact with others in your team and with people in other departments and outside stakeholders. Conversely, you can choose to work for an organisation that you feel you can respect because of their commitment to values that you also hold, such as a company that respects and values its employees.

Your role and task requirements

You are required to contribute to the achievements of team and departmental goals.

Spend some time understanding what your role and task requirements in the team are. Your duties and responsibilities will be described in your PD and reinforced by organisational policies and procedures. However, you need to think about how you apply this information when working as part of a team.

Some of this information will be described in your induction and initial training, and in various documents you will be given as a new member of a team or organisation. The following table outlines some things you need to be aware of.

Induction process

This is the introduction to your role, to your team and to your organisation. It usually covers the relevant policies and procedures you need to know, initial training to start your role, and meet and greet with the rest of the team. The induction process represents an excellent opportunity to ask questions and clarify any doubts you may have.

You should also make yourself familiar with the team norms by speaking to your colleagues or your supervisor, and by consulting specific documents, such as a team charter or a code of conduct for the team (usually included in the team charter).

Team charter

This document is developed and agreed on by all the members of the team. It defines the direction and purpose of the team, agreed behaviours and internal rules, as well as how the team's success will be measured.

The charter provides clarity to the team, and supports the induction of new team members who can readily access key information on how the team operates.

There are different templates available to design a team charter, which should include the following aspects:

- Team purpose – This includes the mission and key objectives of the team
- Team members – Summary of what each team member is responsible for
- Team values – What the team sees as necessary or important
- Group norms – Agreed behaviours and internal rules
- Metrics of success – Agreed measurements of team success
- Resources available to support the team

RACI chart

To better define the role of team members, a RACI chart can be used.

The RACI chart stands for:

R – Who is responsible for completing a task/function

A – Who is accountable for the completion of a task/function

C – Who needs to be consulted in relation to a task/function

I – Who needs to be informed in relation to a task/function

Example

Team charter

Here is an example of a team charter for the front desk team at a marketing company.

Team charter	
Team purpose	<p>The purpose of the front desk team is to provide exceptional customer service and to provide administrative support to the Customer Service Department.</p> <p>Our vision is to always find innovative ways to serve customers.</p> <p>Our objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond to enquiries timely, correctly and consistently • To make customers feel that the Company is partnering with them so that they can succeed in achieving their own business goals • To be an ambassador for quality customer service • To complete all tasks within set deadlines and according to the Company's standards

Team members

Jim Smith – Front Desk Supervisor

Sarah White – Receptionist

Mark Black – Receptionist

RACI chart:

Task/Function	Jim	Sarah	Mark
Respond to clients' enquiries	A/C/I	R	R
Organise and tidy up reception area	A	R	R
Provide administrative support	C	R	R
Open and close reception area	A	R	R
Meet and greet clients	A/R	R	R
Respond to and/or escalate enquiries	A/C/I	I	I
Organise meetings and catering for the Customer Service Department	A	R	R
Plan meetings for the Customer Service Department in collaboration with the Customer Service Manager	R	I	I
Ensure adequate supplies of consumables such as stationery	A/C/I	R	R
Assist with equipment management and maintenance	A/C/I	R	R

Task/Function	Jim	Sarah	Mark
Manage the schedule of the Customer Service Manager	A/R		
Complete administrative tasks to support the Admin Team as instructed by the Customer Service Manager	R/A		
Data entry as instructed by the Customer Service Manager	R/A/I	R	R
Team values	<p>Our team values are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Integrity • Customer focus • Quality first • Respect for diversity • Collaboration 		
Group norms	<p>Our group norms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We meet every day for 15 minutes for a stand-up meeting to discuss the tasks of the day. This is an opportunity to share our workload. • Lunch breaks are taken in turns and may vary depending on how busy the reception area is. Lunch breaks must be taken between 11am and 2pm. • Lunch is consumed in the kitchen area. • The reception area should always be covered by at least two team members. • Team members must complete their daily tasks first and then any additional tasks assigned to them in order of urgency. 		

Metrics of success	Metrics of success for individual roles are stated in the performance plan for each team member. The team's metrics are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All enquiries are responded to within 24 hours (working day)• Feedback from clients to average 95% in positive feedback• All tasks assigned to team members to be completed according to timelines
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desktop computer• Microsoft Office suite• Access to customer relationship management (CRM) software• Ergonomic furniture and equipment• Stationery• Monthly budget of \$500 for professional development



Practice task 1

Question 1

Match each type of team to its definition.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| * Functional team | * A team without a manager that determines its own rules and expectations to achieve the objectives set by the business. |
| * Cross-functional team | * Team members work from different locations, making use of technology to connect and share tasks. |
| * Project team | * Composed of team members from different teams in the organisation who work together for a time to deal with a specific task or activity. |
| * Self-managed team | * A permanent team in the organisation that reports to a supervisor typically in a specific department of the organisation. |
| * Virtual team | * A team that is formed for an arranged period with a set start and end date, and a set of clear goals to achieve within an agreed budget. |

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to the roles and task responsibilities of teams? Select all that apply.

- Your position description will outline your key responsibilities, such as answering the phone.
- Policies and procedures provide consistency so that everyone knows what the company rules are.
- A code of conduct outlines each person's responsibility for their actions and behaviour in the team.
- An organisational structure shows which of the team members have fewer tasks and can therefore be delegated some of your tasks.
- Different roles and titles in a team may include team leader, team member and task specialist.

Question 3

Select true or false for the following statement.

Work culture is the unwritten rules that can be influenced by leadership styles, values, interactions and relationships within the organisation.

* True

* False

Question 4

Select true or false for the following statement.

Most customers accept unethical behaviour in a company as long as the business continues to provide great products and customer service.

* True

* False

1B

Prioritising work tasks

Managing your time efficiently helps to improve your performance at work.

Your daily work is a balancing exercise where you have to consider:

- the tasks to be completed
- your team's requirements
- your organisation's requirements
- other unplanned tasks that may occur.

Learning ways to plan your time and prioritise tasks is essential to become a more productive and efficient employee and team member. Planning and prioritising tasks means considering all the competing demands and managing them within a given time frame. This includes a consideration of how your activities influence and affect other team members.



How to prioritise tasks

Plan your work and start your day efficiently.

You will often have more than one task to complete at one time. You need to plan and prioritise tasks so you can complete them in the time frame you are given.

To prioritise effectively, determine the tasks that need to be completed to meet certain goals; for example, some tasks need to be done first because they are urgent or affect other tasks. If these are not completed as soon as possible, it could affect workflow and the work of others.

Urgent tasks are usually determined by their deadline. For example, a report needs to be ready to send to the printer at 10am. Important tasks you are responsible for can be prioritised, but only after urgent tasks are completed.

One way of making sure important tasks are addressed first is to construct a simple grid or matrix that identifies the degree of urgency of each task. Once the priority matrix has been constructed, scheduling tasks becomes simply a matter of moving them to the right boxes. Dealing with tasks in order of urgency and importance is a good way to tick off difficult jobs that you might be tempted to put off until another time.

An example of a priority matrix is provided here.

Important and urgent	Important but not urgent
These are tasks that must be done now. For example: Writing the agenda for the meeting scheduled for this afternoon.	Tasks that need to be completed, but do not require immediate attention fall into this category. For example: Filing or updating a database of contacts.
Urgent but not important	Not urgent and not important
Tasks in this category have a degree of urgency, but if the deadline is missed it will not be critical. For example: A staff memo that should have gone out yesterday but could be postponed until tomorrow.	Everyday housekeeping jobs fall into this category. For example: Replacing labels on storage cabinets can be done when there is spare time. Note that work health and safety (WHS) housekeeping tasks do not fall into this category. For example, picking up papers on the floor near a desk ensures other staff are not at risk of tripping or slipping.

Consider doing the following to help prioritise your work:

- Keep your workspace organised. This gives you a sense of control.
- Check your emails at the beginning of the day and then only at set times throughout the day to minimise interruptions. This may involve turning off email notifications.
- Work according to your most productive period. If mornings are your most productive time, complete complex tasks in the morning and plan to do easier tasks in the afternoon.
- Take breaks to recharge your mind and have your meals away from your desk. Try not to work while you are eating; you need time to reset.
- Review your list of things to do if anything changes, such as being assigned an urgent task.
- At the end of the day, review your to-do list, tidy up your workspace, check how the day went with your teammates and draft a to-do list for the next day.

Scheduling time efficiently

Managing time effectively is a skill that is key to the success of any job.

Have you ever felt like you have worked very hard all day, but achieved very little? Managing your time effectively is key to performing well in every job.

Developing a work schedule is an important component of assessing and keeping track of your work tasks. A work schedule lets you see at a glance the tasks you are required to do over a specific period of time. You can use a diary or a wall planning calendar to keep track of these tasks and their completion dates. Some workplaces have a set procedure or template for recording work tasks and making schedules.

Make use of software tools on your computer, such as a calendar, reminders and notes to check appointments and organise your tasks. Some file-sharing programs save time and allow different team members to work in a document at the same time in the cloud. Scheduling software can be used to help you set up appointments and view your tasks. Some organisations use software programs to share information and coordinate tasks in a team. This enables a team leader to identify which tasks have been completed at any one time.

Example

Work schedule

Here is a portion of a work schedule for a marketing assistant. It lists all the tasks for the next two months. From this schedule, the marketing assistant plans the requirements for each task. This schedule allows the marketing assistant to assess each task regularly so they can alter the schedule as needed.

Goal	Task	Key result	Deadline
Provide ongoing support to business operations	Organise weekly staff meetings	Meetings organised successfully and follow up completed	Ongoing
	Maintain files	Organisation's documents filed accurately and on time	Ongoing
	Prepare correspondence	All correspondence completed accurately and in accordance with requirements	Ongoing
	Maintain customer database	Customer database is accurate and up to date	Ongoing
	Design promotional flyer	Marketing flyer prepared on time	2 Sept
	Organise mail-out for flyer	Marketing flyer distributed on time	4 Sept

This is an example of a work plan for the task of designing a promotional flyer, which the marketing assistant prepared as part of the team's overall goal to increase customer awareness.

Area	Team goal	My goal	Tasks	Deadline	Result
Marketing	Increase customer awareness	Design promotional flyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with team leader to identify key points of content • Design format • Prepare draft and submit for approval • Make amendments and submit • Arrange printing at Speedy Print 	2 Sept	Marketing flyer prepared on time

Estimating time

With experience, you will become better at estimating the time it takes to complete a task.

You will need to allow for interruptions to your work schedule, and for unforeseen events; for example, your manager or supervisor may ask you to leave what you are doing and complete another task.

Some of these factors may influence how long a task will take to complete.

To allocate a suitable time frame, consider:

- the complexity of the task
- whether you can update an existing document or use a template, or whether you need to develop a document from scratch
- if you can get assistance or advice from another team member
- if the task is automated, such as a report that can be generated by a software program
- if you have to wait on the work of someone else before you can complete the task
- if you need approval before you can continue or finalise the task.

One approach is to estimate how long each task will take to be complete. This will help you plan and prioritise tasks. Remember to be realistic about how much work you can complete each day. As a team member, you need to be able to offer support to others. Your supervisor is there to tell you what to do, but also to mentor and coach you on how to do it.

Time management

Estimating and managing your time is an essential skill in any job role.

Some ways to improve your time management skills include:

- Focus on one thing at the time.
- Place a lower priority on tasks that are not urgent or important.
- Always schedule a buffer (time between tasks) to allow for unexpected delays.
- Get things done right the first time to avoid rework.
- Work as part of a team, not in isolation.
- Work on your motivation to do well at work. Understand what motivates you and use that to fill your daily energy.
- Reflect on what makes you procrastinate and try to eliminate or manage the causes.
- Decrease the number of interruptions during the day.
- Ask a more experienced team member or your supervisor for advice on how they prioritise their workload.

Example

Time estimate for a task

Becky, an administration assistant, realises it might take her a little longer to type the minutes today because she knows the meeting has been a long one with lots of discussion points to note down. She decides to change her time estimate to allow for this. She also considers the problem she had with the photocopier last week, and adds some time to her photocopying time estimate. She remembers Hashim, the room booking administrator, loves to chat and decides she should add extra time to the room booking. Her revised time estimates are shown below.

Task	Usual time estimate	Revised time estimate
Type meeting minutes from staff meeting	45 minutes	60 minutes
Send emails to new customers	30 minutes	30 minutes
Photocopy new staff member induction packs	30 minutes	45 minutes
Book meeting room for induction session	10 minutes	15 minutes



Practice task 2

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You are employed as a receptionist and have been given the following tasks for the day:

- Open and respond to emails at intervals across the day.
- Greet clients at reception and assist them.
- Edit a report, including proofreading and adding charts, and send it to the manager by 2pm.
- Review and submit the stationery order for the month.
- Prepare the meeting room for 10am staff meeting.
- Attend and take minutes of staff meeting.

Question 1

Match each task based on whether it is urgent, important or both.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| ✦ Edit a report including proofreading and adding charts for the manager by 2pm | ✦ Urgent |
| ✦ Prepare the meeting room by 10am | ✦ Important |
| ✦ Open and respond to emails at intervals across the day | ✦ Urgent and important |

Question 2

Number each task from 1 to 6 from highest to lowest priority.

- Open and respond to emails at intervals across the day.
- Greet clients at reception and assist them.
- Edit a report including proof reading and adding charts for the manager and send it before 2pm.
- Review and submit the stationery order for the month.
- Prepare the meeting room for 10am.
- Attend a meeting at 3pm ready to take the minutes of the meeting.

Summary

- A team is a unit of two or more people who work together to achieve a common goal.
- Teams will be different according to their function, composition and the period of time they work together.
- The purpose of a team will align with the function of the department and the organisational requirements for the company, including its policies, procedures and code of conduct.
- Teams are characterised by their size, background, skills and experience of team members, and leadership style.
- The organisational culture is shaped by what the organisation believes in, how they do business and how they treat employees.
- The organisation's reputation is what internal and external stakeholder think of the organisation.
- Planning your tasks and prioritising effectively is essential to perform well in your role.
- Manage your time effectively by learning how to focus more, ask for help and avoid procrastination.



Learning checkpoint 1

Identifying work tasks in the team

- Which of the following statements relate to roles, responsibilities and requirements of teams? Select all that apply.
 - Teams are valuable to organisations because they get the job done.
 - Innovation in a team will occur when everyone agrees and provides the same feedback.
 - A position description defines the role, the work tasks and the organisation's expectations of an employee.
 - Policies and procedures make sure teams agree to the behaviours and internal rules expected of the team.
 - Teams should include a mix of skills, knowledge and personality traits.
- Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.
 - The responsibilities and tasks of team members will depend on the goals of the department or organisation. ★ Yes ★ No
 - Most people can multi-task and perform more than one task at a time. ★ Yes ★ No
 - Prioritising means considering all the competing demands and working them into the requirement of the team within a given time frame. ★ Yes ★ No
 - Cohesiveness in a team means having team members with a variety of skills, knowledge, abilities, age, gender or cultural backgrounds. ★ Yes ★ No
- Which of the following are organisational requirements relevant to teamwork? Select all that apply.
 - Tasks outlined in a position description
 - Ways to behave and show respect to others, as outlined in a code of conduct
 - Style and layout of the office
 - Processes for ordering stationery
 - Reputation the organisation has with its customers
 - Requirements set out in workplace policies, such as use of social media

4. Which of the following are ways to plan work tasks effectively? Select all that apply.

- Always arrive before the team leader.
- Make a list of things that have to be done and complete them in the order the tasks were given to you.
- Make a plan for the work day and place the tasks in order of priority.
- Make sure to read every email as soon as it arrives.
- Use software tools to help manage and schedule tasks.



Topic 2

Contributing effectively to team goals

'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' This African proverb is relevant to working in a team.

A team works towards achieving common goals. To facilitate this process, you will have to contribute ideas and information to the team, and share your knowledge and skills to increase the chances of success. You will need to support each other in the process.

One way to do this is to be an active participant in team planning discussions. Share your ideas and skills to provide feedback to assist with the planning effort.

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A Contributing to teamwork
- 2B Sharing knowledge and skills

2A Contributing to teamwork

Team goals are objectives that the team sets around work performance.

They provide directions both for your work and for the workload of your team. With clear goals there is less chance of confusion about what needs to be done. Goals provide targets and can motivate and inspire collaboration among team members to reach those goals.

Before you can begin to plan your work, consider:

- What goals are you working toward?
- What is your role and what are your responsibilities?

Regardless of the industry you work in or the nature of your responsibilities, you will always have goals and objectives that must be met.



Different types of goals

Often, your work goals will lead towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organisation as a whole.

Organisational goals can come from the following sources.

Strategic goals

- Broad goals for targets the business hopes to achieve.
- Can include short-term goals (to be achieved within a year) and long-term goals (to be achieved within a five- to 10-year period).

Operational/functional goals of the department

- Each department sets its own operational goals to support the achievement of strategic goals.

Team goals

- Each team in the department sets its own goals to support the achievement of the operational goals.
- Usually quite broad and do not relate specifically to day-to-day tasks.
- Overall goals usually have set targets, but a team should develop specific goals that identify tasks to be completed along the way.
- These goals may be written as a team charter with defined team goals.

Team member goals

- Individual team members can set their own personal goals to support the team to achieve its objective and perform well in its role.

Team outcomes

Different goals have different outcomes of what they hope to achieve for the department or organisation as a whole.

Here are some examples.

Internal team goals

- Team motivation
- Team satisfaction
- Innovation

Operational goals

- Quality standards
- Efficiency of operations
- Productivity
- Risk management
- Customer service and experience

Marketing and sales goals

- Data collection and analysis
- Conversion of enquiry to sale
- Marketing exposure
- Number of sales

Financial goals

- Cost saving
- Profit
- Investments

Sustainability goals

- Involvement with community
- Recycling
- Sustainable practice

Example

Objectives and goals

The following table shows the main goal of a business, the objective that will help it meet this goal and the specific goals of three teams in the business.

Organisational goal	Organisational objective	Team goals
To successfully grow the business	Identify new opportunities and increase the range of products and services	Finance: Optimise use of resources and cash reserves Sales: Explore new market opportunities HR: Build dedicated staff with appropriate skills and knowledge

Setting goals

There are several ways that goals may be determined.

One way is using the SMART method. This method for setting goals is outlined here.

Specific



Goals must be well defined and clear to everyone involved.

Measurable



There must be clear and specific outcome indicators to track progress towards the goal.

Attainable



Goals must not be set that exceed the team's capabilities. Each team member must be able to participate in the goal-setting and decision-making process so you can all agree on achievable aims.

Relevant



Goals must be relevant to the work you do and the purpose of your team and department.

Time-framed



Goals must have a time frame. For complex or long-term goals, setting key milestones on the time frame will help the team to achieve them. Goals need to have a clear amount of time dedicated to them.

Responsibilities to achieve goals

Once the team goals are identified, you must clarify how your responsibilities help the team to achieve its goals.

Determine what your role in the team is by considering the following questions:

- How can I support the team to achieve its goals?
- What expectations do I have about my role and work performance?
- How will I know if I am doing a good job?
- Is there something that I should not do?

Determine the responsibilities you have, such as:

- Perform your job according to standards
- Complete a task as instructed and within time lines
- Share your knowledge and skills with the rest of the team
- Report any issues or give constructive feedback
- Be punctual at work
- Participate actively in team meetings
- Demonstrate team values

To clarify how your role and responsibilities work with other team members, ask your supervisor questions such as:

- Who is responsible for what in the team?
- How do we make sure we all do our job according to plan?
- Who can help with what?
- How do roles interrelate when achieving the team goals?

The responses to these questions will give you a good understanding of how you fit in a team that is working towards achieving common goals.

Team planning process

Team planning requires team members to come together to discuss objectives, goals and a plan to achieve them.

Team planning may happen at regular intervals during the year as scheduled by the team leader when a specific objective needs to be achieved. For example, there may be an identified need to increase sales to clear old stock from the warehouse.

The whole team is involved in this type of discussion to:

- provide original and expert input into the planning process
- feel part of the decision-making process
- increase the level of motivation and buy-in within the team
- give all team members clear and agreed directions and guidelines.

A team planning process may include these steps.



Contributing to team meetings

To be a valuable team member, ensure you contribute ideas and information in team planning meetings.

Share your knowledge and listen to the advice and expertise of others. Any potential problems or barriers to achieving the goal and ways to overcome those barriers can be identified and discussed as a team.

Each team member can contribute to the discussion with ideas about:

- Tools – Technology, systems or processes to improve work performance
- Trends – Insights about market and industry trends
- Competition – What competitors are doing and how this could affect the organisation or team
- Policies and regulations – Requirements or changes in legislation, industry standards and policies
- Customer feedback – How satisfied customers are with products and the level of service
- Team dynamics – How well the team members are working together
- Team performance – How well the team is performing
- Issues – How to resolve specific issues that have occurred in the workplace

To contribute effectively to team planning discussions:

- Research one of the key topics beforehand or divide up the research tasks amongst the team.
- Apply design-thinking techniques – Define the problem clearly before attempting a solution.
- Consider how your own skills, knowledge and expertise can support the discussion.
- Seek advice – Ask your supervisor how you could better contribute to the discussion.
- Learn from mistakes and errors made by you and the team.

Team planning discussions may use the following methods to get the best from each team member:

- Think, pair, share – Think about a topic, discuss it with a teammate and share the outcome of your discussion with the rest of the team.
- Breakout groups – Small groups of team members focus on a specific topic and then report back to the team.
- Brainstorming – The group discusses a topic to generate ideas and the discussion is facilitated by the team leader or an external consultant.
- Six thinking hats (facts, emotions, benefits, ideas, process, cautions) – Each team member plays a different persona in the discussion (such as the creative or reflective persona).
- Meeting – A traditional team meeting with agenda items to be discussed and action items to be agreed on.
- Quality circle – A group of employees that perform similar work, who meet to identify work-related problems.

For planning sessions to run efficiently and productively, your team leader may suggest that each team member consider the following:

- Think as 'we' rather than 'I'
- Listen actively to what others say
- Keep an open mind
- Be a role-model for others
- Be aware and respectful of others' reactions and feelings
- Do not be biased
- Provide constructive feedback
- See the discussion as a learning opportunity
- If unsure, seek clarification
- Speak up
- Seek consensus



Example

Meeting agenda

Here is an example of a simple meeting agenda that could be used in a planning meeting.

Front Desk Planning Meeting Agenda		
Location:	Boardroom 1	
Date:	12/8	
Time:	9:00 am	
Chair:	Jim Smith	
Minute taker:	Mark Black	
Agenda items		
Agenda item 1	Review the operational plan for the client services department – Client Service Manager	1 hr
Agenda item 2	Plan team goals for next year	3 hrs
Agenda item 3	Delegate responsibilities for each goal	30 mins
Action items		
Action item 1	Update team charter based on changes to the operational plan	12/9
Action item 2	Compile team goals in a report and distribute to the team	19/8
Action item 3	Each team member prepare a schedule outlining task priorities	19/8



Practice task 3

Question 1

Match each team goal to the action required to meet that goal.

- * To reduce the time taken for orders to be processed
- * To respond to enquiries accurately and consistently
- * To be an ambassador for quality customer service
- * Provide outstanding customer service to clients according to set standards
- * Lead by example and represent the company effectively when dealing with clients
- * Prioritise and respond to enquiries in a timely way

Question 2

Match each type of goal to its example.

* Project team goal

* Respond to customer requests for information within set deadlines and according to company's standards

* Organisational goal

* Improve the time taken to respond to customer orders

* Individual team member goal

* Increase the number of orders from existing customers and the number of new customers

* Departmental goal

* Increase profits based on higher productivity and sales

Question 3

Which of the following statements relate to contributing ideas in team planning sessions? Select all that apply.

- A small group representing the team can develop and agree on the directions and guidelines for the team.
- Team meetings may address how the team is working together and the way it is performing.
- Consider how your own skills, knowledge and expertise can support the discussion.
- A facilitator can run a brainstorming activity that generates ideas in a group discussion.
- Always begin the meeting with clearly defined final outcomes.

2B

Sharing knowledge and skills

You can share your knowledge and skills in many ways.

Your knowledge, skills and attributes describe your competence and abilities to be an effective employee and a valuable team member. Each team member has an individual set of knowledge, skills and attributes that they can contribute to the team.

Knowledge	Skills	Attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theoretical information required to complete a task Involves understanding concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical application of knowledge in the workplace Based on practical experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innate traits or talents of a person Quality of being able to do something better than others

Each of these competencies are linked:

- Your knowledge can be defined, explained and shared with others, such as explaining how something is made and functions.
- We apply our knowledge when we demonstrate our skills, such as showing someone else how to do something.
- Some knowledge and skills are more difficult to explain and share with others because they are innate attributes or gained through personal experience, such as knowing something will not work if applied in a certain way based on past experience.

Key workplace skills

Your workplace skills and abilities are likely to cover many different areas.

The following types of skills are commonly required in workplaces.

Communication skills

Includes written and verbal, interpersonal, electronic and non-verbal communication.

Examples:

- Talking to other team members
- Sharing ideas and discussing concepts
- Resolving problems
- Writing reports and other documents
- Creating electronic documents and communications (such as emails)
- Presenting information to a group

Teamwork skills

The ability to work towards achieving team goals as a member of a team.

Examples:

- Collaborating with other team members
- Liaising with other departments
- Sharing information with internal and external stakeholders

Industry-specific skills

Specific, industry-related skills that apply to your own work area.

Examples:

- Financial management
- Data entry
- Using specialised equipment
- Operating software packages and programs

Coaching, training and mentoring

One way to ensure knowledge and skills are shared is through coaching and mentoring.

Often training is arranged in response to an identified gap in the team, such as lack of knowledge or skills needed for a current or upcoming project. Some teams are given formal training through an external organisation or specialist. Informal training is usually conducted by other team members or in-house specialists to improve the knowledge and skills of the team.

Informal training may include coaching and mentoring, and interactions with your supervisor or team leader. These training methods allow effective sharing of skills and knowledge in the workplace.

Coaching

Coaching is usually a short-term type of training about a specific task. It may follow a formal structure, so that the process to perform the task is repeatable and easily understood.

Your supervisor plays a critical role in identifying your strengths and weaknesses. On-the-job coaching can help a worker in a new role. Supervisors are also a great resource to coach and develop you in weaker areas and with skills development for new tasks.

Mentoring

Mentoring can happen on a longer time line that focuses on soft skills and attributes. It helps you to understand where you fit in the organisation, how you can use and improve your strengths, or address your weaknesses. To work effectively, it requires building a relationship of trust between you and the mentor.

Not everyone has to be a mentor or coach, but being a buddy for a colleague or a new team member can help this person understand their role and responsibilities, how the organisation works and how they fit with the team.

Offering support

Support can take different forms, such as emotional or motivational support.

One of the most important forms of support is sharing your knowledge and skills.

Always remember that you are part of a group of people with different skills, knowledge, expertise and personalities. Working in this diverse environment requires all team members to share their knowledge and skills to enable effective teamwork.

In a team environment, support is a two-way process. You should never shy away from asking for support. Your team members are there for you as much as you are there for them.

Emotions

Apply emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is your ability to manage your emotions and the emotions of others.

Motivation

Encourage and motivate your fellow team members to complete their tasks and embrace the team culture.

Knowledge

Share your knowledge and skills freely with the team.

Inclusion

Help other team members feel welcome and part of the team. Allow each team member to have their say and share ideas.

Workload

Share your workload with others if you are overwhelmed and reciprocate by helping others with their tasks.

Feedback

Provide input and feedback into ways work practices can be improved.

Availability

Be available to your teammates. Take the time to offer advice and assistance if it is requested.

Example

A mentor's support

Rob works as an office assistant in the litigation department of a law firm. One of his tasks is to arrange meetings for staff, internal committees and clients. When he was first appointed, he was shown the procedures, and soon demonstrated he was good at his job.

Rob knows he can improve in his role, however. Sometimes people complain that they don't receive their papers on time or are not notified when a meeting time has changed. Rob jots down some questions he has about meeting arrangements, then approaches Hanvi, who works in another department and has years of administrative experience. He asks her if she has some time to discuss the situation.

As a mentor, Hanvi is able to:

- establish a trusting relationship
- offer advice to Rob based on his current needs and future plans
- encourage Rob to pursue his learning
- motivate Rob to take initiative and the occasional risk.





Practice task 4

Question 1

You are attending the yearly team planning meeting. The team leader asks the team to brainstorm ideas to improve the level of customer service provided to clients.

Which of the following statements are ways to share information and support others in the team? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Team members need data on the team's performance. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Each team member must prepare a research paper ready to present to the team. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Every team member should be provided with a chance to have their say. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Feedback can be provided on the ways work practices can be improved. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| e) It may become evident that the team needs training due to an identified gap in knowledge or skills. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Question 2

You are coaching a new receptionist on how to answer the phone according to the company's standard procedures.

Select true or false for each of the following.

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a) You may coach the new employee by having them take a call while you listen and provide them with feedback after the call. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| b) You may mentor the new employee by explaining the task and letting them practise until they perfect the task. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |



Summary

- Each team member contributes to the team goals, and must understand their responsibilities for supporting the team to achieve these goals.
- Goals can be identified by reading the organisational strategic plan and the departmental operational plan to understand the big picture.
- Team goals often come from operational goals, marketing and sales goals, financial goals, or sustainability goals.
- Individual responsibilities to achieve team goals include:
 - working towards the performance standards of the job and completing the task according to set time lines
 - reporting issues
 - providing constructive feedback.
- As a team member, you are expected to contribute ideas and information during planning discussions.
- Supporting others in the team is key to team effectiveness and involves different types of support, including sharing your knowledge and skills with others.
- Two types of informal training in the workplace are coaching and mentoring.



Learning checkpoint 2

Contributing effectively to team goals

1. Which of the following statements relate to your responsibilities to achieving team goals? Select all that apply.

- The team charter usually includes team goals.
- To achieve team goals, work hard on your own to ensure you get all the work completed on time.
- Speaking with the team leader and other team members can help you understand the team goals better.
- You are only responsible for achieving your own goals, not the goals of the team.

2. Why should team members be involved in planning discussions? Select all that apply.

- To make them feel part of the decision-making process and increase the level of motivation in the team.
- To provide input and feedback on the team's performance.
- To help the team make changes to be more productive and efficient.
- They provide an excellent opportunity to socialise.
- So that everyone has a chance to contribute their skills and knowledge.

3. Match each term about sharing knowledge and skills to its definition.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| * Formal training | * Theoretical information required to complete a task. |
| * Mentoring | * Practical application of knowledge in the workplace. |
| * Informal training | * Structured training often conducted by an external organisation. |
| * Knowledge | * Unstructured training often conducted by a specialist in the organisation. |
| * Skills | * A short-term type of training about a specific task. |
| * Coaching | * A type of training that focuses on soft skills and attributes. |

4. Which of the following enable effective teamwork? Select all that apply.

- Encourage each team member to problem-solve on their own.
- Ask a team leader or other team member to coach you on how to perform a task you are unfamiliar with.
- Provide constructive feedback by outlining what is being done well and ways to improve.
- Give emotional support to a team member by offering encouragement.
- Ensure all team members feel included and respected.



Topic 3

Working effectively with team members

Effective teams are driven, committed and have a high level of collaboration.

Working effectively with team members requires effective communication and respect for diversity. Communication is part of every organisation's day-to-day operations; if it is insufficient or excessive, it can result in an ineffective team. This in turn has an impact on workplace relationships, overall productivity and achieving business goals.

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A Communicating clearly and respectfully
- 3B Communicating with team leaders
- 3C Identifying and reporting issues

3A

Communicating clearly and respectfully

Effective communication is one of the most important skills in an organisation.

It allows companies to be productive and operate successfully. Information must be consistently and accurately relayed up and down the reporting lines within an organisation.

Effective communication within the team is just as important. The way people communicate may need to be adapted to suit the team or individual team members. This will help to ensure a respectful and harmonious work environment.



Types of communication

In every industry or occupation, communication occurs continuously through sharing information by writing, speaking, listening and responding in a variety of settings.

For communication to occur, there needs to be a sender and a receiver. The message will be sent via the voice, email or body language and it is then decoded by the receiver. There can be obstacles that prevent the message from being understood.

Communication can occur in a variety of ways, including:

- in a face-to-face private conversation
- over the phone
- via email
- via videoconferencing
- during a discussion in a meeting
- online
- in a written letter or report.

Each of these is likely to involve one or more of the following forms of communicating.

Verbal

Speaking allows people to interact with one another and articulate ideas quickly. Listening is an essential part of effective communication.

Non-verbal

Involves body posture, facial expressions and gestures. When used in conjunction with effective verbal communication, you can add passion to your language. You can also perceive a person's emotional state.

Written

Writing can be formal or informal. Make sure you follow the organisational guidelines when writing emails, reports and other organisational documents.

Visual/graphic

This is represented by ideas that are expressed in the forms of written language, diagrams, artwork or even signs.

Improving your communication skills

Effective communication involves a number of factors.

Consider these factors to help you improve the way you communicate with others in the workplace.

Purpose

Always be very clear about why you communicate and what you want to communicate. Define the message carefully.

Actively listen

This requires you to listen with all your senses. It is important that you are seen to be listening and comprehending.

Value a difference of opinion

Understanding the way people think can challenge a team, but without these different views there would be no room for innovation.

Follow up

Follow up on important conversations with actions. This helps to build trust.

Be brief

Try to communicate your message in a brief and concise manner whenever possible.

Rephrase

Rephrase your message in different ways, especially if it seems like the receiver is not understanding the content.

Ask questions

Ask for clarification from a supervisor or team leader if you are unsure whether you have understood the information correctly.

Adjust your communication style

You may need to communicate differently to someone based on their communication needs (such as speaking English as an additional language or their role in the organisation).

Share information

Keep relevant personnel informed, keeping privacy and confidentiality in mind.

Be kind, courteous and polite

Be respectful when dealing with others from diverse backgrounds and with different roles in the organisation.

Summarise

Sum up the message or the outcome that was reached to make sure everything has been understood.

Recognising diversity

Every workforce is diverse.

Diversity refers to the differences between people, such as age, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion or social background. Communication is a major tool that can produce a harmonious work culture.

When communicating with a diverse range of people, you should be mindful of the following.

High vs low context culture

Low context cultures rely on facts. They are direct and individualistic. High context cultures focus more on interpersonal relationship and group work; therefore, building personal trust is essential.

Non-verbal differences

Gestures and non-verbal messages are used differently in different cultures. Make sure to learn about these differences when dealing with a colleague from a diverse cultural background.

Language

Even when a colleague speaks your language, consider that it may not be their first language. Pay attention to the accent and be kind with them, understand their difficulty when they speak or write to you.

Generation

Different generations often have different ways of communicating; for example, baby boomers may be more formal and rely less on social media to communicate.

Values

Conflicting values may emerge when working with people from a different background. For example, a teammate may value a more structured schedule than a flexible one, or be less formal in the workplace.

Stereotyping

It is easy to stereotype when you don't have knowledge of someone different from you. Always try to learn and understand others before assuming stereotypes are correct.

Communicating effectively

Communicating effectively means noticing and responding to the emotional cues that someone gives.

When others you communicate with have different cultural backgrounds from your own, be aware of the way you communicate and ensure your message is understood the way it was intended.

Here are some things you can do when communicating to make sure the communication is meaningful and effective:

- Learn about the other person and show that you are interested in learning about them. Knowledge is key to removing communication barriers.
- Be patient and give the other person time to express themselves. Speak slowly if someone's first language is not English, but not so slowly that you make the other person feel uncomfortable.
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication and consider that when you decode non-verbal signals, they may not mean what you think they mean.
- Use plain English whenever possible and avoid using slang and jargon.
- Find other ways to give information if verbal communication is not working, such as writing things down and allowing time for the person to read, and then ask questions to clarify they understand.



Disability

Every employee is protected against discrimination based on disability.

Workplaces must provide employees who have a disability with an environment that can support them in their work-life activities. Many people in Australian workplaces have physical needs or a disability. For example, individuals may have a physical, sensory or intellectual disability or may experience cognitive impairment due to a disease or condition.

Disabilities may relate to one or more of the following areas.



Some people are unable to hear or verbally communicate. They may use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies, such as using pictures to represent words or sentences, a machine that works with symbols or an electronic device that speaks for them. There are also aids that can assist people to use their computer, including:

- headsticks
- light pointers
- modified or alternate keyboards
- switches activated by pressure, sound or voice
- touch screens
- special software, including voice-to-text software.

The organisation must ensure all staff have appropriate channels to communicate effectively. When speaking with a person with a disability, make sure you focus on the person, not their disability. You can show your support by offering help, but the individual may want to do things on their own and may not want assistance.

Some points to consider when supporting people with a disability, either physical or mental, are outlined below.

Physical disability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise that most people with physical disabilities do not have intellectual disabilities as well.• Provide the person the opportunity to make decisions about the products and services that best suit their needs.• Focus on what the person can do, not on what they can't do.
Mental disability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat people with intellectual disabilities with the same respect and courtesy as you treat others.• Avoid talking to people in an overly simplistic and patronising way.• Encourage decision-making and self-determination as much as possible.

Collaboration

Collaboration involves communicating and supporting each other by sharing skills and knowledge.

By collaborating effectively, you can be an active team member. Good collaboration in the team allows the team to achieve its goals.

There are three main types of collaboration:

- **Team collaboration:** Collaboration within the team to achieve team objectives.
- **Community collaboration:** Building a strong team community based on learning from each other to increase the overall knowledge and skill level in the group.
- **Network collaboration:** Collaborating with individuals and teams outside the team, both internally and externally to the organisation.

Actions to take to collaborate with the team
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead by example; be the first one to collaborate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have agreed and clear roles and responsibilities so everyone knows who does what and why.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use technology effectively when collaborating, and make sure staff have the training and skills to use the technology.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build trust in the team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrate the strengths of diversity in the team.

Actions to take to collaborate with the team
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate openly and be transparent by sharing information as this will build an environment of trust.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to the feedback and ideas of others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share your experience, knowledge and feedback with generosity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolve conflicts promptly in a timely and fair manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrate achievements in the team to create a sense of accomplishment and make the team feel appreciated.

Working remotely

A virtual team is where one or more team members work remotely or offsite.

This includes team members who work from home, or from a different geographical location. Efforts need to be made to make the remote worker feel part of the team. If they are working on difficult projects or have issues as part of their role in the team, they need to be able to collaborate with and feel supported by the rest of the team.

Having a remote worker in a team can sometimes cause challenges for team collaboration. Below is a list of some typical barriers and ideas that you and your team can use to resolve those issues.

Communication

- Consider time difference and delays.
- Choose the technology that works best for the team.
- Document and share work.

Structure

- Have clear work processes.
- Use project management apps.
- Manage expectations of roles and responsibilities.

Distrust

- Make work tasks clear.
- Ask for reports on work completed.
- Allow for people to learn new things.

Culture

- Involve the remote worker in decision-making .
- Involve the remote worker in team conversations.
- Invite them to social gatherings.

Technologies for collaboration and team work

There is a large range of systems available for digital communication.

Some communication technologies are used when all parties are present in the same building or office. Some need to be adapted to meet the special needs of team members, including those who work remotely, but need to stay connected with the team.

Personal preference or experience can determine which device is chosen for work outside of the office. Each team will need to decide which type of technology will best meet their needs for each situation. Any new technology introduced to the organisation will require training so that every team member is able to use it effectively.

Here are some examples.

Smartphones and tablets



These devices are useful for emails, text messages, voice messages and various apps. Sometimes a phone call is better than a text message as it allows for two-way communication and an instant response to a query.

Video or web conferencing



A range of web-based programs are available for holding online meetings, training sessions or presentations. Web-based meeting programs are particularly useful to organisations that have staff working offsite or remotely. Examples include Skype, Zoom and GoToMeeting.

Project management apps



Used to keep track of the team's progress. Some examples are Asana, Trello and Podio.

File-sharing systems



These are used to share electronic files. They also allow a number of users to work in a document at the same time. Information-sharing tools such as wikis, Google Drive and Microsoft SharePoint include a version control system that prevents people from undoing each other's work and also allows you to track changes to show exactly who did what (and when).

Note-taking software



These can convert handwritten notes into text. Examples of these apps include Simplenote, Microsoft OneNote and Evernote.

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)



These are communication boards for spelling out or pointing to words. They may include voice amplifier or voice output aids, and computer access aids such as headsticks and modified keyboards.

Example

Using technology to work remotely

Staff at Larger Than Life have a meeting every three weeks to coordinate the promotion for their client, Omega. This meeting involves representatives from several departments. The team uses a web-based meeting program to conduct its meetings. Each attendee has a web camera and microphone attached to their computer. They can see each other and speak freely over the internet. They can electronically share documents with other attendees. In cases where it is hard to clearly understand what is being said, they can type information that displays on the computer screens of the other attendees.

Team members can later print a transcript of any information that was typed during the meeting and use this to prepare the minutes of the meeting. The meeting can also be recorded and shared with other employees using a podcast.



Practice task 5

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to communicating effectively with the team? Select all that apply.

- A report that contains graphs and tables is an example of non-verbal communication.
- A bad connection to the internet can be a barrier to effective communication.
- Active listening requires listening carefully and giving full attention to the speaker.
- A colleague with a disability may prefer to do things on their own and may not want assistance.

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- a) Technology needs to be chosen according to the needs of the team and not just one of the team members. * Yes * No
- b) Each team can choose a different type of technology that will best meet their needs. * Yes * No
- c) It's no use having technology that nobody knows how to use or what situations it works best in. * Yes * No
- d) Video conferencing works well for meetings, training sessions or presentations to staff working remotely. * Yes * No
- e) The cloud allows staff to share electronic files and allows several users to work in a document at the same time. * Yes * No

3B

Communicating with team leaders

As a team member, it is also your job to contribute to the improvement and maintenance of a healthy and productive working environment.

In order to do this, you should consider the responsibilities and needs of the team, including the team leader who, like you, experiences the day-to-day consequences and impacts of work.

Deadlines, heavy workloads, personal issues and miscommunication all contribute to increased stress levels and lack of trust, which impact on the efficiency of a team. As a team member, it is your responsibility to not only make sure you understand what is expected of you, but also to communicate those expectations back to your team leader. You need to bring to the surface any doubts, questions or suggestions that might be relevant to the task. Giving and receiving feedback can save a lot of time and prepare the team for any issues that might occur.



Receiving and confirming task instructions

Effectively receive and confirm understanding of your task instructions.

When team leaders delegate a task to someone, they expect the task is going to be completed competently and efficiently. Unfortunately, some team leaders fail to communicate all the expectations of a task, which ultimately affects efficiency. Make sure you ask questions if any details are omitted.

Here is some information about giving and receiving instructions.

Written instructions

Take time to read all instructions carefully and to re-read if necessary. Pay special attention to dates, times, quantities and format requirements.

Verbal instructions

It's a good idea to take notes when given verbal instructions, especially if they are long and complicated. If necessary, request that the person giving you instructions repeat them. To confirm understanding of what you've been instructed to do, you may need to repeat the instructions verbally back to your team leader.

Analyse and acknowledge the information

Consider the information and ask yourself, 'Is this enough for me to complete the task?' If not, take note of all the questions or concerns you have and pass them on to your team leader. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Your team leader may have forgotten to specify certain information and will appreciate your attention to detail.

Consider your current workload before agreeing to a task

Taking on more work than you can manage is not a sustainable practice. In the long run, it will wear you out, potentially resulting in issues in your team or organisation. Take a moment to determine if the task assigned to you can be accomplished within the parameters of your established role.

Communicating personal commitments

Communicate any personal commitments you have that may affect your work in a timely manner.

Everyone has personal commitments and unexpected circumstances that may arise as part of day-to-day living, including:

- medical appointments
- family issues
- financial constraint
- social activities.

Sometimes these commitments add more pressure to your workload. They may even take a mental or physical toll. In some instances, they may generate so much stress that you are unable to carry out your daily activities. At other times those extra stressors might take up additional time in your schedule and interfere with your work.

For this reason you should communicate any commitments that may impact your work to your team leader as early as possible to minimise impact. Your team leader may decide to extend deadlines or delegate some of your tasks.

In the case of an emergency or unexpected commitment, make sure it is communicated immediately.



Giving feedback

Feedback should be treated as an opportunity to improve, not a criticism.

Learning how to provide and seek feedback can help you collaborate better in your team. Feedback is the cheapest, yet most powerful and underutilised tool at your disposal in the workplace. It can help you and your team members get on track and it serves as a guide to assist people to know how they and others perceive their performance.

Feedback is motivating and energising when delivered from a trusted colleague or manager. Positive feedback increases employee satisfaction and productivity.

Whether feedback is positive or negative, it should always be:

- informative
- timely
- specific
- constructive.

Tips for giving feedback

- Be specific and timely.
- Give praise when it is due.
- Be honest and sincere.
- Show understanding and reinforce positive behaviour.
- Provide factual information about a situation or task, not the individual.
- Focus on the message you are trying to convey, identifying what you want to achieve.
- Avoid criticising. Withhold any negative judgments and empathise with the other person.
- Keep feedback clear and logical, and avoid abstract or vague statements.
- Respect the other person's right to respond and take the time to listen to their view.
- Give feedback at an appropriate time and place, such as in a private meeting room.

Receiving feedback

Feedback can be requested at any time.

Feedback is one of the best sources of information. Asking for it helps you to better understand what is expected of you. It shows you are interested and committed to your team or organisation and allows you to make changes to improve your performance.

Asking for feedback shows that you are open to constructive criticism, which creates a more comfortable and open space for communication between you and your team members.

Tips for seeking feedback

- Let your team leader or colleagues know you'd like to receive feedback so they have time to prepare.
- Specify the areas on which you would like feedback. You can even have a set of questions pre-prepared.
- Types of questions you could ask include:
 - How do you think I could communicate better?
 - How would you approach this if you were me?
 - Why do you think I struggle with this task?
 - What aspects of my work do you think I could improve on?

Tips for receiving feedback

- Listen actively, paying attention to the person and what they are saying.
- Be appreciative and respectful to the person giving you feedback.
- Ask questions to clarify information.
- Reflect on the feedback you have received and what you can learn from it.

Example**Requesting feedback**

Joel has been working at an engineering company for six months. The office is very busy and his boss has little time to assess Joel's progress in the job. Joel has received a number of supportive comments, particularly after solving software problems or locating missing files. However, Joel needs more specific feedback to become more efficient and develop his skills.

He decides to make a form, shown below, giving a list of his tasks, with a column where the level of satisfactory performance for each task can be estimated. He distributes the form to his colleagues. The concrete, easily measurable parameters he has used will allow him to compare his performance and check his progress.

I would appreciate your assistance with providing me feedback about my performance. Please spend a few minutes to complete this form and return it to my desk by Monday 6 September. Please nominate a number from 1–5 next to each task to indicate your level of satisfaction with my work, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

Thank you.

- Joel

Tasks and behaviour	Level of satisfaction (1-5)
Mail pick-up	
Filing	
Answering the phone	
Keyboarding	
Design	
Willingness to take on extra tasks	
Customer service	
Comments:	

Acting on feedback

Feedback that isn't properly acted on can lead to frustration and conflict.

People generally go through three distinct stages when they receive feedback.

Reaction

During the reaction stage, pay close attention to your emotional reactions. Sometimes what you hear might not be pleasant and your instinctive reaction might be to defend yourself. However, this isn't the time to defend your actions, it's the time to listen actively and to ask questions that help you better understand the other person's perspective and expectations.

Reflection

Reflection is very important. Without it, feedback is useless, and personal and professional growth are unachievable. If necessary, take some time to reflect calmly on the feedback received. Remember to keep an open mind and try to leave ego and opinions aside. Ask for detailed information on specific issues and how you could approach tasks differently.

Respond

Always respond in an appreciative and forward-thinking way. Suggest different options and solutions. If you disagree with anything, express yourself respectfully and with the information to support it. Discuss and agree on the next steps to be taken, and thank the person for providing their feedback.

You then need an action plan to determine how you can improve based on the feedback you have received. Ask yourself:

- Do I need training, coaching or mentoring?
- Do I need to access counselling services outside work?
- Do I need time off?
- Is there any support in the organisation that I can use?
- How much time will I need to improve?
- Is there a cost attached?
- Can I ask the organisation to fund my personal development?

By answering the questions above, you will be able to design an effective action plan to respond to the feedback you have received.

Example

Developing an action plan

Here is an example of a simple action plan to document actions arising from feedback.

Action plan		
Date:	5/8/2019	
Feedback received	Need to improve cross-cultural communication.	
Improvement goals	To improve cross-cultural communication skills within two months.	
Development needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-cultural communication • Cultural intelligence 	
Actions		
Action 1	Enrol in and complete online course about cross-cultural communication and cultural intelligence	Deadline: 1/10/2019
Action 2	Ask supervisor to mentor me in cross-cultural communication in the workplace	Deadline: 4/10/2019
Outcome		
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of course within deadline. • Mentorship from supervisor continues. • Positive feedback from client and colleagues on cross-cultural communication skills exhibited at work. 	Date: 6/2/2020
Additional improvement:	NA	



Practice task 6

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to communicating with team leaders? Select all that apply.

- Write notes about verbal instructions you have received.
- If your team leader forgets to tell you something, do not ask for further details as this will only embarrass them.
- Communicate any personal commitments as early as possible.
- Respond to feedback with actions that show forward thinking and an improvement in your work.

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to communicating feedback in a team? Select all that apply.

- Minimise the impact on the team by communicating your personal commitments as early as possible.
- Your team leader will get angry if you have to leave in a hurry for a personal emergency.
- Feedback helps you understand your level of work performance and what is expected of you.
- Asking about specific issues will point out your weaknesses and can lead to you losing your job.

3C

Identifying and reporting issues

Identify and communicate any issues you come across.

As a member of a team, you are required to complete tasks on a day-to-day basis. As a result, you may have a subjective view of every situation at any given moment. Very few tasks in a team are done in isolation as collaboration and resource-sharing is essential. You need to identify and help to resolve issues as early as possible to avoid escalation and minimise impact on the team.



Identifying issues

Understand where and how issues might be generated.

A team or workplace is a complex structure and is an environment where issues can arise. There are processes and procedures to follow, personalities and relationships to manage, and equipment to use and maintain. Any one of these can falter or break down unexpectedly.

Some issues that you might experience in your team or organisation are outlined here.

Unexpected incidents

For example, the internet is down and there's a backlog of unsent emails or a key team member has called in sick and the project deadline is looming.

Failing processes

Sometimes processes that have been put in place to help accomplish certain tasks have weaknesses. This can contribute to miscommunication, delays or conflict, and frequently leads to a task not being completed on time.

Personalities and relationships

The most complex part of any team is the human component. Different personalities and relationships within a team are a frequent source of issues if they are not managed correctly by the team and organisational leaders. Often individuals don't effectively manage themselves. A large proportion of conflict at work is due to personality differences.

Client complaints

Whether you provide a product or service to another company or to individual customers, complaints are always going to be part of your day-to-day operations. You need to know how to manage and respond to complaints if and when they arise.

Lack of effective communication

Communication may be impaired by many issues in the workplace, including:

- lack of adequate communication processes or technology
- lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities
- conflicts within the team.

Excessive workload

This can occur during times of change for an organisation, or due to lack of planning from the company's leaders. Excessive workload causes stress, leading to increased absenteeism and potentially generating conflicts in the team.

Methods your team will use to identify issues include:

- key performance indicators (KPIs)
- project-management software programs
- daily or weekly meetings
- feedback from clients or other team members
- first-hand observations.

Issues and conflicts are sometimes necessary to point out the team's or organisation's weak points. An individual team member should not be solely responsible for solving any issues. Once the issue is communicated to the team leader, the team can work together to solve the issue. This will contribute to the team's cohesion.

Reporting issues

Reporting issues helps to foster team performance.

Reporting is not simply the act of notifying someone that something is wrong; a good report should be a comprehensive and informative assessment of the issue, which can help the person in charge to either find a solution themselves or appoint the task to someone else. Keep in mind that your opinion is not the basis of the report because you might not have a complete perspective of any given situation.

For example, you might be having a hard time working with a team member because they haven't completed the budget you need to make the department's purchases. Instead of communicating that the team member is inefficient, you can say that due to delays in the reception of the budget, you haven't been able to purchase the necessary resources. Then it is up to the team leader or coordinator to determine what the cause of the delay is and what actions to take. It is possible that this delay may have been caused by external factors like a missing approval.



Reports may be:

- written, such as in an email or paper copy
- made via phone or video conferencing
- provided in a hard-copy or online form
- given face to face to a supervisor or team leader
- communicated in team or staff meetings.

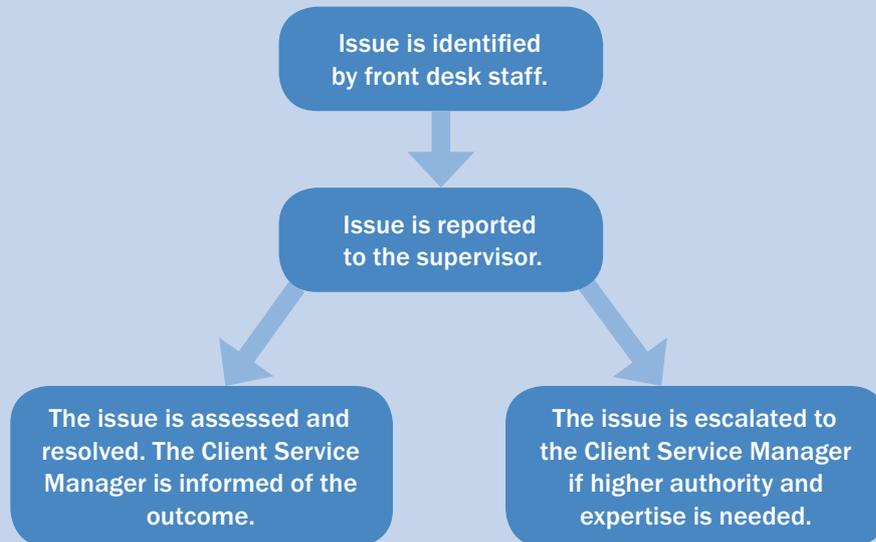
If an issue is brought up in a meeting or one on one with your team leader, a follow-up report can be sent to make sure all team members are aware and agree on what was discussed. Informal conversations about issues usually mean there are no actions taken. If an issue arises during an informal conversation, make a note of it and address it in a more formal way afterwards. Remember that some issues might not be directly related to your work, but may have an overall impact on your team and on you.

Urgent issues should be reported immediately to minimise the impact on your team. This may require a phone call or immediate face-to-face meeting, and can be followed up with a written report. Always follow the organisational policies and procedures for reporting issues.

Example

Issue-escalating process

Here is an example of a simple issue-escalating process that could be used to identify and report issues experienced by the front desk team.





Practice task 7

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You work as a receptionist as part of a front desk team that includes a supervisor and client services manager.

One day your supervisor comes to you and asks you to complete the following task: 'Call 50 clients to confirm that they have received a promotional email from the company giving 20 per cent discounts on their next service purchase.'

Question 1

Do you have all the information you need from the instructions that the supervisor gave you? If not, what additional information would you ask for?

Question 2

How would you confirm understanding of the instructions?

Question 3

How would you advise the supervisor of any personal commitments preventing you from completing the task?

Question 4

Number each step from 1 to 4 in the correct order to identify and report an issue.

The supervisor informs the client service manager of the outcome.

The supervisor assesses the issue and resolves it with the cleaning company.

You report the issue to the supervisor.

You have observed an issue at reception: the cleaner is not collecting the recycling waste and it is building up.



Summary

- Communication comes in many forms; it may be verbal, non-verbal and visual.
- To become a better communicator in the workplace, you should listen actively, ask questions, learn how to summarise and rephrase, and value different opinions.
- Communication should be tailored to the receiver.
- Working in a diverse environment requires you to understand the value of cross-cultural communication.
- A diverse workforce includes team members who may have a disability.
- Effective collaboration includes working with the team to achieve goals, building a community based on a learning environment, and networking with other teams and external stakeholders.
- A virtual or dispersed team is where one or more team members work remotely.
- To be effective, feedback should be specific, honest and timely. It should focus on the situation and not the individual.
- Once you have received feedback, act on it and take steps to improve.
- When reporting issues, make yourself familiar with the reporting procedures currently used in the organisation and follow appropriate protocols.



Learning checkpoint 3

Working effectively with team members

1. One of the members in your team works remotely two days a week. When delivering a task, he has made several errors in writing a document.

How can you provide constructive feedback to the team member and improve the way you work with him?

2. Which of the following statements about effective communication are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Your opinion is more important than the opinion of others and it needs to be heard. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) When communicating with someone from a different culture, pay attention to their non-verbal communication. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) When communicating with a person with a disability, you should always see the person, not the disability. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Learning about someone's cultural differences or disability will help you to improve your communication with them. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

3. Which of the following statements relate to effective collaboration in a team? Select all that apply.

- Clear goals give directions to team members.
- People working remotely don't need to be included in team meetings.
- Technology is key in helping teams work effectively.
- If you learn new information, you should keep it to yourself so that you can take credit for a new idea later on.
- Sharing work experiences increases the level of knowledge in the team.

4. Which of the following statements about working with a remote team member are correct? Select yes or no for each one.
- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) File-sharing software helps to track productivity and work that has been completed. | * Yes | * No |
| b) Phone calls are not necessary these days as you can always text what you want to communicate. | * Yes | * No |
| c) A remote worker can feel part of the team if technologies like video conferencing are used when collaborating or discussing team issues. | * Yes | * No |
| d) Technology can be used and adapted to meet the individual needs of each team member. | * Yes | * No |
5. Which of the following statements about receiving and confirming understanding of work tasks are correct? Select yes or no for each one.
- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) Once you have received instructions for a task, there is no need to review them. | * Yes | * No |
| b) When receiving verbal instructions, it is good practice to take notes. | * Yes | * No |
| c) You can complete any task, independently of your currently workload. | * Yes | * No |
| d) It is good practice to confirm the understanding of instructions in writing. | * Yes | * No |
| e) An urgent task may require you to immediately confirm you understand. | * Yes | * No |
6. Which of the following statements relate to communicating about personal commitments in a timely manner? Select all that apply.
- Personal commitments should be communicated well in advance.
 - Personal commitments should always be kept private.
 - Personal commitments may add stress to the daily workload.
 - Personal commitments that aren't likely to interfere with your work should be communicated to your supervisor.

7. Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order you would follow to identify and report an issue preventing the completion of workplace tasks.

The supervisor assesses the issue and consults with relevant personnel.

The issue is escalated to a higher level or resolved implementing an action plan.

The issue is observed and defined.

The issue is reported to the direct supervisor.

8. Match each term about the type of issues that may prevent the completion of work tasks to its definition.

* Poor communication

* Issues that are not expected or planned for.

* Failing processes

* Issues with work procedures/processes.

* Team conflict

* Issues related to the clash of personalities and values.

* Unexpected events

* Issues related to negative feedback from clients.

* Complaints

* Issues related to ineffective communication in the team.