

How to be a likeable colleague

Starting a new job, or looking to strengthen your relationships at work? Increasing your likeability around your office or job site is simple when you follow these essential dos and don'ts.

- **Do get to know your teammates.** No member of your team is an island – so getting along with your coworkers is crucial. Take the time to ask your colleagues about their weekend, and take an interest in their life outside of work. Smile. Make an effort to learn the names of their children, and make small talk about their obscure hobbies. Have a sense of humour.

Chatting with your coworkers and being a friendly human in general will go a long way towards being likeable and building a great rapport with the rest of your team.

- **Don't be a creeper.** Being friendly is one thing. Being a bit creepy is quite another. In your quest to be more likeable, avoid asking overly personal questions, and be aware of everyone's personal space. Getting in a colleague's bubble can be invasive and awkward, and is a sure-fire way to find yourself avoided in the lunchroom.

If you struggle with boundaries, a great rule of thumb is that a congratulatory high five is a great way to show support. A shoulder rub on the other hand will get you hauled into a meeting with HR.

- **Do be a team player.** You and your colleagues may be working on different projects, but you're all working towards a common goal – the success of the organisation. Compliment coworkers when they've done a great job, stay on top of your workload so others rarely have to pick up the slack, and offer to help when you have time.

Being a team player will help you win friends at work, and ensure you get the support you need when you're under the pump.

- **Don't be a know-it-all.** There's a fine line between offering helpful suggestions and getting on the last nerve of each of your coworkers, so tread lightly. You may think the way John files accounts is counterproductive, or feel Jane's phone manner could use some work – but insisting they try things 'your way' can come across as a tad controlling.

Being helpful is great, but learn to read the room. If you sense your colleague would prefer to do something their own way, leave it at that and get on with your to-do list.

- **Do bring food.** They say the fastest way to a person's heart is through their stomach – and never was this truer than when getting to know your coworkers. A box of doughnuts here or a fruit basket there can do wonders for your likeability at the office, so don't be shy about shouting morning tea once in a blue moon, or organising a workplace bake-off where everyone contributes.
- **Don't offer unwanted dietary advice.** You may be able to list the top ten superfoods to help you maintain mental clarity and productivity through the late afternoon. You may know the dangers of eating refined sugars and starches like the back of your hand. You *may* have the best of intentions when you consider offering this information to colleagues as they scoff a quick pie at lunch or crack an energy drink at 3pm.

Don't. Nothing loses you friends at work or alienates people more quickly than uninvited advice about nutrition, or lack thereof. Unless someone specifically asks you about your lunch, keep your love of quinoa to yourself.

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