

# Maximizing Member Contributions



When people feel valued and part of the team they are more engaged, happier in their work, and give better contributions. Those who feel isolated or undervalued often become emotional, require attention, and ultimately leave. So how do you maximize the contributions of each of your team members?

1. **Know your members** – Each individual on the team is a unique combination of strengths, weaknesses, interests and fears. Each started from a different place in life, and is going through their own set of circumstances currently. Don't expect them to all perform the same.
2. **Set them up for success** – Once you know your members, you can match tasks and responsibilities to those who have those strengths and areas of interests. Recognize that someone who is passionate about their work will happily contribute more than they are required.
3. **Create a solution-oriented environment** – When you fix the problem, you emphasize the solution and foster the team. When you fix the blame, you emphasize the problem and fracture the team. Nothing destroys a team faster than firing up the “blamethrower.” So praise in public, punish in private, and encourage members to come forward to discuss “good catches” (catching an error before it becomes a problem).
4. **Encourage growth** – At all ages of life, people enjoy learning ... particularly if they can choose their own topic. Learning opportunities can be both formal (classes, certifications) or informal (mentor-mentee relationships, personal research). You can also encourage growth by giving members the space to succeed or make (small) failures. Be clear about the intended end result, but give wide latitude in means and methods. Micromanaging exhausts everyone.
5. **Acknowledge achievements** – Don't wait for milestone events. Catch members doing well. While formal awards and certificates are great, a sincere and individualized thank you can be just as effective.

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