

GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR COWORKERS

Facilitator's Guide

Written by Barri Golbus

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The World of Work:
GETTING
ALONG WITH
YOUR COWORKERS

SERIES OVERVIEW

Why This Series Has Been Produced

The world of work offers many challenges to young people. Finding an appropriate vocation, conducting a fruitful job search, and understanding what it takes to have a successful job interview are only a few of those challenges. Once the new worker finds a job, other formidable tasks present themselves. This is especially true for first-time workers whose skills and understandings may be deficient in three crucial areas —

- how to function successfully in the work environment,
- how to relate well with supervisory personnel, and
- how to be a team player.

The World of Work has been produced to help young people find appropriate jobs. It also has been produced to build the skills needed to perform successfully in the work environment. While the information is broad-based, and is applicable to virtually all job situations, the producers have taken special care to give concrete examples to help viewers understand what may be unfamiliar concepts (such as the necessity of showing up on time, every day). The skills covered are applicable to both public and private sector settings.

Intended Audience and Uses

This series is intended for young people and unemployed or under-employed individuals unfamiliar with the basic skills needed to perform successfully in the work environment. The program has been designed to be used in the following settings:

- High school job-training programs
- Vocational schools
- High school vocational and distributive education programs
- Welfare-to-work programs
- Job training programs at penal institutions
- Juvenile detention centers that stress job training.

Materials

The World of Work Series contains --

- four video programs
- four facilitator's guides, one for each program
- overhead masters and blackline masters.

SYNOPSIS OF *GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR COWORKERS*

The computer equipment in a telemarketing firm crashes. A faulty switching board should have been replaced before the first shift, but the employee responsible for picking up the board has overslept. When he finally arrives, his reception is less than enthusiastic. The program's host and hostess explain that this is but one example of how employees' behaviors and attitudes affect their coworkers. The video then explains the best way to fit in with your coworkers is to behave in a responsible manner and be friendly and courteous. Being responsible entails showing up every day, on time. More experienced workers realize that absenteeism and tardiness can negatively impact salary and benefits. Being responsible also means calling your supervisor if you're going to be late or absent so he or she can make arrangements for someone to cover for you. The program then moves on to goofing off, which, it is explained, can cause hard feelings. Horsing around also can cause workplace accidents. The program then discusses safety. Viewers are encouraged to follow their organization's safety rules, including wearing safety clothing and special safety gear, if needed. Other safety issues covered include those involving drug abuse and office procedures. Finally, the video deals with conducting personal business on company time – and how doing so can cause resentment among coworkers.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and completing the suggested activities, participants should be able to do the following:

1. Explain why it is important to show up on time, every day.

2. Tell why employees must phone in if they are going to be late or absent.
3. Explain why each person in the organization depends on his or her coworkers.
4. Give three reasons why goofing off is not a good idea.
5. Name at least five workplace safety rules they are expected to observe.
6. Tell at least three reasons why drug abuse is prohibited while on the job (and at least three others that explain why drug abuse is a bad idea outside work).
7. Explain why conducting personal business on company time may create hard feelings among coworkers, and is dishonest.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION PLAN

1. Introduction

If appropriate, review the information in the other programs of this series. Stress the importance of teamwork. Then, ask the sports fans in your group whether they can explain why championship teams function so well. Why is it that some teams have enormously talented members, but never win a championship? What are the crucial factors that must be present before a group is able to do its best and operate on a championship level? Help your group understand that on championship teams, each person does his or her assignment, and all the other members of the team know it. They *trust* each other to do the assigned tasks. If one member of the team does not do his or her assignment, the bond of trust is

broken, and the team does not operate on a championship level. For the same reason, that is why it is crucial for each person do his or her job in the work place.

2. Previewing Activities

Tell your group that they will now see a program entitled “Getting Along With Your Coworkers.” Place the “What You Will Learn” transparency on the overhead projector. Go over each item. Hand out the “Viewers’ Concept Guide, Getting Along with Your Coworkers.” Tell the participants that everyone will be expected to know the answers to the questions after they see the video. If you feel it is appropriate, go over each question.

3. Show the Video

The presentation lasts 12 minutes.

4. Post-viewing Activities

Discuss the three items on the “What You Will Learn” transparency. Then have the group answer the questions in the “Viewers’ Concept Guide, Getting Along with Your Coworkers,” either as an individual or group activity. In either case, review and discuss the answers in detail. Next, discuss Ted Arquette’s behavior. If you feel it would be helpful, replay the opening of the program, asking your group to pay close attention to Ted’s attitude and behavior. Note his cavalier attitude toward the computer’s switching board – tossing it as he leaves the building and throwing it through the window, onto the front seat of his car. Is Ted thinking how his actions might impact the other members of his organization? Then turn your attention to the reactions of the information systems department head and the technician. Why are they so upset? Help your class understand that the department head and technician are responsible for the system’s operation, and Ted’s attitude

and behavior have negatively impacted their ability to carry out their responsibilities. Have members of your group speculate on the problems (other than the telemarketers' lost income) Ted's attitude and behavior may have caused. Mention the company's lost income, the possible inability to meet a client's sales goals, and the possible consequences of that inability. As the discussion continues, it should be apparent that one person's failure to perform a task can create a "domino effect." After the discussion, hand out "How My Coworkers Will React." Instruct the participants to complete the exercise, then have everyone read and discuss possible answers. Next, pass out "True Tales of Goofing Off." After everyone has completed this exercise, have individuals read and discuss their answers. Then, distribute "Safety on the Job." Have the participants complete this exercise, then discuss it. Next, have the group read and complete "Diversity in the Work Place." Discuss what everyone has written. Finally, as a review activity, pass out "Attitudes & Behaviors Matter." Have your group do this exercise and discuss what they've written, including their personal mission statements.

PURPOSES OF THE HANDOUT MATERIAL

Viewers' Concept Guide, Getting Along with Your Coworkers: To help participants focus on the main concepts of the presentation.

How My Coworkers Will React: To help viewers understand that their attitudes and behaviors carry on-the-job consequences.

True Tales of Goofing Off: To help viewers realize the possible consequences of goofing off.

Safety on the Job: To review common safety procedures.

Diversity in the Work Place: To foster an understanding of diversity issues in the work place, and to help viewers see the positive aspects of a diverse work force.

Attitudes & Behaviors Matter: To underscore the concept that a worker's attitudes and behaviors affect the entire group.

ANSWER KEY

Viewers' Concept Guide, Getting Along with Your

Coworkers: 1. Behaving in a responsible manner, being courteous and friendly 2. Shows you're responsible and tardiness may cause hardship, and decrease profitability (and thus chances of raises and more fringe benefits 3. (see 2) 4. Call your supervisor or other designated person 5. Dangerous and can cause hard feelings among coworkers 6. To lessen risk of injury and death to yourself and coworkers 7. Increases risk of injury and death, can create legal problems for yourself and your organization 8. Impacts productivity, causes hard feelings 9. An open mind, a willingness to learn and appreciate differences among people, and an attitude of tolerance and acceptance

How My Coworkers Will React: Although answers will vary, the following may be considered appropriate – 1. They will be resentful. New workers are often given jobs others don't like to do. 2. Much as the administrative assistant in the video, they may not care to see a coworker goofing off while they're working hard. 3. He may think that Patricia is unwisely overstepping her authority.

True Tales of Goofing Off: 1. Maria may be unable to escape and be caught in the fire. Casey would therefore be responsible for her injuries or death. 2. There is a good chance Philip will be caught because most systems require a

log-in procedure or an identification when ordering. He will be held responsible for the system crash, and may be disciplined or fired. (3) Manuel may be electrocuted. Sammy could be held responsible.

Safety on the Job: Answers will vary.

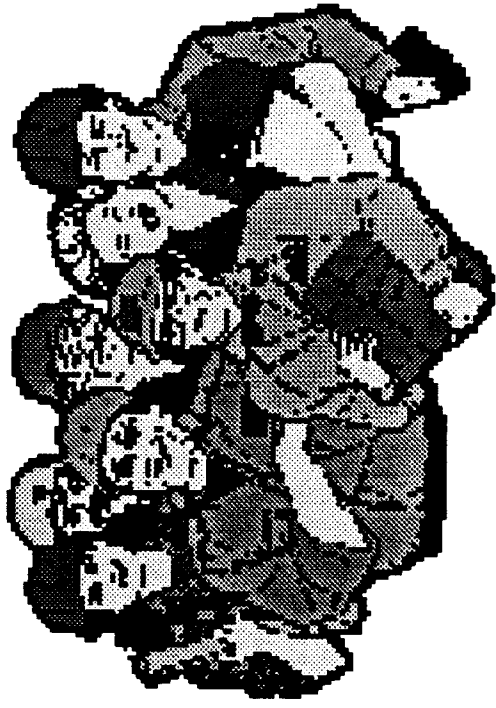
Diversity in the Work Place: Although answers will vary, there should be some mention of a sincere attempt at understanding. Sensitivity training, listening to others and their points of view, and holding both formal and informal discussions are all possibilities.

Attitudes & Behaviors Matter: Answers will vary.

Notes

What You Will Learn

- **Work Habits Your Coworkers Will Appreciate**
- **Behaviors Your Coworkers Won't Appreciate**
- **The Importance of Safety**



Name _____

Viewers' Concept Guide, "Getting Along With Your Coworkers"

Directions: Write your answer in the provided spaces. If you need more room, write on the back of this paper.

1. Generally, what two behaviors will help new workers fit in with their coworkers?

2. Why is it so important to show up on time?

3. Why is it so important to show up every day?

4. What should you do if something unexpected happens, and you have a legitimate excuse for being late?

5. Name two reasons why goofing off at work isn't a good idea.

6. Why is it so important that all workers obey the safety rules?

7. Why is drug abuse a bad idea at work and elsewhere?

8. Why is conducting personal business on company time a bad idea?

9. Working in a diverse workforce requires what three things?

How My Coworkers Will React

Directions: Read the situations below. Then, in the provided boxes, answer the questions that follow each situation.

1. Bob, a new employee, has been assigned to take care of the used soft drink containers in the break room. He's supposed to put them in the recycling bins and place the bins by the trash containers twice a week. After about a month, he says that isn't what he was hired for, and ignores the job. *How might his coworkers react?*

2. Carlos is a shipping clerk who aspires to be a professional juggler. When things aren't too busy, he takes small packages and practices his juggling. The shipping department is next to the assembly area, which is always busy. *What do you think the assembly line workers' reactions might be?*

3. Patricia works at a fast-food pizza establishment, where one of her duties is to drain the hot, excess fat from the ovens. Derrick helps her. Patricia tells Derrick that she's thought of a better way to drain the fat, even though it departs from the standard procedure. Derrick wants to check with the supervisor first, but Patricia says the supervisor is never open to new ideas. *If you were Derrick, how would you react?*

Name _____

True Tales of Goofing Off

Directions: Read the situations below. Then, in the provided boxes, tell what the results could have been.

1. Casey and Maria work in the housekeeping department of a major hotel chain. Casey secretly is smitten by Maria's charms. To get Maria's attention, Casey decides to take some bed linens and tie her to a chair in one of the rooms she cleans. Maria is not impressed, especially when the fire alarm goes off.

2. Philip R. works as a data entry clerk in a large accounting firm. Sometimes the work can get boring, so Philip downloads games from the Internet. When boredom strikes, Philip plays the games. A new game appears on the Internet one day, and although it takes massive amounts of disk space, Philip downloads it. When he calls up the game, the system crashes.

3. It's near the end of lunch break, and Sammy C. and Manuel H., two receiving dock workers, decide to play some nerf football. Sammy decides to play a little joke on his buddy. He takes the ball from his locker, goes into the men's room, and soaks the ball in water. He returns, and passes the ball to Manuel. Manuel misses, and the ball lands on a fork lift that's charging nearby. When Manuel retrieves the ball, he gets a very big surprise.

Name _____

Safety on the Job

Directions: Think of a job you'd like. Read the safety rules and check the boxes that would be appropriate for that job. Then, in the blank spaces, place any other important safety rules that could be geared to that job. Use the back of this sheet, if necessary.

- Read your organization's safety rules and procedures.
- Wear a hard hat.
- Wear safety glasses.
- Wear protective foot gear.
- Know the location of the nearest first aid station.
- Learn CPR.
- Report unsafe conditions to your supervisor.
- Think safety constantly.
- Report potentially risky procedures to your supervisor.
- Wear ear plugs or sound deadeners.
- Wear a dust mask.
- Make certain all hazardous material is properly labeled.
- Make certain all hazardous material is properly sealed and stored.
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Diversity in the Work Place

As the world shrinks, the work force becomes more diverse. Many North American and European work places are particularly diverse. In some areas, it's not uncommon for workers to come from a half dozen countries – sometimes more. Yet, in the world of work, every person is a member of the team. When differences get in the way of achieving team goals, everyone loses. Many experts believe that diversity in the work place can be a big advantage if team members can learn to respect each other's beliefs and traditions. If we are open-minded, diversity gives us a chance to see the world from different perspectives, thereby broadening our outlook. When we see things differently, we become open to new ideas. And new ideas are crucial for organizations to survive and compete.



Working with people from different backgrounds can pose many challenges. The first is communication. Not only is word usage often different, but non-verbal communication can be different, also. Facial expressions and body movements may be completely misunderstood. ***In the space below, discuss ways to overcome both verbal and non-verbal miscommunication.***

Religious differences may pose workplace challenges, too. For many of us, religious convictions are deeply imbedded in our belief systems. It's easy to feel that those who do not share our religious beliefs are somehow inferior. ***In the space below, discuss ways to overcome religious roadblocks.***

Racial differences are still another source of tension in some work places. Racial prejudices are part of the history of many countries. ***In the space below, discuss ways to overcome racial hostility.***

Name _____

Attitudes & Behaviors Matter

Most people are social. We tend to form groups and take on group behaviors. When a group member acts in ways that undermine the group's cohesiveness, or behaves in a way that lessens the group's ability to achieve its goals, that person is often shunned.

All of us have encountered people with negative attitudes, or those who act in ways that negatively impact group cohesiveness. In the space below, tell about that person – what he or she did, and how it affected both you and the group. Then, in the box, write a personal mission statement regarding your attitudes and behaviors on any new job you might take.

My Personal Mission Statement