

7 Tips for Working Successfully with your Partner



1. Start Things

Right: Before you start working

together, you need to introduce yourself and get to know each other a bit. Learn each other's work styles and personality traits by taking the quiz together: <https://hbr.org/2015/01/assessment-whats-your-personal-productivity-style>. Communicate a plan of how assignments will be completed. The only way you're going to work well together is if you both agree to a system from the get-go. Simply divvying up tasks over an email is not enough.

Schedule a time that works for both of you to hammer out your system--whether that means splitting the individual tasks down the middle and coming together at the end, or setting aside time each day to work collaboratively on tasks. Both of you need to agree to the general outline you put together, and that includes a mutual timeline. Set clear expectations about how you expect to work together, and set an atmosphere of respect and appreciation.

2. Be Open About How You Work Best: You might be tempted to try and accommodate the other's person's work style at the cost of your own, but that isn't always the most productive system. Your work preferences are important, and you need to express those openly. Bringing up your preferences isn't necessarily a demand that they must be met, but your partner can't hope to understand your strengths and weaknesses if you don't present them. Likewise, if there are areas where you aren't comfortable working or areas where you don't have much expertise be

open about it--it isn't an admission of weakness so much as it is an acknowledgment that an alternative work system would be more advantageous.

3. Listen to How They Work Best The flip side is you must actively learn how your partner works best, and do what you can to accommodate those preferences, strengths, and weaknesses. Don't interrogate them, but feel free to ask questions about what they've found to be helpful and unhelpful in their past teamwork assignments.

You shouldn't expect your partner to bend over backward to accommodate your preferences, and likewise, you don't have to go out of your way to accommodate theirs. But it is important that you acknowledge these qualities, and work together to find a compromise. For example, if one of you prefers an even split of tasks and the other prefers collaborative work on each of them, consider doing the first half of the project one way and the second half of the project the other way.

4. Spend Some Time Together: One of the best ways to improve your teamwork skills is to spend some personal time with the other party. This is especially helpful if you're completely unfamiliar with the other person. You don't necessarily have to be friends, but work environments can prevent people from opening up, and it's much easier to work with someone if you already have a connection to them.

5. Manage your Reactions: Before you react to anything surprising, take a step back. It's important to manage your reactions and logically assess the situation before you respond. Otherwise, you could make a bad impression and introduce tension and resentment unnecessarily into your working relationship.

6. Keep Each Other Accountable: Just like you each have different preferences for how you work together, each of you'll have a different system for staying accountable. But when you're unfamiliar with the other

person's work history, it's important that both parties work to keep the other responsible.

How you go about this is completely up to you. If you're splitting up tasks, you can follow up with your partner to ask them for any items they've missed, or upcoming assignments. If you're working together, you can have regular meetings about your progress and review any materials or items that are outstanding or road blocked.

7. Provide Lots of Feedback: Feedback is one of the most important pieces of the unfamiliar working relationship. It's impossible to know how your partner feels about your end of the work unless they express that information to you. Objective, clear feedback is the best way to communicate this information, free of charged emotion and intended solely to improve productivity. Provide feedback to your partner at regular intervals throughout your assignments so your partner has time to learn and make adjustments before you're too deep to change anything. Likewise, it's important to ask your partner for honest feedback about your own practices.

Adapted from: <https://www.inc.com/jayson-demers/8-teamwork-tips-for-working-with-unfamiliar-coworkers.html>