

How to Maintain Strong Relationships With Your Colleagues

Relationship Special: Relationships with colleagues are interesting. Sometimes they're work friends, sometimes they become friends outside of work, or they may just be people you work with. Different stages of your life and career will likely have an impact on how these relationships function and evolve



It's not surprising that research shows social connections at work have a positive impact on productivity, as well as people's willingness to stay at a company. Getting along and being friends with your colleagues is good for you *and* the business.

Smiles everyone!

We're not saying you have to be best friends with everyone at work, but treating people with respect, being kind and offering help when you can makes work feel a little less "work like".

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Basic tips

It seems simple, but sometimes when we're stressed and busy, we forget the common courtesies. This happens at home and in the office, so you'll find a lot of these tips work in both places:



- Just like you tell the kids, 'please' and 'thank you' go a long way
- Look as if you're happy to be there
- Be nice to everyone from the CEO to the cleaner
- Treat the office like you would your home (maybe better). If you finish the last tea bag, tell someone, and don't leave smelly food out
- Keep your desk tidy, especially if you share it
- Stay out of the gossip trap, this isn't high school.

Tweeting and poking on social

Social media can be a career killer, or, at the very least, make things really, really awkward. Again, this seems obvious, but so many people get caught tweeting or posting things that land them in hot water. First of all, think before you connect with work colleges on social media sites. And secondly, remember everything you post has the potential of being seen.

If you don't want someone to read it, **don't post it!**

If returning to work from parental leave

A lot can change when you're away for a while. Be prepared for personnel changes and shifts in the office. Your own job may have changed and the people you used to eat lunch with may have moved on. Be sure to use your 'keeping in touch days' so it's not a total culture shock when you go back to work.

You're a parent now, everyone probably knows, so before you go back to the office, pop by with the baby, have everyone meet him or her, so that when you return to work you return as part of the working team, not just a mum or dad.

Part time should equal full respect

The biggest change may be if you return working part time. Most people shouldn't have a problem with it, as they should also be aware that with part-time-hours come part-time salaries.

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Let's face it. Some fellow workers may resent those they perceive as not working as hard as they are. The best way to keep your work relationships positive is to show them that you are working as hard, if not harder, than they are, and delivering targets on time.

Don't check out socially

Try to join in on the social goings on as well. If you can't make after work drinks, suggest a lunch or even a coffee for a birthday or leaving do you're going to miss.

It's all in the attitude

Remember, don't apologise for leaving early. Be confident, people will take their cues from you.