

An organisation is about the products it creates, or the services it provides, but an organisation is also about people, customers, consumers, and employees.

Without these, an organisation simply does not exist. As an employee, building positive relationships with people is as important a skill, as knowing how to forecast market trends, draft a proposal, or weld widgets.

Social awareness is an emotional intelligence competency that illuminates ideal social behaviors that are beneficial to the organisation, the teams in which we work, down to the individuals with whom we interact with.

When you are socially aware, you are able to identify key political relationships in your organisation, observe the unspoken rules at work and understand the values governing your organisation, relate to co-workers and customers regardless of differences, empathise with others and see their point of view even if it is different from yours.

Over the last decade, a lot of research has been conducted to show that individuals who develop these skills are more successful and more satisfied with their work. Having these social skills are a critical prelude to building and maintaining meaningful relationships in teams and interpersonally.

1 Be aware of others' negative moods and don't let yourself go there -

Emotions are contagious - both positive and negative ones. When a direct report is having a meltdown, consider taking him aside and letting him vent, or regain control. You will get greater productivity from all your employees throughout the day than leaving him to stew and lose focus.

Negative emotions are especially potent when it is a supervisor who is in a foul mood. Control your own reactions, striving to maintain an even, calm tone of voice no matter how loudly the irate person becomes. If your boss is ranting about impossible deadlines, for example, offer reassurance and confidence if you are certain you can get the work done. Your calm demeanour may be enough to calm others and keep a potentially mood-souring situation from occurring.

2 Become part of the grapevine

The office grapevine is an informal communications route that circulates organisation-related information that is important but not necessarily vital for everyone to know, so management doesn't formalise dissemination of information. Grapevine information can include when a new position emerges, who is on the short-list for promotion, when a partner or major stakeholder is pulling

out, or whether senior leaders are considering implementing a new IT system. It is an honour to be known as a person who knows what is going on in the organisation - someone others trust to have accurate information. Do not confuse the grapevine with gossip. Gossip does not serve the organisation. In fact, it is often judgmental, personal and mean-spirited.

3 Engage co-workers in conversation

You spend eight hours a day with your co-workers. It is natural to have genuine curiosity about the people you work alongside. Ask questions about a co-worker's interests, family, former jobs, future goals - whatever strikes you as interesting. Share insights into the kind of person you are. When you build a trusting rapport with others, you will find commonalities and a basis for deepening respect. Another perk to build relationships is that people who trust you, are more likely to keep

you informed when they hear important office news.

4 Network at all levels of the organisation

You never know when you will need assistance from any department in your organisation. Get to know the employees in the Printing department as well as HR or Marketing. Too often, ambitious people make the mistake of only networking up, ignoring peers and administrative staff. This is a mistake. When you are embroiled in a grueling deadline, it is not the senior team who will be at your side, crunching numbers, or reworking that million dollar proposal. If you have been dismissive of your peers and staff, you may find yourself completely alone with that deadline and mountain of work to do.

5 Say what you mean, but edit what you say

People may value honesty, but they respect tact. Speak your truth in a thoughtful and professional way. Even if it is Bob's fault that a deadline was missed, does it serve you or the organisation to name him in a public meeting? You can opt to meet with Bob, or Bob and his supervisor, later. The important thing is to air the error and get it resolved as quickly as possible. If you don't like a policy or process, get clear on what your objections are. Is it something that will impact the organisation negatively? Have others expressed similar concerns? Before you speak out, be sure of your facts and remain open to hearing the opposition's reasons for enacting that policy. There just may be some factor you have not considered.

- Compiled by
1Klassifieds Team

SOCIAL SKILLS TO Succeed AT WORK

Few people experience increasing success at work when they remain walled up in their offices or cubicles and keep their heads down, eyes focused solely on the work. If you want to succeed in your organisation, follow the five social skills above to stay on the right track.