

THE BUSINESS OF

Don't just 'get on' with colleagues – learn to love them!

BY KNEEZ BUKHARI

You will spend more time with your co-workers during your lifetime than with your loved ones or close friends. Which makes for a long workday when you don't feel you have any sort of connection with your co-workers. And although it's not always possible to handpick your co-workers, it is crucial to make the effort to cooperate and get on with the people you work with.

A good working relationship takes time and effort to initiate and maintain, but is more than worth it. A good working relationship makes your job that little bit easier and, hopefully, will also mean you get on with your colleague or colleagues out of the office as well. Bonding with colleagues can mean that you have someone to help you solve problems, provide advice, offer a listening ear when you need to talk something out and offer a different perspective on a particular issue. More than providing assistance, a colleague is often the best person to turn to at work when you need a friend.

In today's workplace, where teams form and disband with increasing speed, you may need to form relationships very rapidly in order to be able to work together amicably. It is easier to receive openness and honesty from those you work with if you offer it out. It takes emotional maturity and confidence to actively encourage, not

just a good working relationship, but a great one, and a supportive work environment helps. However, if you don't feel that you have an open and approachable office environment, it may be all the more reason to find and form those strong relationships with your colleagues.

While it's possible to work together effectively with colleagues that you don't actually get on with, it can make for a tense day and may affect the outcome of your work. Getting to know your co-worker, understanding their background and motivations can help to bring you closer and, consequently, make your working relationship easier. And the more senior your role, the more important it is to build connections with people by understanding their skills and experience and what you can both offer each other.

Think about how well you know the people you work with. Ask yourself how much effort you have put into getting to know them. If you don't get on with a particular colleague, think about the times you have connected with them and try to work out what it was that formed that connection. Was it a particular topic that you're both passionate about? Was it a work issue you both agreed on? Try and actively develop your relationship by letting them

know that you want to know more about them, you'll be amazed how people respond to the fact that you're interested in their lives.

If you need some ideas on how to go about 'getting to know' your colleagues, try these:

BONDING TIPS

- Put yourself in your colleague's shoes, try to understand their point of view and respect it even if it differs from your own.
- Treat all your colleagues equally. Getting on well with one person is great, but getting on well with everyone, no matter how high up or low down they are in the organisational ladder, is a skill.
- Don't gossip or bitch about other co-workers behind their backs. People will trust that anything they tell you won't be repeated.
- Spend time with your colleagues. Ask them out to lunch or for coffee. Listen to them and offer advice if it's asked for.



BONDING

