

Team Power!

Introduction: As a Jobs for Montana’s Graduates student, you are also a member of the Montana Career Association (MCA). The MCA is a student-led organization which provides team membership and leadership opportunities.

What is a Team?

A team is a group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose and goals for which they hold themselves accountable. Teams don’t just “happen.” Becoming a high performance team is hard work that requires individual contributions from everyone involved.

Why Should You Become a Team Member?

Employers have found that people working together as a team can accomplish more than the same number of individuals working independently. In addition, the team concept provides a more supportive environment for workers. The Montana Career Association provides an opportunity for you to learn to become an effective team member.

MCA membership provides an opportunity to:

- Make new friends
- Learn new skills and accept new responsibilities
- Develop character and prepare for a citizenship role through leadership development activities, workshops and conferences
- Work with others to set and accomplish goals
- Work towards defining a career choice by exploring many occupational fields
- Interact with professional business people and understand their needs
- Plan and enjoy social and recreational activities
- Serve the community by providing worthwhile services
- Gain recognition for your efforts through competitive events and other chapter activities
- Develop and practice leadership roles and responsibilities

How Do You Build and Maintain a “Healthy” Team?

First the team has to have a goal--a goal that is clear, worthwhile and to which members are committed. All team members need to be involved in setting the goals, be clear about what they are each supposed to do, and how they contribute to achieving team goals. Each member must understand his or her role in realizing the vision. In your Montana Career Association chapter, goals are set through a plan called the Program of Work, which encompasses four areas: leadership, career development, community service, and social activities.

Developing trust, respect and mutual support is necessary for the “health” of the team. A sense of mutual respect enables members to share responsibilities, cooperate, help each other out, and take initiative to meet challenges. Everyone’s roles and responsibilities should be acknowledged. Team members need to learn that others are counting on them to do what they committed to doing.

Decisions should be made by listening carefully to all team members and respecting their input. It is important that all members are encouraged to participate and to be heard. Problems or differences should be solved by using problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Team members need to practice good communication skills, i.e., speaking clearly and effectively, listening to others, and using feedback techniques to ensure that the message being sent or received is clear.

The “health” of the team can be checked by keeping communication channels open, managing conflicts when they arise, and evaluating the team’s progress toward the accomplishment of its goals.

What Are the Qualities of a Good MCA Member?

A good member:

- Attends all chapter meetings
- Participates in chapter discussions by offering ideas and suggestions but does not dominate the discussion
- Courteously listens to other members
- Does not get mad if things do not go his/her way
- Maintains a positive attitude
- Accepts responsibility and completes all jobs for which he/she is responsible

Discussion

How do you think the qualities of a good MCA member relate to the qualities of a good employee?