# Bulletin Board: Tips for getting along with co-workers

*by Maggie_Reed*

OK, the fact is that not all people play nice at the office.

Now, the question is, do you or don't you?

Do you take time to think about how co-workers think about you?

You don't? You should.

"The single most important thing to remember is to be considerate," said John Challenger, chief executive officer of global outplacement service Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. Really think about how your behavior is impacting others. Strive to be courteous, kind and understanding.

Here are some tips for being a better co-worker:

- Dial it down a notch. No matter what it is, reduce the volume of noises coming from your work space.

- Keep your ego in check. Face it, most of your co-workers don't want to be subjected to the endless reasons why you're so great. Wait to really earn a compliment. And even then, don't force it.

- Avoid office politics (Part 1). The office grapevine exists. Don't bite, even if it involves someone you dislike.

- Clean up after yourself. Don't leave dirty dishes in the sink and don't leave rotting food in the fridge.

- Silence it. The cell phone? Put it on vibrate. No one wants to hear your cute little ring tone over and over and louder and louder.

- Cut cube clutter. Don't let your fern or photos hang over into someone else's space.

- Avoid office politics (Part 2). Today's politically polarized environment makes discussing even the most innocuous issue a possible office controversy.

- Temper your toxicity. Don't let moments of your unhappiness blanket the office. Keep it under your hat.

- Good hygiene never fails. Scent-free offices seem to be more and more in vogue. However, just make sure you smell nice and don't offend.

- Keep the small talk small. It's important to bond with co-workers, but realize you are all there to do a job. Keep the small talk just that, small. By all means, share a quick story that will brighten their day, but don't plop down in a chair for an hour.

"The best environments to work in are those where people really get along and have built friendships in the workplace," Challenger said. "However, if there ever is an issue between co-workers, it's very important to recognize it and repair it."

- Never put others down to make yourself look better.

- Don't answer cell phone calls during meetings. Let the calls go and return them when you can. If you're expecting an urgent message, let the others know.

- Don't send voice mails that go on and on and on. Be quick and concise.

- Don't act like a bureaucrat. Making mountains out of molehills is certain to offend people.

- Don't read the newspaper or hammer on your laptop during meetings. Sure, you have other things to do. But if you stay focused during meetings, you might actually learn something.

- "I'm like, ya know ..." You are your words. Be conscious of how you use them.

- Don't do your bills at the office. You aren't being paid to manage your personal life.

- Don't skirt the dress code. Dressing for work has never been more complicated. However, just use common sense. Have two jobs? Lose or add the tie or jacket in between.

- Don't take it too easy on telecommute days. Telecommuting can really be a win-win situation if it's handled properly. Don't abuse it and don't give in to temptations - even if that temptation is throwing in a load of wash while working at home.

- Don't act unethically. It's easy to draw the line on major violations, but what about minor ones? Toe the line and set the bar high.

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