5 rules for effective teamwork

When you're collaborating with great people, it's important to make sure you gather everyone's best ideas and use their time and energy efficiently, says UpdateZen founder and CEO Paul Ruderman. Here are some of his "golden rules" for collaboration.

1. Show everyone respect. This should go without saying, but it's necessary to remind people sometimes. Apart from just being kind, it's good business to treat everyone with fairness and dignity. This will encourage positivity, productivity and loyalty, and help ensure people are less likely to leave your organization or department during tough times.

2. Champion polite disagreements. Not everyone will have the same thoughts and feelings about every project—and that's fine. Allowing people to share dissenting opinions or alternative ideas can lead to discussion and solutions that perhaps no one had thought of.

3. Always explain. When you have to make a decision not everyone will immediately agree; you should explain the reasons behind your choice. Doing so helps team members understand the big picture and their place within it, which will help keep them motivated and engaged.

4. Communicate in brief. If you're leading a project, delegate tasks and explain what needs to be done and why as briefly as possible. If you can't be brief, you may not have thought it through enough. Encourage brevity in status updates from team members, too. If an email gets too long, a phone call may be better. Don't be rude or curt; just explain what needs explaining in an efficient manner.

5. Get rid of toxic people. If someone in your organization, division or party planning committee is ruining it for everyone else, she needs to go—immediately. If you are in a position to fire her or get her transferred, do so. She probably isn't happy either, and you will never make her an ideal fit. It's not fair to the rest of the team to have to put up with negativity and other avoidable problems that limit their creativity and productivity.

— Adapted from "[The Seven Golden Rules for Collaborating with Great People](#)," Paul Ruderman, Lifehacker.