Science Societies

Make your team one people want to join!

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Creating a workplace environment based on mutual respect, diversity, and appreciation is an achievable goal. If you are building a team from scratch for a new project, office, or lab, there are a few things you'll want to prioritize. Or, if you are joining an existing work unit, bring value to your new workplace by demonstrating and expressing these qualities.

Mutual Respect

One of the best ways to create an environment of mutual respect is to demonstrate respectful behavior on a daily basis with you coworkers. Mutual respect in the workplace lets all employees know that they are valued for their achievements, abilities, and qualities. Being valued and treated respectfully helps to promote a positive work culture in which employees are fulfilled, loyal, engaged, and motivated to perform at their very best. Each time you interact with others, be cordial and kind. Respect the opinions of others and avoid using divisive language. Building quality professional relationships results in respect and trust—allowing for robust discussions and even professional disagreement at times without fear of negative consequences.

Diversity

This is something you may think you can't do much about until you have the opportunity to start recruiting or hiring. However, by increasing the diversity of your professional network, all parties can benefit. Diversity within a team has been proven to increase creativity and productivity while also resulting in better decision-making and higher employee morale. Diversity increases strategic thinking because teams of people who come from different backgrounds can draw upon their unique experiences and a wider range of knowledge to spark new, innovative ideas. Increase workplace diversity by gaining an awareness of existing unconscious biases, valuing others equally, and developing a recruiting strategy to increase the diversity of your team. You may also find that your employee relationships are stronger when coworkers can connect on a deeper level based on their backgrounds or shared experiences, improving workplace collaboration.

Appreciation

Building appreciation and gratitude into your daily work routine can have significant positive results. An increase in morale of those around you will be an obvious result, but there can also be benefits to employee retention, increased communication, increased productivity, and creation of a team-oriented culture. Appreciation can be as simple as a thank you! Just try it next time someone shares contact information for a colleague that may be able to help with a project or talks you through a new idea or drives the bus that gets you to work. Everyone likes a kind word and knowing that the things they do are appreciated. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

Bringing these three things into your workplace will make work more rewarding for you and those you work with every day.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is part of a series written by members of the Women in Science Committee, for all Society members. For more information, visit **www.agronomy.org/membership/women-in-science**, **www.crops.org/membership/women-in-science**, and **www.soils.org/membership/women-in-science**.

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