



TriMetrix®HD Sense of Belonging

Sense of Belonging

How motivated a person is by feeling like part of a team or a member of a group.

Why is this skill important?

Different cognitive values cause each person to have a different motivation. People with a balanced value structure tend to have more potential motivators for accomplishing things on the job and in their personal lives. A sense of Belonging is one cognitive value that motivates people to action—it is based on the importance a person places on being part of a team or group, and how strongly he or she wants to feel mutual respect with the people with or for whom he or she works.

You probably have known one or two "lone wolves" in your life, but the truth is that the majority of human beings are social animals. We like, get energy from and even crave interaction with other people, and we feel offended, insulted, or hurt if our efforts to connect with other people are rejected.

People who are motivated by a Sense of Belonging have a particularly strong need to feel like a valuable part of a team or work group. But these people aren't selfish at all—they are truly interested in respecting and appreciating the people they work with, and their ideal is to be part of a smoothly oiled machine that works almost effortlessly to achieve great results.

We all know that the perfect team is hard to find. It requires a great leader, committed team members, a shared sense of purpose, and a balance of knowledge and power. Even if you think the likelihood of these characteristics combining in YOUR workplace is EXTREMELY low, you can still work to increase your own—and your co-workers'—Sense of Belonging.

There are four main components of establishing an effective team that give members a genuine Sense of Belonging:

1. Group knowledge of corporate and departmental missions and goals, and how the team or group efforts contribute.
2. Belief in and commitment to the achievement of team or group efforts.
3. Mutual recognition of and respect for individual team members' strengths and contributions.
4. Active camaraderie within the workplace, regardless of the urgency of projects, goals, or specific team members.

What are skills associated with developing a Sense of Belonging?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with developing a sense of belonging:

- Is self-confident about his or her ability to contribute to a team or work group.
- Is an active, voluntary contributor to team or work group activities.
- Values the importance of other people's contributions to team efforts, and recognizes individual efforts in that context.
- Isn't selfish about knowledge, materials, or suggestions; expects others to share willingly as well.
- Is knowledgeable about, and believes in, departmental, group, and team missions and goals.

How do you develop your own Sense of Belonging?

- Make yourself more knowledgeable about your team or work group's strategic direction, and find ways to actively and positively contribute to the efforts.
- Volunteer to be a team or group leader.
- Be confident—share your knowledge, your laughter, your personality, and your skills.
- Stay in touch with your team or group members. Find out what people are working on, thinking about, and hoping for.
- Make frequent, valuable, VOLUNTARY contributions to your team or work group.
- Share information you have learned—this isn't to say that you should be a know-it-all, but if you learn useful details or new processes, don't hoard your knowledge.
- Don't think of department property as YOURS, but as the team's. Similarly, don't be stingy with your own materials, ideas, or equipment.
- Be appreciative and respectful of other people's contributions to your team or work group.
- Try to help resolve conflicts among group or team members effectively and rapidly.
- Participate in or initiate team brainstorming sessions.
- If you are a project team leader, de-emphasize your position of authority in team meetings—organize the gathering and guide its progress, but don't dictate or advocate too strongly for one position.
- Celebrate team successes, and analyze failures together with a view toward making improvements, not blaming for mistakes.
- Seek opportunities for formal communication among team members—staff meetings, regular weekly status reports, brainstorming sessions, follow-up meetings, etc.
- Seek opportunities for informal communication among team members—monthly luncheons off-site, brown-bag lunches in the break room, loosely structured "meetings" with your employees where they can choose the topics for discussion, etc.
- Think about the unique role you play in your team. Remind yourself of your value to the group, and keep up the efforts you make to contribute.
- Keep commitments that you have made to the team; likewise, don't make commitments you know you can't keep.

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Activities

Activity 1: Valuable Roles

Create a list of people with whom you work regularly. Fill in the chart below, listing each person, what his or her title is, and identifying at least one unique skill or attribute that he or she brings to the work group or department. Don't forget to include yourself on the list!

Person's Name	Title	Unique Skill or Attribute

Activity 2: Evaluating Your Team Membership Skills

Evaluate your own effectiveness as a team leader and/or team member. Evaluate the team atmosphere of a recent or current project you are collaborating on. If you are comfortable asking someone else's opinion of you, take this list to someone who has worked on a team with you recently and ask for their feedback on your behavior.

1. Does/did the team work well together?
 2. Is/was everyone's opinion considered carefully and respectfully?
 3. Have/did team members kept promises they made?
 4. Does/did the team include members from departments other than your own?
 5. Are/were your own actions consistent with your words?
 6. Have/did you ensured that your team's successes are shared throughout your organization?
 7. Do/did the team manage conflict productively, resulting in a better understanding of one another or the problem at hand?
 8. Do/did you practice your active listening skills?
 9. Does/did the team members feel comfortable with one another?
 10. Do/did you celebrate accomplishments as a group?
 11. Are there any other observations you can make about your participation in team projects?
- Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable working with others?
What do you think would help you be a more active and positive team member?

Activity 3: Informal Team Activity

Take the lead in organizing an informal team activity—it could be a department outing to an amusement park, a holiday party, a "gong show", or even just a monthly brown-bag lunch. Make arrangements for the event, communicate with everyone in your team or department, and follow through with plans the day of the event.

Activity 4: Lessons Learned

What three things do you think you are BEST at related to establishing a Sense of Belonging?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What three things do you think you are WORST at related to creating a Sense of Belonging?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What three things from this lesson do you think are MOST VALUABLE to you?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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