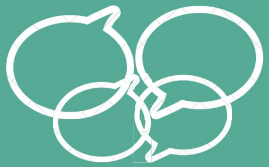


5 Ways to Connect with Your Team on a Personal Level

Communicate frequently



As a leader, communicating with your team is key. After all, it gives your team members the chance to ask questions, share ideas, and solicit feedback. As a result, they feel like they're part of the bigger picture – as long as you actively listen and act on their suggestions. (Even explaining why you're not able to act on them can go a long way.)

Go beyond "How are you?"



You need to dig deeper, asking open-ended follow-up questions. And those should delve into what's going on beyond work. Find out about their backgrounds and personal interests. You don't need to know every detail of their lives – and you shouldn't – but getting to know what sparks joy for them is an effective way of showing that you care about them as people, not just employees.

Help employees reach their goals



You can achieve this by creating an environment that fuels this type of growth. Have team meetings to discuss goals as a group. Host one-on-one meetings with individuals to hear about what drives them in their work. Ask about their goals outside work, too – someone who wants to run a marathon or seeks a writing outlet may trigger new ideas.

Recognize and celebrate



Don't forget to recognize your employees' hard work. Send a quick email thanking them for the thoughtful question they asked at the last meeting or acknowledging the improvement in their work. You can also surprise them with gifts that they'll either enjoy or become more effective with. Obviously, you can't celebrate every day. But when it comes to milestones and important dates a little celebrating can go a long way – even via a handwritten note.

Stop saying you don't have time



You should make time for your team. That doesn't mean always stopping what you're doing. But, in the grand scheme of a day, we all have five minutes to respond to an email or refer someone to a resource he needs. If the teammate needs more time than that, ask them to schedule a time to talk with you. It shows that you value your and their time, and you want to give them your full attention when you can.

