

## Productivity goals and strategies guide

Co-Worker Interactions (Team mates)

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### **1. Goal: Constantly determine, record, and share progress**

**1.1 Problem:** There's no method for determining and recording progress.

**1.11 Strategy:** Work with the teams existing plans, or a person who is managing the team's plans, to keep up to date records of what tasks need to be done, who is responsible for which tasks, and what progress has been made and update at beginning and end of meetings.

"Okay, who is working on \_\_\_\_\_? "

"Sara, how is \_\_\_\_\_ coming along?"

**1.12 Strategy:** Make sure everyone has access to progress records.

"I am going to email this to everyone so we all have it."

**1.13 Strategy:** Check off tasks as they get done.

"Great, you finished that already, let's check it off."

**1.14 Strategy:** Have regular team meetings to discuss progress, or send regular emails.

"It's time for our progress meeting."

"To: [Team@edu.psu](mailto:Team@edu.psu)

Subject: Team progress

Hi everyone,

Here's the weekly list of what we have already accomplished and what still needs to be done. Let me know if I missed anything. Also please let me know when you estimate to be finished with your current responsibilities so I can let the planning manger know.

Thanks

**1.2 Problem:** People are not doing their share.

**1.21 Strategy:** Decide from the beginning what actions the team will take if a member does not do their share.

"Okay, so we all agree that if for some reason one of us cannot participate equally then we should reassign that person's tasks and inform the instructor?"

**1.22 Strategy:** Find out what the problem is without judgment and see if the team can provide a solution.

“Debra, it seems like you are having problems finishing your tasks, what’s going on? Do you need help?”

**1.23 Strategy:** Work with existing plans to set deadlines and ask if they will work.

“We need you to have this done by Friday, does that seem doable?”

**1.24 Strategy:** Keep records of deadlines and when they are not met.

“That is the second time you have missed a deadline.”

**1.25 Strategy:** Discuss reassigning tasks to other members and informing instructor.

“We really need your help with this project, but if you just can’t do that right now, we can reassign your tasks and let the instructor know your situation,”

## **2 Goal: Use time wisely and stay on-task**

**2.1 Problem: The team is constantly off-task.**

**2.11 Strategy:** Remind people about important deadlines.

“When are supposed to have this done by again?”

**2.12 Strategy:** Ask questions that will point out the problem.

“Sam what are you doing and is this related to the project?”

**2.13 Strategy:** Make sure the team and sub-teams are on task.

“Have you guys finished that yet?”

**2.14 Strategy:** Keep records of members who are constantly off task for team records and evaluations.

“I don’t want to write down that you’ve been goofing off, but if you don’t start working I may have to.”

**2.15 Strategy:** Ask team members if they are bored and perhaps need more to do.

“Brad, looks like you have some extra time on your hands, want to take on...”

**2.2 Problem: The team is not making good progress, but no one notices.**

**2.21 Strategy:** Learn to recognize when there is a problem.

“Does anyone see a problem with what we’ve done so far?”

**2.22 Strategy:** Don’t single out an individual for criticism; make it the team’s problem.

“We’re off task a lot; how could we fix that?”

### **3. Goal: Evaluate and improve work quality**

**3.1 Problem:** The team is producing low quality work. People care more about getting the work done, not about how good it is.

**3.11 Strategy:** Reread original instructions and grading criteria provided by the instructor and ask yourself if you are fulfilling all of the objectives.

**3.12 Strategy:** Have the team develop criteria for evaluating the work.

“I know we have to make sure the paper is in APA format, so what is we each focus on a specific APA item and highlight any problems we see. What do you think?”

**3.13 Strategy:** Check your work to see if it meets the criteria.

“I’m concerned that this is not clear; others won’t be able to understand/use it.”

**3.2 Problem:** The team never tries to improve its work.

**3.21 Strategy:** Ensure that the team make improving work an implicit aspect of the project plan that the team can focus on.

“Mary, since you’re the planning manager, could you make sure we focus on improving this part of the project next time?”

**3.22 Strategy:** Have the team think about how the work could be improved and revise it.

“How could this be more persuasive?”

**3.23 Strategy:** Have members evaluate each other’s work and provide feedback.

“Since you are done, would you mind taking a look at my work and suggesting improvements.

**3.3 Problem:** Deliverables are not clear or concise.

**3.31 Strategy:** Have someone outside of your team read your deliverables to ensure that they can be easily understood.

**3.32 Strategy:** Schedule time to check each other’s work prior to submitting (peer editing) in order to reduce wordiness and improve readability.

**3.33 Strategy:** Set up a peer editing exchange with another team. Your team can check their deliverables and they can check yours.

**3.34 Strategy:** Read materials on writing style, i.e. Strunk and White, Elements of Style, or others listed at: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/jth/Engl497.html>

#### **4 Goal: Meet the deadlines you set**

##### **4.1 Problem: People are very lax about deadlines.**

**4.11 Strategy:** Care about your deadlines. Make it a priority, but you can also make it fun. Some teams set up project pots when team members are late or deliver low quality products they have to donate \$5-10 dollars to the pot. When team members turn in things early, on time, very high quality they earn differing points points. At the end of the semester the member with the most points gets the money pot.

**4.12 Strategy:** Set clear deadlines, write them down, and make the list publicly accessible.

"Okay, I'm posting the To Do list in a Google doc. Please update it."

##### **4.2 Problem: People are not doing their share.**

**4.21 Strategy:** Decide from the beginning what actions the team will take if a member does not do their share.

"Okay, so we all agree that if for some reason one of us cannot participate equally then we should reassign that person's tasks and inform the instructor?"

**4.22 Strategy:** Find out what the problem is without judgment and see if the team can provide a solution.

"Debra, it seems like you are having problems finishing your tasks, what's going on? Do you need help?"

**4.23 Strategy:** Work with planning manager to set deadlines and ask if they will work.

"We need you to have this done by Friday, does that seem doable?"

**4.24 Strategy:** Keep records of deadlines and when they are not met.

"That is the second time you have missed a deadline."

**4.25 Strategy:** Discuss reassigning tasks to other members and informing instructor.

"We really need your help with this project, but if you just can't do that right now, we can reassign your tasks and let the instructor know your situation,"

**4.26 Strategy:** Hold people accountable with clear outcomes for failures to meet deadlines.

"Kevin, we decided as a team in the beginning what we would do if we failed to meet deadlines, and this is the second time you've done so. So this

means we'll have to write you up, and inform instructor and, as a team, give you lower peer evaluations (which will reduce your grade)."

**4.3 Problem: Procrastination- Team waits until the last minute to do tasks.**

**4.31 Strategy:** Take a task and break it up into check-points, ensuring that team members are making consistent progress.

"The requirements are due in two weeks. This means that by the end of this week we should post drafts of our work and give each other feedback."

**4.32 Strategy:** Provide each other with support and flexibility needed to manage your entire workload. Coordinate with fellow team member's schedules (mid-terms, papers due for other classes) in order to give each member some lean weeks and others more responsibilities.

"Well I have a midterm in one week, but you two have yours in three weeks, So if it's okay with the team, this will be my lean week."

**5 Goal: Implement time saving strategies**

**5.1 Problem: The team is running out of time.**

**5.11 Strategy:** Have the team rethink the plan.

"We're not getting anywhere; what should we do differently?"

"We're falling behind schedule; what can we leave out?"

**5.12 Strategy:** Determine the cause and try to improve productivity.

"Why are we so behind, what's the hold up?"

"Well, it turns out that programming that was much harder than we thought, maybe we should do a paper prototype in order to speed things up."

**5.13 Strategy:** Evaluate remaining tasks in order to reprioritize those that MUST get done.

"We have to at least find five more artifacts, before we move on. Let's each find one and then finish that task."