

Ask the Expert: Diversity in Teams



“How can team members who are very different work together, and still be successful?”

Maximizing the Benefits of Diversity in Teams



What the Research Says...

- Diversity, on its own, is **not** consistently related to team effectiveness ([Guillaume et al., 2017](#)).
- On the one hand, differences in background, identities, and perspectives across team members provide more information and ways of seeing the world ([van Knippenberg et al., 2004](#)).
- At the same time, diversity can also create an "us vs. them" mentality within the group ([Jackson et al., 2003](#)).

Increasing the Value of Different Perspectives



Perspective Taking

Team leaders and team members can practice taking each other's perspective.

For example, teams can regularly reflect on:

- How others in the team may experience the current situation differently.
- What is important to the other group members right now.

Answering these questions can increase the appreciation for distinct perspectives within the team.



Knowing Who Knows What

Teams often do **not** know where expertise resides within the group.

Ask your members the following:

- "If I need to get expertise on a certain topic, I know exactly who I can turn to."
- "I know which team members have expertise in specific areas."

This assessment, as well as documenting expertise, can unearth reservoirs of knowledge.



Next Steps

- Diversity comes in a variety of forms (e.g., culture, personality, values, education). Your team can actively consider what aspects of diversity are most relevant for your work.



Additional Resources

- CCL has developed the REAL framework to help leaders maximize the benefits of diversity in their teams.
- [Learn more here!](#)