



Teammate Is One Word

Many of my emails, memos, and newsletters contain the word teammate. Depending on the program I am using, my spell check doesn't always like the combining of the words team and mate. A recent revision of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (CCD) 11th edition proves that I am right and my spell check is wrong (don't you love it when that happens?). The CCD shows that the following words are completely joined: icebox, handyman, repairman, firefighter, teammate, and schoolteacher. Teammate is one word representing many people.

Spelling teammate is just the beginning. The team culture is important in everything we do at Americollect. Our Mission Statement includes the following statement: "Americollect partners with our employees to help them to grow as individuals and to give them an opportunity for a rewarding career in the collection industry." That partnering is so important to us, that we had it painted on a 10x6 section of our wall to remind us each day that our goal is to help one another grow.

There are several synonyms for teammate — colleague, co-player, partner, etc. . . . but none seem as descriptive as the one word -teammate. Team is defined as "a cooperatively functioning group" and mate is "a partner or comrade". Who wouldn't want to be a partner in a cooperatively functioning group?

Our teammate culture is valuable. This culture helps attract quality people and gives them an incentive to stay on our team. The knowledge of these long-term teammates is passed down to grow others and grow the team as a whole. You may visit our office or meet a teammate and think "wow — not sure what it is, but there's something special going on there". That something special is our culture and it doesn't happen overnight. Each teammate makes a conscious effort to do the following:

- Focus on the Americollect vision and Mission — passionately
- See the good in others and help them to grow
- Say I'm sorry and mean it, and then move on

- Worry more about getting things done, instead of about who gets the credit
- Give honest and sincere feedback to teammates
- Respect internal and external customers

Of course we all know what we need to do to be successful. None of the above bullets came as a surprise, did they? The teammate concept isn't new, but it is a moving target. There are several pitfalls to avoid, any one of these things can spoil your culture: concentrating solely on your bottom line instead of growing individuals, promoting those who aren't passionate about your culture, and making changes too quickly and without getting the support of the team.

Teammate is one word representing many people. I couldn't imagine working in any other atmosphere or with any other group of people. Watching your teammates grow ranks right up there with watching your child take their first step. I am forever thankful for the culture we've developed here at Americollect. I enjoy going to work each day to see my teammates' happy smiling faces. We are one word and one united group. . . . a Family. . . . A TEAM

Being on a team means cheering one another on and rejoicing in individual successes as well as team successes. The back and forth emails/messages and general comments when someone has achieved their goals or taken on a new challenge is quite remarkable. Each teammate feels the support from the team when something good happens or when they have an opportunity to grow.



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