

## Collaboration Across the Enterprise

Payroll is one of the few departments that works with everyone else in a company. Collaborating with these diverse internal clients can be challenging at times. In a recent Robert Half [survey](#), 39 percent of chief financial officers (CFOs) polled said dealing with a wide range of personalities is the greatest challenge for accounting and finance professionals when working with colleagues in other departments. In fact, the respondents considered this aspect of their job to be more difficult than managing stress, prioritizing conflicting deadlines and explaining financial information to a layperson.

With the increased touch-points payroll staff have with others, effective collaboration can be even more of a problem. Here are three tips for productive relationships:

### **1. Make customer service a priority.**

When employees contact payroll, it's usually because they need to update their financial information or, worse, there's a problem. Different personalities have different ways of expressing a personal — and potentially emotional — matter like their paycheck. Listen to the issue they present, ask clarifying questions and take responsibility for resolving the matter. Let payroll be known as a department that provides [excellent customer service](#).

### **2. Communicate clearly.**

When you compile reports and require information from other departments, use your best [writing skills](#): Tell colleagues what you need, making sure to include format guidelines and due dates. Clear communication is vital to reducing misunderstandings, preventing crises and, in turn, managing stress.

### **3. Get to know your non-payroll colleagues.**

With your heavy, deadline-driven workload, you may think you don't have time to get to know employees outside of accounting and finance. However, it can be very helpful to learn the pressures others are under. To improve communication and collaboration, get out of the department and [network](#). Volunteer for enterprise-wide service projects. Attend work-related social events. Make it a point to mingle with non-payroll colleagues when circumstances permit.

A payroll department is most successful when staff get along with everyone, of course. Even if your greatest challenge is working with colleagues who have abrasive personalities or trouble prioritizing deadlines, aim for a professional and cordial work relationship. Strive for clear communication, take the high road and build interdepartmental bridges; when you do, the entire enterprise will run more efficiently.

*Accountemps, a [Robert Half](#) company, is the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm for temporary accounting, finance and bookkeeping professionals. Accountemps has more than 340 locations worldwide. More resources, including online job search services and the [Accountemps blog](#), can be found at [accountemps.com](#).*