



# ***“Team Tip Principles”***

For

## **Teams**

### **Preface:**

As a “team building” organization, we often get the request from team leaders or project managers for some basic principles to help focus their business teams. While every situation is uniquely different, some characteristics of success are constant. Experience Based Learning often provides the following four ***“Team Tip Principles”*** when asked that question. Then, we provide curriculum development for team building workshops that focus on maintaining these four principles during the training. We hope that your particular team can find benefit from these ***“Team Tip Principles.”***

### **Idea Volleyball:**

Basic principles of creativity based communication, is essential when teams are comprised of high functioning individuals. Without set boundaries within creativity based communication, chaos will certainly prevail. When brainstorming for solutions or new outcomes, listen to all ideas. This at the surface is a common understanding however knowing and practicing a behavior are two different things.

First, look for the solution which is most logical. Maintain a record of all additional ideas as they may prove to be a good “plan B” if the first option doesn’t work. When brainstorming for options, continue to look for the “second right answers” as well. This is usually accomplished by stacking ideas together. When in active dialogue try saying the word “yes” rather than “but”, when responding to someone’s idea or suggestion. This will create a positive atmosphere where the perception of safety is evident and that no idea is a dumb idea. This will only serve to engage everyone’s active thinking. Experience Based Learning calls this practice ***“Idea Volleyball.”*** This practice keeps conversations and idea energy a live!

The converse is using language that turns people down or undermines the spirit of their ideas and suggestions. Experience Based Learning calls this ***“Idea Skeet Shoot.”*** This is very easily done and often is accompanied with the word “but” in a sentence. Avoid responding to people with sentences that begin with the word “but.” For example, if Susan need to ship 1,000 purple widgets to a client by next Friday and if Bob has a concern around production, he should reply, “Yes, **AND** if we can establish that production can meet that order, we should be fine.” Rather than a reply of, “Yes, **BUT**, I don’t think we can produce that many in such a short turn around cycle.” The use of the word “AND” empowers someone to go find out the answer. The use of the word “BUT” shoots the ideas down by not making it look not very feasible to even try.



## **History:**

History is a valuable tool in establishing a vision or future action. Without knowing where you have come from, you are susceptible to creating the same mistakes time and again. Thus, losing precious time and consuming valuable resources. Worst yet, you often run the risk of not learning, nor the ability to share best practices. Imagine spending months on a development plan only to find out the solution had already been found by another project team just down the hallway. This is frustrating and costly to say the least. Learn from others, other silo teams, and other company resources.

**Remember to remember!** Have someone archive previous ideas, actions, failures AND successes! This will act as a map towards future success! Again, a common understanding, but don't get caught reinventing the wheel again.

## **Leadership:**

The need to establish a group leader is apparent when working within a project or task. Look for the natural emergent leaders, support them, and provide them the tools required to manage the group. If emergent leaders are not noticeable, try to develop / foster an environment that will allow them to sift to the surface during projects. If all else fails, try a rotating "Leader by Project" assignment and delegate accountability by function or skill base.

A word of caution, emergent leaders can be intimidating. Attempt to control energy and focus on everyone's contribution. Remember, "**Leadership by Loudness**" is not true leadership. "**Leadership by Listening**" is when followed with thoughtful decisions and execution of a plan.

## **Failure:**

Failure is a word that is attached with other words that carry a negative stigma. A common word linked with "failure" in word association exercises is "looser." No one wants to be a looser. To be a looser, is to be unpopular, outside the team, or a waste. By nature, everyone wants to be a part of something. And, without people taking risks and trying something different, nothing would ever change and we would still be awaiting the invention of electricity. Who would have thought flying a kite with a key at the end of the string was logical, let alone sane?

Be mindful that words carry power and perception. Try to imagine that the word "failure" really means "feedback." For with "feedback" we learn what needs to be changed or altered to increase the odds of a success later on. This procedure is directly linked to "History" so I hope you paid attention in that paragraph.

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If you continue to receive “feedback” and measure it against “History”, then, you are truly moving forward. Therefore, go out and take chances, try something new. Try approaches that are uncommon or non-traditional. Dare to **“Fail..... Forward!”**

### **About Experience Based Learning:**

Experience Based Learning (EBL) is a team building, activity-based consulting organization. Since 1996, EBL has lead powerful team building experiences which change the way corporate teams face challenges and take advantage of opportunities. We help build stronger teams, improve team decision making abilities, enhance customer service, resolve team conflict, and aid companies in planning for and adapting to a continually changing future. We help individuals within teams develop a new appreciation for collaboration. EBL sessions show groups how to achieve goals that at first seemed impossible.

EBL delivers consultative team building services to organizations that demand results for their investments. We provide engaging workshops for groups of all sizes, from 6-1,000 persons, from single day team building sessions to multiple day change initiatives, internationally. Our adaptable workshops are typically customized for specific outcomes that are defined by the client. The results often exceed client expectations.

Our workshops cover team models of highly effective behavior, theories from cutting edge business thinkers, and practical skills for getting work done well. This multilayered approach fosters reflection for weeks, months, and years after the initial seminars, promoting ongoing positive change.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.ebl.org>