

# Ten tips to building a great team

 By [Tara Turkington](#)

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You don't necessarily need to be a manager or a senior person in a company to be a leader and to help build a great team around you. Leaders are those who lead by example through passion, tenacity, hard work and positivity.

So whether you're an entrepreneur trying to start a social media company in your dining room, a middleweight creative or a graduate just starting out in the media and marketing industry, you can strive to build a great team around you.

Here are 10 tips for building a great team:

1. *Have fun.* Sometimes people need tequila and a guy jumping out of a cake at 10am. Having fun takes planning, creativity and setting aside sufficient time. Make an effort to have fun often.
2. *Work on work that is meaningful.* If you can find meaning in the work you and those around you do, you will be more engaged and happier at work. Strive to make the country and world a better place through (at least some of) the work you do every day.
3. *Take clients very seriously and yourself not too seriously.* Work is hard to win, and when you do, you should throw everything you have at delivering it to the highest quality possible. But beware of taking yourself too seriously or growing arrogant.
4. *Surround yourself with people who are cleverer than you.* No one can be brilliant at everything. Find others who have skills and talents you do not have; associate with them, and learn from them. A great team is made up of a sum that is greater than its parts.
5. *Give credit where it's due but do not be afraid of building a culture that is self-critical.* Constructive criticism - giving it well and taking it well - is crucial to the success of any team. That said, go out of your way to recognise others' hard work and achievements. Affirmation and kind words never hurt anyone - drop your colleague a note on a Friday when he or she has had an excellent week or dealt well with a difficult issue; or even better, praise the person in public.
6. *Have common goals.* Define your goals together and communicate clearly and frequently about what they are and where you are in your progress to attaining them. Do collective visioning exercises where team members list what they would like to achieve. Then go and achieve those things together.
7. *Be honest.* Build trust by telling the truth. Admit mistakes and face up to failures. Ask for help if you do not know how to

do something - even if you think you know, listening to others' ideas is always valuable.

8. *Get to know your team-mates.* Investing in your personal relationships with your team members pays off. Research has shown that one of the keys to employee engagement is whether people consider themselves to have good friends at work. Be a friend - understanding the people you work with can only make for better work relationships. Knowing their personal circumstances and challenges - and them knowing yours - can lead ultimately to better team performance.

9. *Build diversity.* Strive to create a mix of team members of different ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities, and a balance of both genders if possible. If you can harness this diversity to work towards common goals, you will have a more versatile, more interesting, better-rounded team that wins more often than those that are less diverse.

10. *Take risks.* When you take risks together - for example, trying to win a new client, entering a seemingly impossible tender or renting a larger office - you face both failure and success together. Risk taking, tackled in the right way, injects adrenalin and energy into a team. When you take risks, you will win and you will lose. When you lose, you learn far more than when you win. Use failures to make you stronger as a team by learning from them and moving on. And when you win, there is nothing better and more bonding than winning together.

## ABOUT TARA TURKINGTON

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