



## **Four Elements Help Build Successful Teams**

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Building successful teams isn't easy, otherwise every team would be one.

Throughout sports history, certain teams arguably stand out as the best – the 1927 New York Yankees, 1972 Miami Dolphins and 1995-96 Chicago Bulls, to name a few.

It certainly is fun to discuss great teams and analyze the secrets to their success.

Recently, the acronym T.E.A.M. was brought to my attention, and I'd like to pass on its formula.

'**T**' stands for "Trust." For a team to be successful, a great deal of trust needs to exist between all of the parties involved. If the players don't trust the coach's knowledge or approach, no one is going to listen. If the coach doesn't trust the players, progress will be limited. The players must trust each other, too.

Trust doesn't come overnight – it comes through each party being consistent. Knowing at all times where someone is going to be on the field lends to a strong sense of trust. Knowing your teammates are always giving their best builds great team character and bonding. In other words, trust is earned over time.

The trust factor also involves confidentiality. Gossip cannot be part of a successful team. Back-stabbing only brings people down, and instead incorporates a state of distrust.

To build trust, a team needs to be close. It is very helpful for teammates to enjoy being around each other. We often hear the phrase "team chemistry" when describing an organization's success.

'**E**' stands for "Empathy." Empathy means a team needs to live in harmony. This is similar to closeness, but involves deep feelings.

Teammates need to be quick to listen and slow to speak. This display of respect will slow a team down in a good way and allow it to work together. Team members must ask questions so everyone is "on the same page."

Good teams show their emotions. They win together and they lose together. They play with passion, but they don't become emotional. You can tell who the good teams are,

because the players keep each other in line. It's fun during a football game to see an individual start to lose control, but be reeled in immediately by several members of his team. Those teams are on the same page.

'A' is for "Accommodate." Teammates need to be easy to get along with. That means they must recognize each other's needs, ideas, personalities and faults. I've heard before, a team is only as good as their least-talented player. Accepting each other the way they are, and building each other up, helps teams focus on perhaps the most important piece of all: the mission.

'M' is the "Mission" on which everyone must agree. If the team is focused on one purpose, the opportunity for success is much greater.

If a team fails to reach its goal, one of the elements probably was missing.