

## First Team vs. Second Team

“A first team is the idea that true leaders prioritize supporting their fellow leaders over their direct reports.”

– **Patrick Lencioni**

### Examples of Principles, Behaviors, and Language as a First Team

#### FIRST TEAM (Prioritizing Executive Leadership Team)

Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting your first team takes priority over supporting your second team</li> <li>• Each member sees themselves as a part of a team of peers, and an advocate for the needs of the organization</li> <li>• The first team uses a shared leadership framework, tools, and language to create mutual standards and efficiency, while reducing anxiety through a structured approach to navigating challenges</li> <li>• The first team takes healthy responsibility for company-wide results</li> <li>• Feelings are seen as sources of wisdom and are expressed and revealed, not suppressed and concealed</li> <li>• Stories and assumptions are openly shared when they get in the way of trust and productivity</li> <li>• There are no private meetings after the main meeting</li> </ul>
Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizes and intentionally develops first team relationships</li> <li>• Makes decisions and shares suggestions focused on the good of the whole organization</li> <li>• Learns and uses a shared model for conflict resolution and giving and receiving feedback</li> <li>• Structures meetings so everyone's voice is heard, no consistent dominant voices</li> <li>• Uses metrics to track the agreed-upon behaviors and commitments. Results are shared with the team</li> <li>• Chooses candor over avoidance, denial, or withholding. Willing to reveal facts, feelings, thoughts that if concealed would lead to disengaging with the group</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “How might we...”</li> <li>• “What are the opposing views here?”</li> <li>• “What/who are we missing in this discussion?”</li> <li>• “Let's have a round of reactions - how is each person feeling about this conversation/decision/goal?”</li> <li>• “What is going well? / What is not going well?”</li> <li>• “What are we learning to improve our efforts going forward?”</li> <li>• “If our organizational results reflect our commitments, what are we committed to?”</li> <li>• “I feel [emotion]” (with no justification needed)</li> </ul>

## Examples of Principles, Behaviors, and Language as a Second Team

<b>SECOND TEAM</b> (Prioritizing Direct Reports)	
<b>Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizes supporting your direct reports (second team) over your first team</li> <li>• Sees yourself as an advocate for the needs of people who report to you</li> <li>• Leads as an expert in a functional area</li> <li>• Seeks cooperation from other second team leaders to get desired results (quid pro quo)</li> <li>• Fights for resources for the second team</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizes and intentionally develops second team relationships</li> <li>• Lobbies the primary team for what is beneficial for your second team</li> <li>• Functions as a hero to the second team</li> <li>• Indicates to the second team you are “at the effect of” the first team’s actions</li> <li>• Measures results on the short-term</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We should do...”</li> <li>• “I’ll take your opinions under advisement and will make the final decision”</li> <li>• “We need [other department’s] buy-in here so let’s see if we can do something for them in return”</li> <li>• “I know I didn’t agree with the executive team’s decision either. I need you to do it”</li> </ul>

Adapted from the work of Patrick Lencioni

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