



Quick E-Tips



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Thank you for subscribing to this newsletter brought to you by International Advantage® - *Leading Across Cultures*. Every month we bring you tips to help your team and organization, especially those operating in culturally diverse environments, reach their business goals.

Topic of the month: What a Hiking Trip to the Sierras Can Teach Us about Group Effectiveness

Imagine you were with me last week on a 4-day backpacking trip in the Sierra Madre Mountains in California. You and I are with a group of 13 other people with intentions to camp on a hill overlooking South Fork Lake and to hike a few peaks. (Pretend you enjoy hiking and camping even if you don't ☺...Certainly a group activity like this sounds like fun, right?)

But now imagine you know few or no members of the group. Everyone else is in the same situation.

A good trip leader knows that the more quickly that group members know each other will create a more successful trip. Why? With a cohesive team, you reap creative solutions, collaboration, safety, fun and accomplishment.

The trip leader achieved this in record time. [Side note: the trip leader is both a VP in a company and a highly respected Sensei ("teacher" or "master" in Japanese), a black belt karate instructor with his own dojo (a school for training the Japanese martial arts).]

Here are some ways the trip leader - Sensei -- did it (and tips on how it might be applied to the workplace):

Example 1: Since four cars with a total of 14 people caravanned for 2 hours to the trail head, the Sensei instructed that **at each stop** (gas, restaurant, picking up permits) **all non-drivers were to switch cars in order to get to know someone else.**

Tip (for the workplace): Sit in different seats in meetings to promote interaction and build relationship with others you have less rapport with. (You will also benefit by seeing things differently from a new spot.) Also, pair or group your team in different formations on projects whenever possible with mutual accountability to promote collaboration and deeper relationships.

Tip: Consider how you can build rapport in newly formed teams even before arriving together in the same space.

Example 2: At the first pit stop still driving to the trailhead, Sensei drew the group together and **shared his 2 team goals for the hike and what that would require of each of us. He then suggested that we also determine our own personal objectives.**

Tip: As a leader, make your vision, "non-negotiables", and expectations clear. Equally as important, help your people identify their own goals and support them in achieving them (as long as they do not compromise the group goals).

Example: During long hikes, Sensei would consistently keep the energy up by making humorous or **encouraging comments to individual members** of the team.

Tip: As the leader, you have a special responsibility to guide your team's "experience" in the group. Two ways to care for the group are to recognize the individuals in the team regularly for what they do well (and provide coaching on areas of opportunity) -- or eliminate those who are hurting the team.

Example: On the third day of the trip, half the group wanted to stay close to camp and half the group wanted to summit another peak. Sensei opted to stay with the group who would not climb. He gathered the climbing group and **announced who would be the trip leader in his absence, why that person was chosen, and his expectations of the group.**

Tip: Let people know the process in your presence or absence - who to go to for help, who will make decisions, your expectations and your reasoning for all of that. People are usually happy to follow if they know how the decision was made. Have a structure and process for all to follow so that communication channels are clear.

Example: Sensei would find many moments to **demonstrate and talk about issues human importance at a deeper level.** He led 30 minute Tai Chi exercises each morning and would occasionally deliver short, thought-provoking lectures on topics like achieving work-life balance or the elements of a meaningful life.

Tip: Become clear on what is important to you as a person and employee and don't be afraid to share them at work at appropriate moments. Don't assume people will be able to guess what you stand for. Talk about them often and live by them. Your people will know you better, and will experience your leadership in a richer way.

What a great trip for me on many levels. To experience being a member of an effective team for 4 days was very rewarding, and had everything to do with the strong leadership provided by a Sensei.

What's News

1. Cancer Climb Sponsor - Flagstaff, AZ

Our second annual participation in the Cancer Climb, hosted by the American Cancer Society, took place on Saturday, Aug 19. This coming year I will be remembering Margaret, a lovely woman recently diagnosed with cancer, who made it almost the entire seven-mile hike up Snow Bowl Mountain.

2. Event Announcement: Institute of Management Consultants - Arizona

Please join us for our Aug 11th breakfast meeting in Phoenix for our IMC-AZ meeting: Overcoming Wicked Consulting Challenges. Details and registration: www.imcaz.org

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To your continued success around the globe,

Lisa

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