



LIONS PRESENTS

Exercises to Support Creative Collaboration

Having awareness of others and the willingness to accept all ideas as valid creates momentum and innovation.

Building strong teams starts with openness, so let's look at how to get started.

Trust and empathy are key to collaboration.

Exercise 1

YES, AND...

This exercise helps to build trust and momentum. “Yes, and...” is one of the pillars of improvisation. It means that when another person suggests something it’s your job to accept it as truth and push it further.

- **Person 1:** Suggests an idea.
- **Person 2:** Responds by starting with “Yes, and...” No ‘buts’ allowed.

Keep pushing it and see where it takes you. Even if the idea starts to snowball into something absurd, you can always take the best elements and hone them into something better.

Exercise 2

STINKY FISH

This activity helps the group explore and share their individual worries about the project. It can also be used as an icebreaker for new teams.

- **Step 1:** Explain “The Stinky Fish” concept to the group. It’s a metaphor for anxiety; that thing you carry around but don’t like to talk about, but the longer you hide it, the stinkier it gets.
- **Step 2:** Give the group five minutes to write down their own “stinky fish” in the context of the project.
- **Step 3:** When the timer goes off, have everyone share their ideas and let it lead to discussion if need be.

Exercise 3

THE IMPACT vs EFFORT MATRIX

This exercise is a great way to kickoff a project. It hones in on the biggest priorities and let's teammates express their strengths and biggest interests in the project. Find a template for the Impact/Effort Matrix or create your own using the example [here](#).

Step 1: Establish the group's goal, then frame the goal in a "What to do" or "What we need" question.

Step 2: Ask the group to come up with ideas individually and write them on sticky notes.

Step 3: Ask them to present their ideas back to the group by placing them within the matrix that is organised by impact and effort:

- Impact: The potential payoff of the action, vs.
- Effort: The cost of taking the action

Step 4: Discuss as a group if some ideas should move up in potential impact or down in effort.

Step 5: When the discussion comes to an end, the category of high impact, low effort will often hold the set of ideas that the group is most agreed upon and committed to.

In a virtual world collaboration has become more tricky, it's important to practice these exercises to help get beyond business-as-usual tasks and explore new possibilities.

FOR LOTS MORE IDEAS CHECK OUT

- [Harvard Business Review](#)
- The [Hyper Island Toolbox](#)
- And don't forget the importance of creating the right space for creativity. In the virtual world this means giving other tools a try, like the digital whiteboard platform [Miro](#) or a [RACI matrix](#) to see if it's the right fit for your team.

These exercises provide a great kickstart to get your creative juices flowing, but like most things it takes effort and practice.