

BUILDING HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

If you're serious about taking your business to the next level, it's vital to focus on improving the effectiveness of your teams. A high performing, highly motivated team can help your business by increasing productivity and improving customer service, as well as helping your business to be more innovative and forward thinking. During difficult times, a high performing team will also give you more flexibility to make changes as well as the ability to do more with less.

So whether you have just a few staff members or employ large teams to support your business, what can you do to make sure your teams are engaged and working to their full potential? Here are some ideas:

Review the team: The first step is to assess how they're currently doing. How well are they meeting their targets? How well do they communicate with each other? How happy and motivated do they feel? How well do they support each other to meet collective goals? Once you have an idea of the team strengths and areas for development you can take a focused approach to nurturing and developing your team.

Set the direction: The next step is to clearly set the direction and expectations for the team. What is your vision for your business and how can the team help you to achieve this? You need to be able to articulate the direction the team should be heading for, then discuss your expectations and establish objectives together. This way the whole team's energy and drive is focused on achieving the overall "big picture" - i.e. what you are aiming to achieve in the longer term - and there is a clear understanding of how the team will achieve this goal in the short, medium and long term.

Agree clear team roles: Make sure each team member has clearly defined responsibilities for team issues as well as their own specialism, and these team roles need to be assigned based on their strengths and preferred behaviours for working within a team. #



For example, in an IT business, a team member may take on responsibility for attending initial customer meetings, as they enjoy scoping out requirements and are good at building strong working relationships. #

Above all, in a high performance team, every team member is very clear of who has responsibility for which task.

Encourage clear, open lines of communication: Within high performing teams, foundations are not only in place for team members to ask questions and provide feedback on how well the business is doing, but also there are opportunities for team members to share ideas and propose potential solutions to growing the business or increasing the effectiveness of the organisation's systems and processes. An "open door" policy along with regular team meetings and feedback sessions also encourages and supports this approach.

Use the team members' talents: Playing to your strengths is key if you wish to be successful. The same applies to teams. Leaders of high performance teams recognise this and ensure they are aware of all the team members' talents inside and outside work and continuously look for ways to utilise these to benefit the business.

Regularly review the team's effectiveness: High performing teams schedule and spend time frequently reviewing their team objectives to ensure they are on track to achieve their goals. In this type of environment, team members are very clear on their responsibility to deliver results whilst feeling supported by other team members when challenges and issues arise.



Recognise and celebrate the team's successes: At appropriate and relevant times such as the end of a large project, winning of a new contract etc, you need to recognise what has been achieved. This could be by simply thanking them or arranging for a team reward or social event.

Most importantly, the way you recognise them needs to reflect what really motivates and inspires the team members, so taking time to learn about what motivates your team members will ensure you get this recognition stage right.

Continuously enhance your own management and leadership skills: To make sure you are providing your team with the best possible support, you need to keep up to date with your own personal development. This will not only set a good example to your team but also ensure you are equipped to effectively manage all types of team management situations and stretch your team's capability.

As a business leader, you need to create an environment where the potential of your team will be realised, and in doing this, you are much more likely to create a sustainable and profitable business for the future.

For a more 'hands on' experience and to see if I can help you take your team to the next level, call me now to discuss your needs.
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