

# 7 STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A GREAT TEAM



## DO YOU WANT TO BOOST YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCE?

**W**HETHER YOU ARE HEADING UP A division of a major corporation, leading a governmental agency, coaching a sports team, or starting a new company, you need to know the secrets to building a great team.

Building a great team requires strong leadership — leaders who have the ability to get people contributing selflessly, the expertise to create unity through a sense of community, and the skills to engage people to be part of the team. Leaders also know how to make an immediate impact. These are the seven most successful strategies to building a great team:

1. Build a nucleus
2. Raise the bar of expectations
3. Use consistency to grow your team
4. Have a single objective, supported by three related objectives
5. Use mentors for team success
6. Recruit new winners, and surround them with winners
7. Create an atmosphere of fun and success

### 1. Build a nucleus

The #1 most important consideration in building successful teams is the ability to attract three key players who are committed to the success of the team. If you want to build a fire, you will not succeed with one log. With two logs, you might get a fire to burn for a little while, but the fire usually goes out before the full energy of the logs is consumed. A fire requires three or more logs to burn efficiently. So, start with your three “logs” to build your team nucleus.

These three key players need to demonstrate high levels of ability, leadership, and loyalty. Find these three players, and keep them by ensuring they know they are valuable to your organization. If you are loyal to them, they will be inclined to stay loyal to you.

### 2. Raise the bar of expectations

Did people fail before you? Is your organization in chaos? In times of failure, you must learn; in times of chaos, you must lead.

Leaders raise the bar of expectations. Winning is the objective. Building upon

success is a wise strategy. So, find a small goal, set it, and achieve it at all costs. For example, the first year, set a goal for 30% improvement. The second year, raise the bar. Through time, as you show continued success, raise expectations even higher.

### 3. Use consistency to grow your team

The three components to success are: (a) consistent habits, (b) consistent location, and (c) consistent people

Consistent habits are important for individual and team performance. If you start to hold meetings in your organization on Tuesdays at 8 am, keep them at that time and do not change it unless necessary. Use repeatable systems throughout your operations to drive consistent habits in performance.

The importance of consistency in location is exemplified by case of the sales manager who frequently pulled salespeople out of one territory and assigned them to another. The team struggled under his poor leadership. The new manager assigned both geography

## ORGANIZATIONS WITH CONSISTENTLY HIGH PERFORMANCE RETAIN THEIR TOP LEADERS AND KEY PERFORMERS FAR LONGER THAN ORGANIZATIONS WITH POOR PERFORMANCE.

and vertical markets to his team and kept those territories 80% in place for three years. His team performed dramatically better than the previous manager's team.

Consistency in people is the biggest problem organizations face. The pressure to succeed is enormous, especially if some employees have been failing by missing quotas, blowing budgets, and failing objectives.

Communication is a key factor in helping to achieve consistent performance. Leaders need to clearly communicate realistic expectations and monitor outcomes. Poorly performing organizations often exhibit an unusually high record of firing or replacing their top leaders. Organizations with consistently high performance retain their top leaders and key performers far longer than organizations with poor performance. High-performing organizations attract others to their winning ways.

### 4. Have a single objective supported by three related objectives

Great leaders usually strive to attain a single objective. In basketball, it might be to win 50% of games or reach the playoffs. In business, an objective might be to eliminate wasteful spending. Whatever it is, figure out what is most important, and achievable, and set that as your single objective.

Support your single objective with three related objectives. Organize these related

objectives around projects, people, and priorities to help ensure overall success. Focus on a project within a related objective, initiate discussion with the relevant people, and follow up with the people you need to move the project forward. Schedule your top ten priorities for the day after those discussions. This is how highly productive people successfully push each project forward every day.

### 5. Use mentors for team success

Mentors can play a vital part in helping to build a great team and a successful organization. They can help determine who will rise above the pack, and who will be the top performers and valued team members within the organization as you grow.

For example, to determine your winning sales team, find out who performs the best during a test period. Give each salesperson an equal territory and a mentor with the appropriate background and coaching skills to provide individual encouragement. Seasoned mentors can provide one-on-one guidance and support and share personal secrets of selling success.

### 6. Recruit new winners and surround them with winners

Sometimes you cannot promote from within: You may be growing quickly and need to bring in new people. Recruit winners with a proven success record in similar endeavours. Continue growing from an atmosphere of success within your organization.

To help create this atmosphere, place a newly hired salesperson under the supervision of a top salesperson. This offers new hires invaluable experience and creates an aura of excitement and success. Team your salespeople with veterans and watch them start selling successfully. Let your veterans model the behaviour and strategies to lead new recruits to higher success.

### 7. Create an atmosphere of fun and success

If you want to win, you have to have fun. Schedule events in fun places to build team camaraderie. Eliminate poor management methods. Blaming the team for failures with negative communication, or treating the team poorly, will backfire. Instead, replace with empowering methods of communication.

Communicate expectations and create a sense of fun and urgency. Coach team members by letting them know you believe in their capability to succeed and that you will support them. This is the biggest motivator in building a winning team.

These seven strategies are your tools to building a great team, and a successful organization.

#### DBR

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