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How to Build and Maintain a High-Performing Team

Dhruv Menon

Introduction

“The combined effect of individuals in collaboration that exceeds the sum of their individual effects”,¹ as stated by Stephen R. Covey, encapsulates what a team ought to be; a team should be a place where collective and individual growth is fostered and company goals are met while maintaining quality standards.

Why is there a need for teams? Should work and responsibility be delegated to a singular person who can perform a one-man show?

Teams are made not to undermine the people in them by implicitly stating that they, as individuals, are not ‘good enough’; they are set in place to combat factors such as dealing with workload, pressure and allowing for areas where individuals can shine.

Let us take an example of a Football team, there are eleven players present, who are given exclusive areas of the field to execute their skills to defend, innovate and/or create chances. If the narrative for this team were to only have one person handling the entire field, it is not a far-fetched conclusion to say that the person would lose. Let us also look at a scenario where a person in the team has been continuously not performing well and brings the team down, the impact of which could mean losing the match. This becomes increasingly important to analyse as this scenario is unfavourable for any team setting, sport or otherwise.

How does one build and maintain a ‘High Performance’ team?

1) Understanding the team composition. -

Employees or any workers of a team are not the same, having a healthy mix of the archetypes of teammates². Where some challenge authority structures and some who

are able change the opinions of the other teammates. Having them be active members of the team creates synergy, by which all people can amicably reach a consensus as to what needs to be achieved.

2) Creating a sense of unity within the team. -

Man is a social being, as per Maslow's theory of needs, the stage where man looks to be a part of a project, to socialise with others, to have the feeling of belonging. This stage is called social needs, the midpoint of all needs, as stated by Maslow. Managers, leaders can use this to build a team that is connected outside the working spaces and keep the teammates connected. This will ensure that the team doesn't disengage and only focus on the task at hand.

3) Understanding that all members of the team are not the same. –

A leader who can understand that a person in a team whose work rate is below the average of all teammates may not necessarily be a bad teammate, some people bring more to the team than their performance. They could be bringing the motivation for the other workers to not lose morale.

4) Performance appraisal and reward programs. –

A team can only be appraised if the work can translate to profits, a good team dynamic would allow for opportunities for all members to be appraised which should happen, if all members are not appraised to some extent it could lead to dissent for all those not appraised leading to issues regarding the chemistry within the group.

5) Structure. –

Having a structure becomes integral to making and maintaining a high-performance team, as without establishing structures like communication channels, it would lead to miscommunication and no record of reports being made. A high-performance team can end up wasting resources and can become blindsided by this oversight.

6) Authority relationships. -

The methodology, as stated above, might seem to be similar to how a manager might opt for a country club management system where employees are prioritised, but still maintaining a strong and fair leadership strategy should be sought as keeping the teammates unionised could lead to their bargaining power be greater than that of the manager. A driven group is more likely to lead to ego clashes and sensitive situations, which should be treated clinically with the utmost care, as a mishap in that scenario could lead to an internal fissure of the team, leading to mistrust and other such issues.

A good, powerful, just leader who can understand, communicate effectively the needs required and keep a good working atmosphere, keeping in mind to work on the morale and motivations of the team while not losing sight of the bigger objective at hand, is a good leader. Keeping in mind to become a situational leader who can adopt the various styles of leadership and trusting the team to give them the autonomy they need to fulfil their's and organisational goals is a leader who can lead a high-performance team.

Conclusion

A high-performance team is an ideal scenario for all managers, but there are a lot of considerations that need to be taken into account for having a team capable of high performance and performing with that in mind. There need not be the 'perfect hire', but the vision, implementations and control of result-making areas can make any team a high-performing one.

References and Citations

¹ Stephen Covey, *Stephen Covey Quote*, <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/867287>.

² Cloudflare <https://thesweeneyagency.com/blog/the-7-types-of-team-personality/>.