

Team Building - an elixir to success



It takes great leadership to build great teams. Leaders who are not afraid to course correct, make the difficult decisions and establish standards of performance that are constantly being met - and improving at all times. History has shown us that it takes a special kind of leader with unique competencies and skills to successfully build great companies and teams.

Building companies requires the know-how to build long-lasting teams. This is why most managers never become leaders and why most leaders never reach the highest pinnacle of leadership success. It requires the ability to master the "art of people" and knowing how to maneuver hundreds (if not thousands) of people at the right place and at the right time. It means knowing how each person thinks and how to best utilize their competencies rightly at all times. It's playing a continuous chess match - knowing that every wrong move that is made can cost the company hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars.

There are six ways successful teams are built to last:

1. Be Aware of How You Work - As the leader of the



team, you must be extremely aware of your leadership style and techniques: Are they as effective as you think? How well are they accepted by the team you are attempting to lead?

Evaluate yourself and be critical about where you can improve, especially in areas that will benefit those you are a leading.

2. Get to Know the Rest of the Team - Much like you need to hold yourself accountable for your actions to assure you maximise performance and results, you must make the time to get to know your team and encourage camaraderie. Give



importance to caring & understanding the needs of your team, embracing differences and helping colleagues experience their significance. Gathering intelligence means learning what defines the strengths and capabilities of your team - the real assets that each member brings to the table, those they leave behind and those yet to be developed. All great leaders know exactly what buttons to push and when to push them. They are experts at activating the talent that surrounds them. They are equally as effective at matching unique areas of subject matter expertise and / or competencies to solve problems and seek new solutions. Fully knowing your team means that you have invested the time to understand how they are wired to think and what is required to motivate them to

For example, I once inherited an employee who wasn't very good at his specific job. Instead of firing him, I took the time to get to know him and utilised his natural talents as a strategic facilitator who could keep all of the moving parts within the department in proper alignment and in lock-step communication. This person helped our team operate more efficiently and saved the company money by avoiding the bad decisions they previously made because of miscommunications. He was eventually promoted into a special projects manager role. A team should operate as a mosaic whose unique strengths and differences convert into a powerful united force.

excel beyond what is expected from them. Think of your team as puzzle pieces that can be placed together in a variety of ways.

3. Clearly Define Roles & Responsibilities - When you successfully complete the team step up, you can then more effectively and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of those on your team. Now, don't assume this is an easy step; in



fact, you'll often find that people's ideal roles lay outside their job descriptions. Each of your team member's responsibilities must be interconnected and dependent upon one another.

This is not unlike team sports, where some players are known as "system players" - meaning that, although they may not be the most talented person on the team, they know how to work best within the "system." This is why you must have a keen eye for talent that can evaluate people not only on their ability to play a particular role - but even more so on whether they fit the workplace culture (the system) and will be a team player.

4. Be Proactive with Feedback - Feedback is the key to assuring any team is staying on track, but more importantly that it is improving each day. Feedback should be proactive and constant. Many leaders are prone to wait until a problem occurs before they give feedback. Feedback is simply the art of great communication. It should be something that is part of one's natural



dialogue. Feedback can be both formal and informal. In fact, if it becomes too structured and stiff, it becomes difficult for the feedback to be authentic and impactful. Take the time to remind someone of how and what they can be

doing better. Learn from them. Don't complicate the process of constructive feedback. Feedback is two-way communication.

5 Acknowledge and Reward - With proactive feedback comes acknowledgement and reward. People love recognition, but are most appreciative of respect. Take the time to give your teammates the proper accolades they have earned and deserve. Many leaders take performance for granted because they don't believe that one should be rewarded for



"doing their job." At a time when people want to feel as if they are making a difference, be a thoughtful leader and reassure your team that you are paying attention to their efforts. Being genuine in your recognition and respect goes a long way towards building loyalty and trust. It organically ignites extra effort! When people are acknowledged, their work brings them greater satisfaction and becomes more purposeful.

6. Always Celebrate Success - At a time when uncertainty is being dealt with each day, you must take the time to celebrate success. This goes beyond acknowledgment - this is about taking a step-back and reflecting on what you have accomplished and what you have learned throughout the journey. In today's fast-paced, rapidly changing world of work, people are not taking



enough time to understand why they were successful and how their success reverberated and positively impacted those around them. Leaders fall into the

trap of self-aggrandisement - because of what their teams accomplished - rather than celebrating the success stories that in many cases required tremendous effort, sacrifice and perseverance. Celebration is a short-lived activity. Don't ignore it. Take the time to live in the moment and remember what allowed you to cross the finish line. Leaders are only as successful as their teams and the great ones know that with the right team dynamics, decisions and diverse personalities, everyone wins in the end. ■

Source : Extracts from a presentation by Ms. Shruti Tripathi from Amity University at EPCH's seminar on the topic