



DEVELOPING A HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM

Getting a group of individuals to perform as one unit and work simultaneously towards one goal is not an easy task, especially when confronted by turbulent times. As defined by the Harvard Business Review, *“a team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable”*. From our experience, there are a number of factors that need to be in place for this to develop. This PDF will provide you with an overview of what we believe it takes to develop the high performance team from just a collection of individuals who are working disparately from one another.

1. DO YOU HAVE A STRONG PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES AT YOUR CORE?

The first thing you must do as the leader is to engage the group both emotionally and rationally about the direction that you wish to take them. Why should they go on a journey with you? It is vital that you paint the picture and evoke emotions in them. They will not know where it is you are taking them. That it is why you must not only convey the logical aspects of the why, but also the emotional aspects of the outcome when it is achieved. The vision must be compelling otherwise there will be a failure to commit at the outset. Along with this it is also vital that you establish and get your team on board with some common values that everyone buys into. How will this team work together? What principles will underpin the decisions that are made? We are naturally drawn to things that fall closely in alignment with our values, and our beliefs. Engage your team in this process and get them to take part in this process.

2. ROLE CLARITY AND ROLE ACCEPTANCE

Once your team are on board with the vision and have defined the values they will work to, it is vital that you sit down and discuss the roles that members of the team will play to whilst going on this journey. Whilst you may be clear about the role that this person will play, they may not necessarily accept the role. Again, it is vital that your team take ownership over this process and are able to engage in the discussion with you and define the role with you. If a role is imposed, it will often be the case that the team member will disengage.

3. IDENTIFY YOUR PERFORMANCE GOALS

The next stage in the process is to agree what the team's performance objectives are. These should be factors which are within the performer's control. Ensure you agree what the success measures are and again, allow them to engage in this process.



4. FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

It is often the case in performance management that weaknesses are highlighted and areas of incompetence are brought to the attention of the performer. From there, agreed actions are put in place for the performer to go away and work on. We believe in the opposite to this approach. Whilst it is important to recognise what your weaknesses are, it is of far greater importance to work on the person's strengths and look at how these can be fostered. The strengths approach will often enable the individual to flood their weaknesses and will leave them feeling more motivated, more engaged and more empowered, resulting in higher levels of performance on a day to day basis.

5. DISPLAY AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

It is vital that you as the leader, lead with your authentic self and you stay true to your values and beliefs. It is often the case where an individual will get promoted to a position of influence, only for them to change their way of working because that is how they believe a leader is meant to behave. There is no right or wrong way to lead. The art of leadership is engaging the hearts and minds of the people you lead and that is by being yourself.

6. ENSURE COMMUNICATION IS OPEN AND HONEST

One of the biggest flaws in teams that fail to perform is their inability to speak openly and honestly about the factors which affect them as a team. Meetings take place about meetings, and individuals leave and have their own meetings on the corridor and the tit for tat begins. When the team gets to this stage, they are in trouble. It is vital that your team members feel comfortable talking in an open and honest fashion. For this to occur it is your job to create a trusting environment. The best meetings are those where a healthy level of conflict is present. The worst are those where nothing gets said in the meeting and everything gets said outside.

7. RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

Developing emotional intelligence within your team is vital if you are to create a high performance team. This is about being aware of the impact that you have on others. Often you don't know what you don't know and you will continue to work in the way you have always done. However, this may not be appropriate. It is therefore vital that the lines of communication remain open and awareness can develop as to the impact each member of the team has on one another.

This article was produced by the Metaphorics Performance Consultants Team. Any attempt to reproduce or disseminate this article to third parties will be in breach of Copyright regulations.