



HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

An environment of trust, communication and passion

BY DUSTIN WEAVER

Are you leading a high performing team? The term almost seems cliché in the fast-paced, execution-based world we live in today. But what does this phrase really mean and how do you know if you are guiding your group in the right direction, accomplishing the right goals and most importantly, fulfilling Maslow's *hierarchy of needs*? As American psychologist Abraham Maslow once said, "If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life."

Therefore, as a leader, how can you facilitate your team into becoming the most capable they can be as both individuals and as a collective group? Secondly, how do you know if your team is running at its optimum mastery to strategize, execute and fulfill all project needs? Are your team members fulfilled, gracious and excited about their opportunities to add value to the organization? Let's focus on the three tenets of high performing teams: trust, communication and passion.

Tenet #1: Trust

Trust is defined in the bible as a bold, confident, sure security or action based on that security. Ultimately, it is what we do because of the faith we have been given. Therefore, how do you ensure or implore trust among your team? First, faith must be given to each individual that the team is pulling for one another to be successful in their venture.

According to business executive, author and chemical engineer Jack Welch, trust begins with generosity and continues with clear vision and feedback. Being generous in the workplace is not about material gifts, but rather an understanding of giving of your time and attention. It's not just hearing, but really listening to people's

ideas and openly praising, showcasing gratitude and providing recognition. The leader must set the example by being fueled with passion for the team to get the recognition for a job well done and team members being promoted. This engrains security, respect and admiration for one another, which builds a trusting and healthy cultural environment.

Tenet #2: Communication

Communication in the workplace is well understood to be an important factor in the success of tasks and projects, but for high performing teams, it is the epitome of creating the right atmosphere to ensure that everyone is really listening rather than just hearing.

Peter Drucker—the "father of management," whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation—once said, "Listening is not a skill; it's a discipline. Anybody can do it. All you have to do is keep your mouth shut." This seems harsh, but most of the time we listen only to prepare our reply rather than to learn from the speaker. The three rules in communication are as follows: listen first and speak last, involve the entire group in the discussion and finally, articulate the vision and goals clearly so everyone has a clear path to success.

Tenet #3: Passion

Lastly, have you heard the parable of the brick layers? A passer-by stops to admire the work of three men. He asks the first brick-layer what he is doing. The brick layer simply says that he is laying bricks. The passer-by approaches the second brick layer and asks him what he is doing. The second brick layer replies that he is earning a living laying bricks. Lastly, the passer-by approaches the final brick-layer to ask him what he is doing, expecting a similar answer. However, the third brick layer explained how he was

building a grand cathedral, which would house thousands of people and be a monument to the city. It is in the answer provided by the third brick-layer that demonstrates passion—a burning within to be part of the change we wish to impress in our work and to see the larger vision. According to *Business Insider*, "The people that achieve their greatest success are passionate people that lead, support, and mentor others with zeal and zest for the work and the people."

As a leader, you set the tone to fan the flames of passion in your team. Start by asking yourself if you believe in your product or service. Get to the "why," and that will fuel the rest. Secondly, use competition to excite and change the atmosphere in your group and then publically praise the success.

Final Thoughts

In closing, leading and building a high performing team is not always about getting everything right or always succeeding. Although that is the goal to reach and fulfill the vision, a team can learn more in its valleys of failures, challenges and difficulties rather than staying on top of the mountain. Therefore, focus on building trust, on creating great communication and on instilling passion for the work, driving towards excellence and winning in your team. So break-through expectations, outperform the norms and blaze a new path into the future. ✪



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