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TOP TIPS TO
BUILD A HIGH
PERFORMING
TEAM

EQUALIISE

ADDING VALUE THROUGH PEOPLE

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LOUISE FRAYNE IS THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF EQUALIISE SPECIALISING IN SUPPORTING THE PRIVATE, PUBLIC SECTOR AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR TO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY SERVICES BY ADDING VALUE THROUGH PEOPLE.

With over 20 years of extensive experience, working at a senior level in highly complex organisations Louise specialises in the delivery of high quality bespoke solutions to develop people to achieve more. She brings particular expertise in transformation programmes to build organisational resilience and anticipate external change – incorporating leadership development programmes for managers to lead change effectively; workshops and support for junior members of staff to believe they are empowered to be creative and innovative to influence change, and; coaching and mentoring for staff at all levels within the organisation. The initiatives Louise has introduced have seen her clients achieve Investor in People status, listings in The Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work for and the National Skills Agency Top 100 Employers of Apprenticeships.

Louise works continuously to develop a wide range of tools to provide interactive and engaging services relevant to: workplace mediation, coaching and mentoring; change management; employee engagement and cultural change; project management and team leadership; strategy development and organisational change; employer branding; recruitment and selection; workforce planning; employee relations; performance management, and; talent management and succession planning. She is an accredited leadership coach, trainer and workplace mediator as well as a licensed user of a range of psychometric tools and personality inventories including Hogan and MBTI.

Louise's approach draws heavily on her varied experience and she is passionate about supporting and encouraging individuals to develop their careers further and organisations to maximise their potential through their people. Louise's style is to develop an open and honest relationship where individuals and organisations feel challenged to think differently, have the opportunity to reflect and feel confident, motivated and committed to move forward and achieve their objectives.

Louise is also a Trustee of Deafkidz International which works to ensure every deaf child lives in a safe, caring and supportive environment, free from poverty, violence and exploitation.

ADDING VALUE THROUGH PEOPLE

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SO, WHAT IS THE VALUE OF BUILDING A TEAM? WHEN SOMEONE TALKS ABOUT AN EFFECTIVE TEAM WHAT IMAGES SPRING TO YOUR MIND? A TEAM THAT WORKS WELL TOGETHER WITH MINIMAL EFFORT REQUIRED TO KEEP IT THAT WAY? A TEAM THAT CONSISTENTLY DELIVERS RESULTS? A TEAM THAT EXCEEDS ALL EXPECTATIONS OF IT?

Sounds simple doesn't it? Yet, the effort required to build an effective team is often underestimated and consequently the strengths of the team are often not leveraged to maximum effect. And with the pace of life and work rapidly increasing more and more teams are experiencing new challenges, and don't know how to deal with it effectively.

Highly effective managers across the UK recognise how important team building within the workplace really is. Through carefully planned team building activities they focus on specific outcomes which, in turn, will lead to increased productivity and an improved level of individual and team performance.

Here are our top tips to build a high performing team.

TAKE A STEP BACK AND PLAN

It's all too easy to get carried away when tasked with either building a new team or taking over an already established team. Poor planning will inevitably lead to failure and a demoralised team, so it really does pay off to think about your goals and how you are going to articulate them. What are the team objectives? What do you expect from your team and what can they expect from you? Where does your team fit into the overall organisational strategy? And what contribution will your team be making to the mission, vision and values of the organisation?

A good place to start is a Team Charter which has a golden thread to the organisational strategy.

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THE GOLDEN THREAD

You can lead by example and suggest that the team undertakes a Day in the Life Analysis where you map out the team's daily activity, discuss with the team if time is being spent well, what would they suggest the team does differently and/or better and can energy be put to better

effect on other projects, for example. By being open and transparent with your team, asking for their ideas and suggestions will help with building trust and rapport.

HAVE YOU GOT THE RIGHT PEOPLE?

Once you know what the team ambition is, talk to your team about their skills and strengths; don't assume that you know or you will miss a trick and undermine trust. This includes behaviours, which are again an important consideration and merit very little time and attention.

This helps you to consider if you need to let some people go, and recruit new members to the team, or whether you need to upskill your existing team.

If you are recruiting new people think:

- = The roles
- = The recruitment process
- = The onboarding experience

Time spent on this is time well spent in the long run. Bad hires have a significant impact on overall team morale, wastes resources and causes resentment.

With the team in place use your Team Charter to clearly set out the team's objectives, your expectations and how people will be held to account. Every member of the team should understand their role, how they will help to deliver the team's objectives and overall contribute to organisational success.

INVEST, INVEST, INVEST IN YOUR TEAM

Just as rapport and trust is important, so is investing in your team and their development, and understanding their ambitions. Get to know your team as individuals to better build trust and collaboration. This helps develop respect too.

Ensure you know and understand what further training is required, or how specific opportunities can be identified to better develop their skills. The induction programme is equally important to your team, both for the individual joining the team and for the team itself. As teams develop they naturally progress through the Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing stages before they become a cohesive team.

Don't just limit training to the very beginning of team formation. The team will require ongoing training and development to help them become more effective. This is because as the organisation evolves, so will your team's needs and therefore training needs to be maintained as a priority.

Spend time with your team individually. Talk to them, ask questions, listen carefully, hold team meetings or have an away day to really set out objectives etc, going forward. Identify the leaders of tomorrow and nurture them.

TOP TIPS TO
BUILD A HIGH PERFORMING TEAM

Always give your team timely feedback about their performance. Provide examples of what went well, and what could be done differently and/or better.

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FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

BE THE ROLE MODEL
THAT INSPIRES

One of your top priorities has to be setting a good example and inspiring your team to keep growing and developing to become a high performing team. Take the time to understand what motivates your team and believe it or not this often is not money!

Always celebrate success, highlight great performance, progress made etc, and your team will want to keep pleasing you too.

SAY THANK YOU

Saying thank you costs nothing! Research shows time and time again just how far a simple thank you goes with teams. Consider having a team lunch every month, spend time talking to your team and getting to know them as people. Make a point of remembering small details and then following up at a later date; this really does make people feel valued.

SO...

Building a high performing team is something that all managers want to achieve. But often what's missing is the planning of how to get from A to B. To do this, and do it well follow the top tips above and watch your team grow.

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“Pace – excellent. Challenging style very good, involvement of participants very good; felt that dynamics within team were assessed and incorporated into day.”

“Fantastically paced – challenging yet not threatening; good use of different exercises – individual/reflection/active/team exercises.”

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CASE STUDY

IN 2015, I WAS APPROACHED BY A SMALL CHARITY IN EAST LONDON WHICH WAS EMBARKING ON A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE PROGRAMME TO STREAMLINE ITS PROCESSES AND WAYS OF WORKING TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES TO ITS CLIENT GROUP.

This was a small team, and all members of staff had considerable length of service with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer, who had joined in the last three years. There was a long-standing conflict between two members of the team, which was having an impact on the wider team, and coupled with poor communication there was a real risk of the new management information system project not being delivered and service delivery adversely affected as the charity was unable to manage an increase in demand.

Through carefully managed discussions with the CEO, I drafted a programme which would focus on building rapport and trust across the team, and encouraging each team member to identify with their own preferences and how this could in turn affect their communication styles. Further exercises explored why appreciating the difference in others was so important to harness creativity and innovation and the value this could bring to growing the organisation in the longer term, including anticipating external change and building organisational resilience.

On the second of the two team building days I encouraged the team to think about what change meant for them, and to identify and articulate their fears. The team building programme culminated with the development of a team charter which included the desired behaviours the team felt were essential to effective team working and an implementation road map to implement the new system. This included appropriate identification of risks, mitigation actions and co-dependencies.

The conflict between the two members of staff was much improved and feedback from the team positively identified the new ways of working was embraced by all.

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