

leadership instalments

Build Your Leadership Team

By Dan Gaynor

As leaders progress into bigger assignments the scope of their work grows to include more people and a larger role in the corporate mission. As the job gets bigger the need for help becomes more apparent. At some point all leaders reach this defining point. The most effective build strong skilled leadership teams to help them carry the load, creating space to move into the essential culture and team building work of senior leadership. Others press on trying to do it all by themselves, they never become effective in the senior role.

The ability to build an effective leadership team is a prerequisite to corporate growth and success as a senior leader. Here are five factors to think about as you consider the development of your leadership team, they apply whether you are leading one supervisor or many leaders as a president or vice president.

1. Choose Well: Assembling a great leadership team starts with selecting the right people so hire and fire for character. Contrary to popular thinking, not everyone is cut out for leadership. Many of the best doers make lousy leaders. Effective leaders have specific attributes that enable success, they are unselfish, influential, courageous and empathetic to name just a few. Every successful senior executive knows that the process of building a strong capable leadership team includes hiring the right people and removing the wrong ones.

2. Trust them: You cannot build a strong leadership team without trusting the men and women you appoint. You must trust them to give you an honest effort and to do what they believe is right. They will make mistakes, these are part of the learning experience. Provided they are honest mistakes made in an effort to do a good job, see them as teaching and confidence building opportunities. If you beat them up for honest mistakes, you'll teach them to avoid all risks and any initiative you hope to cultivate will be lost.

3. Give them a common mission: Your subordinate leaders need a clear understanding of the mission they are part of and you need to make sure they are enthused about it. Remember, they are responsible for their part of a larger mission. They can't lead it well if they don't understand it or care about it. There is no room for indifference on your leadership team.



4. Teach them: Great leadership takes time and experience. One of your most important roles as a senior leader is to pass on what you have learned to others. The right people will learn with or without your mentoring, but they'll learn a lot faster with it, and your efforts to teach them will send a clear message that you care about them. Mentoring leaders create loyal dedicated followers.

5. Keep watch over them: Finally, remember that empowering subordinate leaders does not release you from your responsibility for the results they produce. You are delegating your authority. Doing the work for them is big mistake, however you must know how they are doing so you can step in when you're needed with the feedback and coaching they need to help them succeed and build confidence.

The organization will be lifted or limited by your ability to build a strong leadership team. If you cannot empower others to help with the leadership load, you will limit your own growth and that of the organization.

Discussion Questions:

1. When did you first feel the need to share the leadership load?
2. Are the members of your leadership team passionate about the mission they are part of?
3. How much time do you spend passing on what you have learned about leadership to the members of your team? How do you go about it?

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