

BUILDING HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

Building high performance teams takes discipline:

- Disciplined People
- Disciplined Thought
- Disciplined Action

Disciplined People

Build Effective Leadership

The first stage in building a high performance team is ensuring high performance leadership. See “Level 5 Leadership” in the Leadership Development section.

Build the Right Team

Get the right people on the team and build cohesiveness through establishing trust, debate, commitment, accountability and focus on achieving collective results. Don't discourage dissent, but if dissenters fail to commit to group objectives once they've been fully heard and their views considered then they will probably be better off the team. *Letting the wrong people hang around is unfair to all the right people.*

People are wrong if:

- You know you wouldn't hire them again;
- You'd be pleased rather than disappointed if they said they were leaving.

The right team will produce great results – regardless of any rewards or incentives – simply because they could not contemplate any other way of doing things. The wrong team will not.

People aren't your greatest asset – unless they're the right people!

- When in doubt, don't hire. Keep looking. A company should limit its growth based on its ability to attract the right people.
- When you know you need to make people changes, act. But first make sure you don't simply have someone in the wrong position.
- Put your best people on your biggest *opportunities*, not your biggest problems. And if you sell off your problems, don't sell off your best people.

Move people around to see where they might flourish: *“Every minute devoted to putting the proper person in the proper slot is worth weeks of time later.”* – Colman Mockler, CEO Gillette.

Key points:

- Before asking “what” and setting vision and strategy, ask “who” – assemble your dream team then co-create the vision.
- Be rigorous, not ruthless. The best performing companies rarely use lay-offs or restructuring to improve performance.
- Encourage people to debate vigorously to get the best solutions, then unify behind decisions.

Disciplined Thought

Confront the Brutal Facts (But Never Lose Faith)

Develop a simple but insightful frame of reference for decisions then, once all of the facts have been assembled, the decision becomes self-evident.

Avoid ruling by charisma – people hide brutal facts from charismatic leaders. Too much strength/power becomes a problem as people worry more about the leader’s reaction than the facts themselves.

Create a climate where truth is heard.

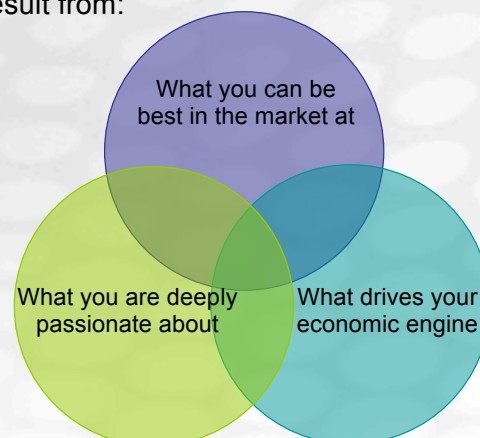
- Lead with questions, not answers. Holding open agenda forums can be a good way of teasing out hidden issues. Level 5 leaders have the humility to know they don’t have all the answers and are only as good as their team.
- Use dialogue and debate, not coercion.
- If things go wrong, find out what happened without apportioning blame, then take action to make sure it doesn’t happen again.
- Build in “red flag” mechanisms to make sure you get feedback from customers before they desert you – listen to the hard truths from the market.

What separates high performing organisations is not the absence of difficulties, but how they deal with them when they arise.

Relentless Focus on a Single-Minded Proposition

Focus on one simple, unifying concept: this is your “Single-Minded Proposition”. Everything else is irrelevant.

That concept should result from:



Just because something is your core business it doesn't mean you can be the best in the market at it. If you cannot be the best in market you will need to re-focus your business around something that can form the basis of a single-minded proposition.

Set up a strategic guidance group where it is:

- Used to gain understanding about important issues facing the organisation
- Used by CEO to guide decisions
- Made up of between 5 and 12 members
- A forum for healthy debate to surface issues
- Made up of people from different levels within the organisation, all of whom have a high level of expertise in their areas
- A standing body which meets regularly (between once a week and once a quarter)
- An informal body with no executive responsibility

Disciplined Action

Culture of Discipline

Everyone would like to be the best, but most organisations lack the discipline to work out with ego-less clarity what they can be best at, and lack the will to do whatever it takes to turn the potential into reality.

High performing teams:

- Avoid bureaucracy and hierarchy, opting to create a culture of discipline and an ethic of entrepreneurship
- Build a culture of freedom and responsibility within the context of their single-minded proposition
- Fill the culture with self-disciplined people willing to go to extreme lengths to fulfil their responsibilities
- Don't confuse discipline with disciplinarianism
- Have clear constraints
- Don't get distracted by extraneous activities
- Hire people who don't need to be managed so they can focus on managing the system, not the people

Descriptors:

Disciplined	Fastidious	Focused
Rigorous	Systematic	Accountable
Determined	Methodical	Responsible
Dogged	Workmanlike	Precise
Diligent	Demanding	Consistent

Technological Discipline

High performing organisations approach technological change in a calm, quite and deliberate way, thinking about how it can be used to support their single-minded

proposition. They will not take on new technology for the sake of it or just because that's what everyone else is doing.

If they can see that new technologies can be enablers they will adopt a pioneering attitude and will seek ways of tailoring it to their needs. They will not re-engineer their organisation around the technology unless they can see a tangible benefit in delivering against their single-minded proposition.

Their approach can be summed up as:

PAUSE → THINK → CRAWL → WALK → RUN

Creating Momentum

By adopting the disciplines outlined above, high performance teams create a momentum effect. Discipline breeds more discipline, and great results create the impetus for even better results.

They also create momentum by adhering to their core values and purpose beyond just making money.

The organisations change and adapt over time, and even transformative changes are conducted in a calm and workmanlike manor after full consideration to all the issues involved.

Changes are made on the basis of preserving the core whilst stimulating progress.

Great companies use acquisitions as accelerators of momentum, not creators of it, whilst staying true to their single-minded purpose.

OVERNIGHT SUCCESS IS USUALLY THE RESULT OF A DECADE OF HARD WORK.

And remember: profit is like breathing; it is essential to life but is not the entire point of it. What is your purpose beyond profit?

WHY STRIVE FOR GREATNESS?

- IF YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT AND IF YOU BELIEVE IN IT, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE NOT TRYING TO MAKE IT GREAT.
- IF YOU'RE NOT, YOU'RE PROBABLY IN THE WRONG BUSINESS.
- YOU WILL HAVE THE ULTIMATE SATISFACTION OF KNOWING YOUR TIME ON EARTH WAS WELL SPENT ON SOMETHING THAT MATTERED.

Source: adapted from Jim Collins "Good to Great"