

Building A High Performance Team - 5 Simple Steps

By Lyndsay Swinton

There's something not quite right at work. Your colleagues are generally a good bunch and work gets done, but yet you're in early, leave late and a full lunch break is a distant memory.

Chances are you've been down-sized or re-engineered so radically there's zero tolerance for mishaps or delays, and you extend your work day to pick up the slack. What you really need is some help on building a high performance team, to regain that work-life balance we all yearn for.

Step 1 - Master your own destiny

Realise you don't have to be the "boss" to build a high performance team. It's easy to let average performance slip by just because you're not in charge. Always remember - it's your life that is being frittered away by all those extra hours at work, so take control of your work-life and be your own boss, managing your own team.

Step 2 - Put your eggs in one basket

Chances are you're a member or leader of many teams at work. Think about which teams work well and which could do with some care and attention. Do you need to improve all your teams or is it just one? Start small and invest your efforts in improving the team that will make the biggest difference to your working life. As they say, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Step 3 - If you don't know it's broke, how can you fix it?

Regardless of how established the team is, invite constructive feedback about the team's performance. In the classic "[Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing](#)"

team building model, the Storming part is about disagreement, dissent and dissatisfaction. Ask the team's customers what they think. Ask the team what they think about themselves as a group and individually. Learn to recognise the team's strengths, discuss where performance gaps exist and plan to close them.

Step 4 - Proper practice prevents poor performance

Footballers spend 95% of their time practising for the big game. How much time do you and your team invest in practicing basic skills and team work? Even if you spend 1 hour in an effective team meeting, planning who's doing what and when, it's still less than 3% of your working week. Building and maintaining a high performance team doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming, when you build it into your regular work-life.

Step 5 - A stitch in time

Keep going. Get your priority team functioning well and establish a team maintenance regime. Then think about the other teams in your life. What is it about the more productive teams that you could replicate in the less effective teams? Behaviour breeds behaviour, and as you develop a reputation for being an effective team leader or member, you'll be pleasantly surprised how much easier it is to make improvements elsewhere.

As my grandmother said, don't have a wish-bone where your back-bone should be! High performance teams are not conjured from thin air – they are a direct result of thought, plans and action. Follow these five simple steps for building high performance teams and enjoy longer lunch breaks again.

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