

## **Peak Performance Teams AND Making Magic Happen**

When you have worked on a team that performs and getting great results, you realize that teams or groups of people can band together for a common goal and really make magic happen!

I joined a team that had been working together for 5 years, replacing the manager. I realised that I needed to find my place in this team – listening and learning. They had successfully delivered a highly visible and customer-facing technology solution enabling a startup to take significant market share.

When I managed the build of a Call Centre, leading the technology stream for a new business, I observed the methodology used to recruit, train and operate a 200-seat business process Call Centre. This helped me understand the rigor required to create peak performance teams who would be measured on sales performance.

Through these experiences I concluded that a team can achieve amazing outcomes that individuals (skills and experience) could never realise and the ‘whole’ was demonstrably greater than the sum of the parts.

Here are key management guidelines for creating Peak Performance Teams:

- A team must meet daily for 15 min. This time is where the manager communicates/updates on what is going on in other departments and what initiatives are important for the company. Also, this is an opportunity to clear any issues (remove obstacles) for the team in achieving daily goals. Daily effectiveness ensures your team is always focused on the most important activities and today this can change DAILY!
- A weekly 1-hour team meeting is best used for training and improving skills (and review KPI performance) as well as reviewing overall team delivery and upcoming events. Assuming you know the skills of your people and what areas they would like to grow as individuals you can guide the skills sharing and up-skilling of your whole team. Educating is the KEY.
- Weekly one-on-one time is for each person to report on how they are tracking to objectives. This ensures a culture based on achievement. I always recommend that each person puts together a weekly report – this is great management training and ensures each person has a weekly story to tell. Also allows time to remove personal obstacles and give recognition of their performance contribution.
- A Vision/Mission statement that is developed with the team is visible in a workplace, preferable in A1 size with great marketing colours.

- Positions Descriptions are consistent with the Vision/Mission.
- Flexible working hours are important and go hand-in-hand with an achievement-based culture. It encourages a person to be efficient and meet objectives rather than working to set hours.
- Open door policy needs to be accompanied by an open-mind policy. It is proven that the boss is not always right. The same results can be achieved in many different ways. This encourages people to challenge and improve.
- Encourage creativity in the way people work and be the problem solver when they get stuck.

There are a number of realisations you may arrive at when managing a team of people. You may not appeal to every person on the team. It is important to allow team mechanics to work in a positive way geared to performance outcomes. Having team and individual goals supports this behavior.

When it comes to leading people, I found there are distinct groups; ‘those on-board’, ‘those on-board if the majority are’ and ‘those that do their own thing’. As a manager, it is important to know who is who and adapt different management styles to each group.

Clearly, those that are on-board need to be stretched. They are generally hungry and need to be what I call ‘entertained’ to maximize your opportunity for productivity and sense of achievement of the overall team. This person could in fact be up to 25-30% more productive. I always have a program of work set aside for this group and call this ‘special projects’. I have found that it is totally win/win:

- I get key initiatives completed
- I get activities which are icing on cake done
- I can focus on managing the team
- They get to do work that normally gets done by SME’s or managers
- They get mentoring and coaching
- They get to learn a new skills to progress careers
- The organisation maximises productivity
- The organisation keeps talented and motivated achievers
- The organisation’s culture is positively influenced
- Overall there are those in the middle and sometimes bottom group that decide it is worth getting motivated as there are BENEFITS!!!

Those in the ‘on-board if the majority are’ group are the ones to focus on. They can be swayed and I believe are the true measure of a managers’ success. This group has usually been doing their current job for a while and have a lot of the detailed knowledge about the organisation and how it operates. Getting the productivity up by 10-25% really depends on how you address the issues which they believe are standing in the way of achievement (i.e. remove frustrating obstacles). Remember, this group

(i.e. mostly risk averse) don't like to rock the boat, do like to sit on the fence and are looking for trust, integrity and consistency.

Last but not least, 'those that do their own thing'. I have mixed feelings about this group given the emotional journey that usually occurs. On a more serious note, this is the group that can produce the greatest improvements! I am most proud of the many individuals who have leaped out of this group and become Peak Performers. They generally find opportunities within other departments. Unfortunately, some leave the organisation to make this change as it is extremely difficult for many to make significant change in the same environment.

You will save huge amounts of time and hit the ground running by identifying who is who. Be the LEADER not always the MANAGER! It is too much hard work to do it all yourself, however it is your responsibility to create an environment where a person can excel.

The final key aspect is more controversial. I have always taken the risk and socialised with my teams/organisations. This can be through sport, morning/afternoon tea, lunches, dinners and drinks after work. I firmly believe that you can be the boss during hours and then take that hat off and be yourself out of the workspace or office hours. It is a bit like the saying 'what goes on 'on tour', stays 'on tour'. After all we spend up to 10 hours a day 5 days a week with a team and in operations environments, sometimes more, why not let people get to know each other – with rules. You can't touch the hearts and minds of people by being a remote manager!

This falls into the category of Open and Honest and as long as people know and respect the rules, the benefits have always out-weighed the risks. I personally have built relationships with people that I worked with from 1987-2017, spoken at weddings, become a Godmother and developed lifetime friendships.

There have been many magical moments over the years and I am always motivated to find or build a Peak Performance team so I can participate and **MAKE MAGIC HAPPEN!**