



How to Coach Your Team to Performance Excellence Guide

Web: www.8020Center.com





Building a great team

If you can lead and coach your team to a level where they are performing to a very high standard, they will be doing great things for your business.

A lot of what it takes to build up a high performance team, is making time to coach your team, and being available for them for issues that arise. Creating a high performance team also counts on you empowering and trusting your team and not trying to micro-manage every aspect of their work. This type of approach leads to mutual respect and will motivate most individuals in your team to perform to a high standard.

Creating a high performance team takes time and energy on your part. You will need to guide your team and lead them effectively, helping them to learn which are the best kind of decisions and which have the potential to cause problems for your business.

You also need to create the right kind of culture, one in which your team are able to perform to a high standard. A lot of this is about your behaviour. Your team should be able to come to you when a mistake has occurred and work with you to fix the problem, putting in place procedures to ensure that the problem does not recur. This is about developing an open environment with effective two-way communication.

How to develop a team that reaches levels of performance excellence

Below are seven tips for how to go about coaching your team to become a high-performance team.

1. Set clear targets and expectations for your team

Your team do not know what their goals and targets are unless you tell them. You need to do this in a manner that is clear to understand. This is really divided up into two main areas: targets and expectations.

a) Targets

Both your team and every individual within it need to understand how they fit into the team and how they need to contribute to its success. This is communicated to your employees and team

Web: www.8020Center.com





through clear objectives that are SMART. SMART is a simple acronym used for objective setting. The acronym stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timeframe

Each objective that you set for your team and the individuals within it needs to meet this set of criteria. Take a look over recent objectives that you have set individuals. Do they really fit all of these? Maybe they had a timeframe but were not realistic within that timeframe. Maybe the target simply wasn't measurable at all.

For your team to be able to work towards their objectives effectively those targets need to have all of the SMART elements. If an objective is not realistic, the team may just dismiss it as being impossible, or they may try to work on it, but it is unlikely that they will achieve it. If it doesn't have a timeframe, the team will work on it at their own pace, which may not meet company requirements. If it isn't measurable, it is impossible to know whether or not the person achieved the goal. If it isn't achievable, the team are setting out to fail from the get-go. And if it is not specific, then it won't be clear what the team has to achieve and they may not work on the right thing for the business.

Targets that you set should always be stretching but within reach. Those targets that are out of the team's reach will quickly be given up on. And those that are not stretching will not motivate your team.

With SMART objectives your team will be clear about what they need to achieve, how and by when. This will go a long way towards making them high performing.

b) Expectations

Expectations are to do with being clear about the behaviour that you expect in the office, especially in relation to areas such as start and finish times, length of lunch breaks and other breaks throughout the day, how to book annual leave and the process for sickness or other necessary absences from work.

Web: www.8020Center.com





These may be areas where you think things should be obvious, but your staff may have a different understanding, or may have worked in businesses where the expectations were different to yours.

Simply spelling out clearly what the procedures are in these areas can go a long way towards avoiding misunderstandings in your team, or having your team make their own decisions about the processes for these areas, that do not work well with your thoughts. One example of this is that a member of staff might think it is OK to request annual leave just a couple of days before they want to take the time out, rather than giving you sufficient notice to plan for someone to cover for them.

To avoid problems such as the type outlined above, which can lead to resentment, it is advisable to have clear policies and procedures for all of the types of issues highlighted here.

2. Communicate well and have channels of communication open

Good communication is critical to the running of a high performance team. Poor communication will ultimately lead to mistakes, issues, misunderstandings, and poor decisions being taken.

One of the most important steps that you can take in coaching your team to high performance is being *available* for communication with them. If you are always too busy or unavailable in other ways, this will not help them to understand what you need and to grow and develop. It also may lead to them believing that you think that they are unimportant to the success of the business. Finally, you can't coach your staff effectively if you don't communicate with them.

Be clear with your team when you are communicating. Allow as little room as possible for miscommunications and misunderstandings. Some messages may need to be communicated a number of times, perhaps first through a group meeting, then through a written communication such as email, finally following up with a one to one discussion if necessary. Other messages may only require a brief email or a one to one meeting. Don't use flowery words or make things sound more complicated than they have to be. This will turn off your team and not get the best results from them.

Be sure to communicate to your team what is important and why it is critical. If you don't, your team can't be expected to know or to be able to make effective decisions. Conversely, providing them with all of the appropriate information will help them to be able to do a great job for the

Web: www.8020Center.com





business, as they will be making decisions based on knowledge and information, rather than guesswork.

Be sure to use communication effectively to also give both positive and constructive feedback where required. If you do not communicate to your team when they have done well and why you think that, they won't know for sure whether they have done a good job or not. Positive feedback is also extremely motivating for most people, encouraging them to continue to do well. Providing of constructive feedback through coaching helps an individual to understand where they may have improved upon their performance, enabling them to do a better job next time, so is also essential.

3. Be coordinated and consistent

In addition to having clear objectives and good communication, it is important that you are coordinated in your approach towards the work that needs to be completed.

If you change the goalposts or priorities every few weeks or even days, your team will quickly become confused about what they should be doing and when. Additionally if you give them too much to do and don't help them to prioritise, they may make poor decisions about what is important. Always be clear and consistent about what is important and be sure to coordinate the plan for the work that needs doing so that your team can achieve success and be high-performing. Uncoordinated teams that receive inconsistent messages stand little chance of performing to a high standard.

4. Empower your staff

Staff empowerment is essential for high performance teams. You need to be able to empower your team to make appropriate decisions and support them in this. You also have to coach them to make decisions well.

Empowerment requires that you let go of the reins just a little and allow your team members to make good, educated decisions about what they are doing. This is important because it is far more motivating for most individuals to be able to make decisions for themselves, rather than having to come and ask you every time a small decision is required. Making the right decisions means that your team will become more confident in what they are doing, and more effective in their jobs as that confidence grows.

Web: www.8020Center.com





To make the best decisions, your team needs to be trained effectively so that they understand what the right decisions for the business might be. If they do not have all of the information at their fingertips, chances are that they will make damaging decisions. You need to ensure that you protect against that, by providing the information that they need to them.

Essential for the empowerment of a team to reach high performance is the lack of a blame culture. If you empower your team, they will make mistakes from time to time. What's important is that they learn from their mistakes and take action to correct them for next time, not making the same mistake over and over again. When a mistake occurs, you need to be able to coach the individual in such a way that they are able to figure out where they went wrong and put things right. If the team feel that they will be blamed for the making of mistakes, they will likely cover them up, making potentially damaging issues harder for you to spot.

5. Encourage an entrepreneurial approach

Similarly to being open with communication, you need to be open to ideas and suggestions in order to create a high-performance team that can help you to drive your business forward.

Your team is made up of individuals, all of whom had a different upbringing, have a different outlook on life and have different friends and experiences. All of this can help them to provide a different view on decisions that the business could be making to improve. All of these different minds have different perspectives that can make you look at your company in different and interesting new ways. Maybe you don't want every single team member involved in every decision that you make, but it cannot hurt to be open to suggestions on improvement from your staff.

Being listened to by their manager is an important motivator for teams. Showing that you listen to the ideas of individuals in your team and actively encouraging people to come up with new ideas will help your team to improve and become even more high-performing, especially if they see some of their ideas come into fruition and achieve success for the business.

You might even consider setting up some kind of reward system for the best idea each month or quarter that helps to improve business success. This may drive your team to come up with even more entrepreneurial and interesting ideas than they may otherwise have had, resulting in success for your team and your business.

Web: www.8020Center.com





6. Make the team accountable

While your team must not feel that there is a blame culture, they do still need to be accountable for their actions. If there is no accountability in your team, then there is less incentive for your team to feel responsible for what they do and the outcomes. This balance between blame culture and accountability can be difficult to manage at times, but it is important that you are able to see the difference and to do this effectively.

For example, your team must feel that they are accountable for not meeting objectives that are genuinely SMART. In this instance, you need to understand what they were doing rather than working to the clearly laid out objectives and why.

Accountability is also important for you as the team manager, and you should lead in setting an example in being accountable. If you have made an error, explain to your team why you made that mistake and what you plan to do to avoid it in future. That way you are showing them that you recognise a mistake that you made, but that you are taking responsibility for it and correcting things going forward. Your team will have much more respect for this approach than if you try to hide mistakes that you have made. It will also encourage them to behave in the same way.

7. Celebrate successes

When your team achieves an important milestone, celebrate it with them. This doesn't have to be through a big, expensive celebration. One option might just be to buy them a pizza for lunch, or get some a little beer in on the day of the success after work. Neither of these options has to cost much money if there's not much available to use, but it goes a long way to demonstrate to your team that you are happy with their performance and that you appreciate what they did.

Summary

In summary, it takes time and effort to create a high performance team, but the results are worth the energy expended. You need to be clear with your team what their targets are and

Web: www.8020Center.com





what your expectations are of them. You need to communicate with them effectively, and that includes listening to their ideas – maybe they have a great idea that will improve your business considerably. You also need to create an environment where your team feel safe to express their ideas in the first place and steer away from the kind of working environment where blame for mistakes plays any part. Finally, you should take a consistent and coordinated approach to the work that is required, ensuring that everyone understands the same plan and is working to it effectively. This does not mean that the plan can't change, just that everyone needs to understand what the priorities are at any given time. If you stick to the principles outlined above, you have a good chance of creating a high performance team that will drive your business forward to new levels of success.

Web: www.8020Center.com

