Getting your management team into gear



Jo Clayton

3 Focus Areas for a high performing team

Getting Clear, Getting Real and Getting Better

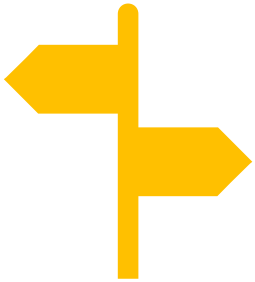
Your management team is likely to be source of untapped potential.
Learn how to leverage the power of a high-performance leadership team

Getting Clear – Well understood and agreed direction

The team needs a clear, well-articulated direction. The beginning of the year is when many of my clients revisit their business plan and ask questions such as: Where is our business heading? What are we trying to become? What is our Why?

The direction needs to be well debated, and for the team to have lots of input so as to develop a deep shared commitment as to where the business is going. This should include key areas of focus, priorities and be carefully considered from the customers perspective. Be clear on what you ***are*** going to do and what you are ***not*** going to do.

Having agreed the key areas of focus, each manager needs to then consider their own contribution to the company and agree these with their colleagues. The allows the team to get tight alignment, and to be all heading in the same direction.



Consider

- Holding a facilitated strategy development or re-fresh workshop with your management team – be rigorous in agreeing your few key areas of focus
- Communicating widely across the business the key 4-5 areas of focus so the wider team can understand the direction
- Holding quarterly updates to continue the company wide engagement and communicate progress

Getting Real – Improving relationships and behaviours

The management team needs to be the No 1 team. I am constantly surprised that this is not something many teams have considered, with managers seeing their department or function as their No 1 team. This leads to siloed behaviour and decision making which may not be in the interests of the business as a whole.

Your management team may be made up of competent and committed managers who have high standards. But it's how they work together that really counts.

Good decisions are based on the quality of debate a team can have and that's only possible with high levels of trust. Trust develops when the team spends lots of time together – both formally and informally. Consider how much time sports teams spend together "off the field" – it's a great analogy for us in business. Patrick Lencioni regards high levels of trust as the foundation for successful teams in his book "Overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team".

The team also needs to get real about the behaviours that are ok and not ok in the way they interact with one another and the way they lead the business. Often protocols are required for how the team will work together when things are not going so well. Be clear about the leadership behaviours the team needs to demonstrate to the business. Set the tone for your people to deliver great experiences to your customers

Consider



- Committing to the management team being the No1 team
- Developing a team charter for the management team
- Committing to ground rules and frequent team meetings – formal and informal
- Developing a culture of openness and challenge within the management team – ask each other for feedback

Getting better – Continual Review and Improvement

Leaders in successful businesses ask themselves and their teams "How can we get better tomorrow?". They create an environment of restlessness with the status quo, knowing that they need to change and learn faster than their industry peers.

Great teams seek to learn more about the business and each other so having regular reviews is a key habit to adopt. They consider and review the performance of the business, the performance of different teams within the business and ask: what have we done well? what needs to improve? and what have we learned?

Establishing quarterly reviews is a key discipline most of my clients put in place. In these reviews, performance is monitored, priorities are re-set if needed, and behaviours are re-calibrated.



Consider

- Scheduling quarterly reviews – diary these at the beginning of the year – begin these by asking "What have we learned in the last quarter?"
- Spending time reviewing the effectiveness of your meetings and interactions – complete a Stop/Start/Continue as a team
- If projects plans drift out or milestones are missed – ask what could we do, what are we missing, how do we "make the boat go faster"?

How good could your business be with a high-performance team at the top? Many management teams are really just a group of managers working together rather than a cohesive high performing team. I believe this is one of the most underutilised assets in many organisations, and a powerful leverage point for any business to really take a big step up in performance.