

Building and Keeping Your Dream Team

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■ Introduction

To be team builders, means to look at ourselves and determine where we need to change so that we can lead by example. Next, we must learn to be effective in transposing our positive attributes into the teams we are building. It is apparent that the success of any business is completely dependent on the ability of its leaders, to recruit, and develop suitable individuals into team players with a common goal.

■ Building Your Team

Philosophy

Successful teambuilding will require a formal process, which does not allow for shortcuts or omissions to the process. Although we sometimes feel pressure to fill a position, to reach the overall goal of successful teambuilding, it is imperative to allow sufficient time to follow the steps in the process.

Identification

In the opening steps of team building, you should have a clear picture regarding what position needs to be filled and how this position is expected to contribute, to the success of the team. Normally it will be relatively easy to identify the need. Usually it will take a little more thought and review to understand what type of individual is required to ensure the success of the team. Although all successful teams may share some common strength, each team in itself is also unique. It is important for the hiring manager to have a good understanding of the functionality of the team as well as the individual character of the team and its members.

Definition

The role to be filled must be clearly defined. A good first step is to have a comprehensive job description for the position. Normally a good job description will essentially define the position. At the same time, since every team is unique, and situations vary, it is important to define the particular nuances of the team in order to decrease the risk of hiring an unsuitable employee.

Research

Although not every company has the luxury of employing an individual who will make a daily practice of conducting research in recruitment issues, it remains the responsibility of all hiring managers to be familiar with the challenges and idiosyncrasies of their industry. To build successfully, one must be knowledgeable about the history of their industry and understand what has been successful in the past and why it was successful. Equally important is knowledge and understanding pertaining to past failures.

Replacement

Turnover is generally quite high in the hog industry across Canada. Normally one would think of that as a negative. In many companies, it can also be viewed as a positive opportunity to build and improve. Successful teambuilding includes continually striving to improve in every position. Never stop being a builder.

Education Coefficient

It is a well-known fact that most successful companies will make it a priority to build their knowledge pool and hire individuals who have demonstrated their progressive nature through a history of continual learning. Although not every position related to the Canadian Hog Industry requires a university degree, the future of the Canadian Hog Industry depends on its ability to employ progressive learners at every level.

Educating

If we want to attract intelligent young people into the Canadian Hog Industry, we must collectively stay at the leading edge of technology and continuously strive to operate with utmost integrity and responsibility. We must raise the profile of every position in our industry so that young people will recognize the opportunities and desire to be a part of a thriving industry. We should keep the general public well informed about the important issues surrounding our industry and continually strive to demonstrate our commitment to growing a sustainable industry.

Source

Where do we find the most suitable people? My motto is “Keep all the doors open”. We should never presuppose that we will not find the right individual through a particular source or background. At the same time, we should never assume that one particular source will always yield the people we need, to be successful. I firmly believe it is the responsibility of the Canadian Hog Industry to attract, develop, and train young Canadian citizens to take their place in our industry both now and in the future. At the same time, we must invite qualified applicants from outside of Canada to join our industry and thereby continue to build our talent pool.

Selection

There are a variety of methods and ideas that can be used in interviewing and selecting the best applicants. Some very common criteria would include suitable education and experience. Some positive indicators include:

- Involvement of applicants in a variety of areas.
- Display of leadership.
- Evidence of being a team player.
- Work habits.
- Stable relationships.
- Positive attitude.
- Commitment to continual learning.
- Positive recent employment reference

Placement

A key to putting people in the right position is to allow for a trial period. Although it is not always feasible, a trial period of a few days, weeks, or possibly a 3-month term position (summer employment), will allow time to make a fair and accurate assessment. Many companies have had great success in bringing young people into the company through a “Summer Employment Program”, which allows for the appropriate exposure to the environment of a position. The key to success is having a leader in the company assigned to act as a mentor during the trial period so that there is constant communication with the new employee and ongoing encouragement through the learning process.

Training

“We must train individuals into the philosophy and culture of our company” (Bruce Campbell). Although it is important to have a well-defined training and orientation program for new employees, so that they can learn the various

aspects of their position, the teaching of philosophy, culture, and values, must supercede all other aspects of training. Each employee must be taught the "Vision Statement" of the company.

■ **Keeping Your Team**

Be Competitive

In some industries it seems to be expected that individuals will work for minimum wage with little chance for significant increases. Many employers will endeavour to hire only part time employees in order to avoid providing benefits like a group insurance plan. I believe it is important for the Canadian Hog Industry to structure itself in such a way so that wages are high enough to support a family and a comprehensive benefits plan is available for all employees at every level. To recruit and keep good people, we must be competitive with other industries that also wish to attract the best people.

Leadership

In order to keep progressive people, a company must display leadership. A "dream team" will be made up of leaders and individuals who want to be associated with leaders.

Innovation

Almost any job can become mundane and leave employees feeling unhappy. The challenge for every employer is to keep challenging the employees with new innovative ideas and methods to stay at the leading edge of its industry. It is important for employers to be open to new ideas and to establish an environment conducive to learning for all employees.

Example

One of the biggest challenges of a business owner, manager, or supervisor, is to "keep the game face" and be consistent in setting an example of integrity, commitment, and vision. For the leaders, there is no room for failure in exemplifying what it takes for the company to be successful.

High Standards

A successful team is built and maintained by leaders with a high standard of moral and ethical values. It is easy for employees to see through a leader that is not genuinely committed to a high standard.

Discipline

Every team will experience having a player that is falling behind or not participating adequately. In such a case, it is critical that the team leader takes time to work with and deal with this employee on an individual basis. It is of utmost importance, that the leader is careful to study and review all the facts surrounding the situation, in order to take correct action. If the response of the individual is less than desirable, appropriate action must be taken, so that the team does not experience a continued negative impact.

Be Sensitive

A successful leader will be sensitive to the needs of the group. Undoubtedly, employees will go through a hardship from time to time, and it is essential for a business owner, manager, or supervisor, to be sensitive and caring with respect to personal matters of individuals in the team.

Responsibility

Although it is important for leaders to assume responsibility, it is equally important to allow for the transferring of responsibilities to team members.

Participation

Every player on a successful team must be allowed to participate. Any member of a team that is mostly observing and not allowed to participate will soon be looking for another team. No one likes to stay on the bench.

Encouragement

“Acknowledge everyone openly for work well done” (Bruce Campbell)
Remember, every person at every level, needs encouragement. Perhaps the most critical ingredient to the success of a team, is for each leader to develop the habit and skill to be an encourager.

■ Conclusion

If you wish to be surrounded by the best people, make it your purpose each day to make the people around you better.