



BUSINESS ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

INCREASING TEAM PRODUCTIVITY



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Increasing Team Productivity

Introduction

It takes a fine blend of talent and people to pursue an assortment of growth strategies simultaneously. Very few executives can do everything. *Enter team!*

A good team is a pivotal element of a great company. Your company will experience hardship under the weight of growth unless there's a strong team at the top. You should know how to pick, manage and lead an effective team to grow. Your team should extend the values, plan, vision, and mission throughout your company, align it and speed up its growth.

Your team members should be able to manage three vital roles: leadership, executive, and functional.

Your team generates ideas to solve company issues. When your team works well together, it permits the members to offer suggestions comfortably. And your company benefits from the varied suggestions. Your team should be able to identify gaps in the market as well as markets in the gap. You should set team goals and measure progress. If you don't set goals right at the start of a project, your team will find it impossible to understand what to aim for. If you spend time upfront, thoughtfully bringing together, managing and motivating your team, you will have more success than if you pursue a 'business as usual' approach. Therefore, it's critical to develop a great team in order to grow and improve your business.

10 Useful Team Strategies Summarised

Below, 10 strategies are summarized for building a great team. This list of team strategies is not meant to be exhaustive. It does, however, include some practical low cost and no cost strategies that you can implement into your business immediately.



Take notes on the ideas you can implement into your business wherever you see this symbol .

Here are the strategy summaries.

1. Team Committed to Plan

A group of individuals coming together to collaborate makes a team. Reaching a shared goal or completing a task is the primary purpose of their collaboration. The team members have some unifying relationship. They don't come together just for administrative convenience. Rather, all of them demonstrate a high degree of interdependence as they strive to achieve a common goal. The normal range of a team is 5 to 9 members. But sometimes, it goes beyond 25 members.

Complementary Skills

Complementary skills provide the team synergy. When the team members are like-thinking individuals, the number of answers for creative problem solving is limited. But when the team members come from diverse backgrounds and have varied qualifications, multiple skills and numerous ideas are combined. In such cases, the synergistic effect of the team is really high – one plus one is much more than two. And given today's superior communication tools, it's possible for team members located in different continents to communicate in real-time and meet goals.

Common Purpose

Common purpose is the powerful force that drives teams. A great team develops its own purpose, also labelled Agenda, that's meaningful. And all the team members have ownership of this purpose or agenda. As the team develops, a periodical revisit of the agenda by the members takes place if the agenda is open. But when there are hidden or closed agendas that select team members try to push forth, the team will not be a true team. In these instances, many emotions and motives remain hidden under the discussion table, and they hurt the team's goals.

Performance Goals

Another energizing force of teams is Performance Goals. Specific goals are established, monitored, accomplished, and assessed in an ongoing process. The last aspect of teamwork that develops is mutual accountability.


Major Benefits of Teams

- Teams maximise your company's human resources.
- A team fosters creativity and learning.
- A team's output is far superior, even when the odds aren't favourable.

 YOUR IDEAS

- There is continuous improvement.
- A team encourages healthy risk-taking.
- A team promotes a broader sense of ownership.

WHAT IDEAS CAN YOU USE IN YOUR BUSINESS?

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2. Characteristics of a Great Team Member

A great team member will demonstrate many of the characteristics below. Go through the list of behaviours below and do the following:

1. Rate your team 1-5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent).
2. Tick () those that are a priority for you to implement with your team.

Characteristics of A Great Team Member	Rate Your Team 1-5	Priority For Action
Dependability		
Follows directions reliably, offers suggestions for improvement openly		
Delivers consistent performance		
Works independently and is a self starter		
Has self respect that is evident from quality of work and personal presentation		
Always on time to work and back from breaks		
Good Attendance		
Honesty, Integrity and Trustworthiness		
Keeps the promises that they make		
Is aware of what they can and can't do		
Respects those who are not present		
Observes the Golden Rule		
Positive and Proactive Attitude		
Takes ownership of their job		
Takes responsibility for their actions and job tasks		
Accountable for the results and quality of their work		
Uses good business manners		
Exhibits high energy levels		
See the good in every situation		
Don't say "I can't..."		
Willing to Work and Learn		
Sets and Achieves Goals – Continuous improvement.		
Has personal direction.		
Flexibility – Adaptable, accepts changes		
Listens to others with experience		
Takes responsibility for learning in their own time as well as attending company sponsored training		
Keeps work area clean		

Uses downtime effectively and proactively		
Plans work to make the most productive use of time in each day		
Asks how they can do more than is expected		
Knows hard work is good for the soul		
Team Player		
Positive interpersonal skills		
Is pleasant to others and makes an effort to fit in		
Makes an effort to get along with all members of the team		
Willingness to understand differences and accept diversity		
Takes part in team meetings and adds ideas/suggestions for improvement		
Doesn't get involved in office gossip or politics		
Expresses appreciation for others when needed and apologises when needed		
Speaks up when needed and encourages other team members to pursue the team goals		

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3. Accountability

Accountability is having the authority and responsibility to act and accept the logical consequences for the outcomes of those actions. In a company that's team based, accountability isn't focused at the individual level. Rather, it's focused at the team level. Team members are reciprocally accountable to each other. Also, the team as a whole accepts accountability for the outcomes of the team's actions.

The Weekly Meeting

The weekly Meeting is an essential strategy for breeding a culture of accountability and maintaining team morale. The meeting focuses on three questions specifically:

1. What did you accomplish last week? Here, the focus is on actual results, not activities.
2. Do you have any ongoing problems? Here, the focus isn't on problem-solving. It's on management's use of authority to help eliminate barriers to completion of tasks.
3. What will you accomplish next week? The focus, once again, is on results. Since it's in the future, it can be carefully planned by the worker and management.

It is important to delegate someone to take minutes every week and post this in the common drive, or notice board. These are reviewed in the following meeting to see how people went about meeting the things they stated in #3 above.

Why is Accountability Critical for Business Growth?

Since Accountability = Answerability, even responsible employees prefer to avoid it because of its potential for being used as ammunition for unfair blame or punishment. However, accountability is unavoidable. In a traditional organization, every individual is accountable to someone – supervisor, manager or boss. In a high-performance organization, each team member is accountable to other team members and also mutually accountable to their customers. Accountability isn't a negative force. Holding team members accountable for their results has several positive results such as greater accuracy of work, better decision making, more vigilant problem solving, increased cooperation with co-workers, and greater team satisfaction.



Barriers to Accountability

Study your team's behaviour and organisational conditions to identify if any of the barriers listed below exist. Then work hard with your 'internal champions' to eliminate these barriers:

- Hidden agendas
- Lack of leadership
- Favouritism
- Lack of resources
- Lack of clarity
- Lack of follow-through
- Data misuse.

Key Aspects of Accountability

- Accountability requires reporting – *use the weekly meeting for people to 'report in'*
- Accountability is results-oriented – *progress is made towards predetermined targets and plans*
- Accountability is a relationship – *it is never to be used as a 'stick'*
- Accountability improves performance – *what gets measured and reported on gets done*
- Accountability is meaningless without consequences – *corrective actions, performance management and rewards, never punishments*

A Special Note About Team Meetings

Although Team Meetings are indispensable for business growth, they take team members away from frontline duties. So, keep the weekly team meeting to 1 hour with a clear, standard agenda. Effective meetings need clear structure and perfect order. You should consider the following factors to prepare an agenda for the meeting:



- **Priorities** – What must be covered without fail?
- **Participants** – Who needs to attend to make certain the meeting is successful?
- **Sequence** – What is the order you'll cover the topics?
- **Results** – What do you need to accomplish?
- **Timing** – How much time to spend on each topic?
- **Meeting Place, Date, and Time** – Where and when?

Ensure 100 Percent Orderliness

Sit in a circle. Start the meeting by allowing one person to speak at any time and only when it's their turn. Avoid arguments. Ensure nobody speaks out of turn. Take minutes. Write down what each team member says in point form. Review minutes every week.

If you don't address each point, team members become disinclined to contribute. Consequently, your team meetings will be a failure!

Assign Someone to Take Minutes

For better accountability, prepare a set of minutes. Follow a standard agenda. Forward it to each team member. These minutes record what was accomplished. As the team moves forward, you know who is responsible for what. Never overlook this critical part of effective meetings. Maintain a written record of what transpired showing the list of actions that individual team members agree to perform.

Every Team Member Should Respect the Time Allotted

Start on time. Never recap for latecomers. Finish on time. Complete the things that can be done before the meeting time. Circulate reports for team members to read beforehand. Whenever appropriate, assign smaller group meetings for discussing issues applicable to only certain team members.



4. Clear Job Descriptions

Clear Job Descriptions are essential for optimal performance in your small business. A job description needs to be more than a “To Do List”. It should clearly explain the goals and outcomes required, the areas of the business that the employee is responsible for, the communication and reporting that is required of them and the overall standards that they are to work to.

Everybody in your business, including you, needs to have a job description that includes the following (as a minimum):

1. The Job Title
2. Job Summary including key goals and outcomes
3. Areas of Responsibilities, Job Tasks, Authorities and Standards
4. Job Qualifications
5. Supervision and reporting
6. Working Conditions including hours, location, equipment and so on
7. Salary and Benefits.

When you describe the outcomes to be achieved and the tasks to be completed in this way, it allows you to have better conversations about work performance and productivity with each employee. This will lead to more effective coaching, training and employee development.

Finally, a clear job description also allows employees to be more “self managing” at work, instead of waiting to be told what to do next.

More Key Benefits of Clear Job Descriptions

- A clear job description allows an employee to see where they fit into the big picture.
- A clear job description sets out what is expected from each person at work.
- A clear job description helps you to meet your employer obligations under employment legislation.
- A clear job description helps with recruiting the right person for the job as every applicant can be ‘compared’ against the one set of criteria.
- Job descriptions help all employees to understand internal communication, reporting, lines of authority, impacts of one job on another and so on.
- A job description helps the individual to know their role in the team and therefore, helps facilitate team work and enhanced productivity.
- Clear job descriptions are essential for any form of formal or informal performance management and development.

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See over for a sample Job Description template.

Sample Job Description Template

Job Title:

Job Purpose: The purpose of this job is ...

Areas of Responsibility

-
-
-

Key Goals/Targets/Performance Requirements:

-
-
-

Key Tasks (not exhaustive)

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-
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Important Standards (customer service, quality, technical, etc.)

-
-
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Authority and Reporting

- Responsible to / Reports to:
- Reporting required: format / frequency:
- Who reports to you, how:

Qualifications (if required)

-
-

Working Conditions

- Hours
- Location
- Equipment
- Team
- Special requirements (early start once per week, interstate trips)
- Etc.

Salary

- Amount
- Pay frequency
- Treatment of expenses
- Super

5. Recognition

Team Member Recognition is essential to drive collaboration, innovation, and business growth. You should understand that regardless of the position of a team member, they are recognition hungry. So by recognising the efficiency of a team member, you not only motivate them but also bring out their hidden talents.

Examples of Recognition

- Good: “Thank you for the hard work, Sue!”
- Better: “Thank you for working so hard to win over that new project, Sue!”
- Best: “Sue, I really appreciate your sincere work to land the new Jones account. The company was behind that account for several months. It’s good you stepped up to bag an important deal. This isn’t a huge win just for you. It’s an enormous win for our team and the whole company too.”

Here, the “good” version of Recognition is too general. It’s a compliment that could be aimed at any individual or task. The “better” version of Recognition is an improvement because it mentions the specific accomplishment. But the “best” version is a great example of Team Member Recognition because it explains the reason the team member’s work was so important and also who benefitted from it.

Although Every Individual is Part of a Team, They’re an Individual Too

While getting praise as a member of a team that meets goals successfully is important, every team member also desires to be recognized for their personal accomplishments by their colleagues and superiors. Individual recognition is strong motivation for a team member to “go the extra mile”.

Methods of Creating Motivational Currency

A shout-out in a meeting or a company-wide email acknowledgment in recognition of a team member’s exceptional effort or rare achievement expresses genuine appreciation. A team member who is recognized for going that extra mile is more fulfilled and productive, shows greater loyalty, and is eager to contribute to the company in a meaningful and impactful way.



6. Delegation

Delegating is a vital skill for managers and business owners at any level. It involves working with a team member to establish goals and granting them adequate authority and responsibility to achieve these goals. You have to give the team member substantial freedom in determining how they'll achieve the goals. Additionally, you have to remain available as a resource to assist them, at least initially. Sometimes, you may have to assess the quality of their effort and address performance issues. Despite all this, delegating is NOT work directing.

Delegation Helps You to Become a Better Leader by Building Trust

Delegation is more about growing team members. As they grow this reduces your own workload over time. It communicates to the team member that you trust them enough to give them more responsibility for key results. Being able to delegate successfully improves your capability to lead. It also improves your business growth. So, delegation is a Win-Win if you do it appropriately.

The Steps of Effective Delegation

1. Define the task
2. Select the team member
3. Evaluate ability and training requirements
4. Explain the delegated task to the team member
5. State the required results clearly
6. Consider the resources needed
7. Agree deadlines

- 8. Support the team members and communicate with them
- 9. Give feedback on results.

Importance of Delegation to the Business Owner

The “D” in Leadership indicates Delegation. Delegation focuses your attention and increases productivity. When you assign lower priority tasks to other team members, you can focus better on higher priority tasks. Delegating will challenge your expertise in planning, problem solving, listening, communicating, and decision making. You will become proficient in building rapport and creating productive relationships. Importantly, you will be able to focus on difficult assignments that are critical for business growth.

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7. Team Targets and KPIs

Your Team Targets should be (SMART) Specific and Measurable while being Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. Communicating all your strategic visions can be challenging. So, you should split your main objective into smaller targets because it becomes easier to manage your team. These mini targets are like day-to-day operations. As your team completes each of these targets, you move closer to your final objective. When you have a powerful vision and give your team members clear directions, the chances of meeting the daily targets are better.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A KPI, in its simplest form, is a form of team performance measurement that helps you understand the way your team is performing. An effective KPI acts as a compass, assisting you and your team members understand whether you're headed in the right direction towards attaining your strategic objectives. To be result-oriented, a KPI must be:



- Communicated to all your team members clearly.
- Well-defined and quantifiable.
- Critical to achieving the team objective.
- Relevant to your Line of Business.

Importance of Picking the Right KPIs

Since there are innumerable KPIs to choose from, you should carefully pick only the right ones. If you pick the wrong KPI, then you'll end up measuring something that's not in line with your team objectives. The best way to pick the right KPIs would be by researching and understanding the most relevant KPIs for your business.

Deriving the Maximum Benefit from Your KPIs

The KPIs you select must indicate the trends in your business performance and the progress your team is making. Only then you'll be able to spot potential concerns and growth opportunities. For instance, if the trends are headed in an unfavourable direction, you know there are problems to be solved. Likewise, if the trends move in a favourable direction, there's a greater scope for growth.

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8. Leadership Training for Supervisors

As regards the subject of engaging team members and maximising their skills, one factor consistently towers above all others – Leadership. Effective leadership is the chief driver of employee satisfaction. Every business owner knows that team members need to be provided with effective leadership to bring about a greater level of effort. And the most relevant leadership for the majority of your workforce comes from first-line supervisors.



Why is Leadership Training for Supervisors Important for Business Growth?

Supervisors impact the daily performance of team members more than managers because they have direct contact with them. An effective Leadership Training Program for Supervisors benefits your business by reducing employee turnover, improving employee performance, increasing sales, and reducing expenses.

What Are the Salient Attributes of Leadership Training Program?

Leadership training includes classroom education and training, developmental relationships, feedback-intensive programs, and job assignments. The program is aligned with supervisor development needs and your business goals. Supervisors spend time learning everything they need to learn to excel in their leadership roles.

What Are the Topics of the Leadership Training Program That Align to Your Business Needs and Goals?

Leadership Training Area	Priority Y/N
Shaping / Influencing culture	
Handling difficult team members and mediocre performers successfully	
Coaching team members for improved performance	
Running effective meetings	
Giving and receiving feedback	
Time management for enhanced team productivity	
Conducting on-the-job training	
Hiring and interviewing skills	
Developing high-performing teams	
Managing Conflict	
Managing Change	
Customer service management	

WHAT IDEAS CAN YOU USE IN YOUR BUSINESS?





9. Bonus System

Bonus systems are payment systems devised to improve production. Team members are awarded incentives with methods of payment by outcomes that fall into one of these three categories viz. contract work, bonus work, or piecework.

Advantages of Team-Based Bonus System

This type of bonus system is gaining in popularity because it allows targets to be measured at the level of specific teams. A team bonus scheme encourages team members to develop new methods of working to fulfil their shared targets. Besides, it helps to strengthen the culture of team working.

Key Business Objectives that Bonus Systems Fulfil

- Improve business performance (e.g. profits, sales or productivity)
- Increase the motivation of team members by establishing a clear tie-up between performance and pay (at the team or individual level)
- Focus team members' efforts on key business objectives such as on-time delivery, quality, and customer service
- Create the desired workplace decorum by rewarding good attendance and teamwork
- Encourage change within the company
- Support stakeholder ideals by permitting team members to share in the company success.

Hurdles

Most companies make payments to team members from their bonus schemes only if certain hurdles are surmounted. These hurdles include:

Threshold profit level – Almost all the profit-related bonus systems are based on financial measures either in part or in full. Typically, for any payments to be made, a threshold profit level must be reached.

Absence triggers – Many companies use “absence triggers” for making bonus payments to team members regardless of whether team targets are being met.


Management discretion – Companies often maintain a level of discretion over bonus payment to team members. For instance, the board may decide

against making bonus payments in case critical success factors or financial objectives are not met.

Employment Law Deliberations

Ideally, your company should recount the bonus system in writing as reviewable, non-contractual, discretionary, and cancellable at any time.

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10. Effective Feedback

Effective feedback is crucial to the success of each team member, the team and the company. It motivates team members to improve their job efficiency by encouraging effort, enhancing ability, and acknowledging results.

Giving Effective Feedback

The 6-Step Model, an enhancement of the classic 3 part assertive message, was taught by Thomas Gordon in Effectiveness Training in the 1960s and 1970s.

- Step 1:** Describe (non-judgmentally) the behaviour that is working/not working. What is the behaviour?
- Step 2:** Describe the effects of that behaviour (positive or negative). What are the effects of that behaviour right now?
- Step 3:** Describe any feelings associated with that. How do you feel about it?
- Step 4:** Outline the change in behaviour required. What is the new behaviour that you require?
- Step 5:** Outline the desired effects that will happen when the required behaviours are exhibited. What will be the new effects of the new behaviour?



Step 6: Outline (in a non-threatening manner) the consequences that will occur if desired behaviour is not displayed. What are the consequences of not adjusting the behaviour?

Mistakes to Avoid in Giving Feedback

- Don't judge the individual, judge their actions.
- Your feedback should not be vague.
- Your feedback should not speak for others.
- Don't sandwich negative feedback between positive messages.
- Don't exaggerate the feedback with generalities.
- Your feedback should not psychoanalyse the team member's motives behind their behaviour.
- Your feedback should not be too lengthy.
- Your feedback should not contain an implied threat.
- Don't use inappropriate humour in your feedback.
- Your feedback should not be a question; it should be a statement.

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