



BUILDING A POWERFUL TEAM

A SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE TO CREATING
SUPERSTAR EMPLOYEES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A U D R E Y C L A R K C O L L C

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DON'T BE A SUPERHERO

- Many small business owners are very protective of their vision because they know exactly where they want to take their business. Sooner or later, though, most entrepreneurs recognize that they need help to grow.
 - If you're ready to start growing your work team, this book will give you the skills to find an incredible team and the knowledge to create a productive work environment.
- You may be the type of person who does everything for themselves. That's a good plan if you have a very small business that depends solely on your own efforts. However, if you want to significantly expand your business, you'll eventually need help. For most businesses, great success arises from having an incredible team of workers.
- Have you ever heard of "superhero syndrome"? Superhero syndrome means that you feel that you're the only one who can do things well – and you should be the one doing everything.
- Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, used to have a big challenge with delegating work to his team. When he first started his company, he struggled to trust his employees and had a strong urge to micromanage. His need to

manage everything began to affect his company's productivity.

- Over time, he realized that this was not the best thing for him or the company. He began trusting other people to manage new hires, write code, market his products, and many other things. He even began to realize that some of the people who worked for him were better than he was.

HOW TO FIND GOOD PEOPLE

- Before you can hire the perfect team you need to determine exactly what you need help with. Do you need employees who can take over some of your responsibilities, or do you need to hire people with expertise that you don't currently have?
- Here are some quick and simple ways to know when it's time to expand:
 - You're not able to do big tasks because you're spending all your time on rote work or focusing on small details.
 - Your customers are not getting the attention they need.
 - You have steady, consistent work, not just a week or two of intense work.
 - You or your current staff are consistently overworked and frustrated.
 - Hiring new people will increase revenue.
 - You're turning down work because you can't keep up.
 - You need someone to do a specialized task.
 - You're making enough money to hire employees.
- Many experienced entrepreneurs have been burned by bad employees. This can cause some businesspeople to want to avoid hiring anyone. There are good workers out there who are ready to support your business -- you just have to find them.
- Here are five important things to consider when bringing on a new employee:

- **Define your business culture.** The culture of your company is a combination of values, traditions, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. The people you hire will have a lot to do with your business' culture. In order to maintain the type of culture that you want, hire people that will enhance it instead of diminishing it.
 - Look for people who share your values and understand the vision and branding that you have for your company.

- **Hire people of strong integrity and character.** Your employees should be knowledgeable about your products, but they should also be ethical people who can work well with others. Hiring trustworthy employees means you can provide a safe environment and unburden some of your responsibilities without fear.
 - No employee is going to be perfect, but a team member that works with integrity will produce ongoing rewards.

- **Create a team of diverse workers.** The business landscape has been changing over the past sixty years and many companies are learning that diversity is a strength and not a weakness. If you want to bring in people from many demographics, there are a few things you can do:
 - Make diversity a part of your business culture.
 - Determine your criteria before the interview.
 - Have a diverse group of people interviewing.
 - Post job opportunities in different localities.
 - Attend job fairs in different communities.

- **Use a variety of avenues to find good people.** You may know exactly what kind of people you want, but how do you actually find them? Consider using the following avenues:
 - Your personal network

- Social media networks
 - Online job boards
 - The newspaper or physical job boards
- Use your branding in your recruiting ads. You may not be selling a product, but you are selling your company. Try to think of creative ads that will get people interested in your business, as well as give them a clear idea of your company's ideals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING YOUR EMPLOYEES FEEL VALUED

- The importance of treating your employees well can't be underestimated. You may not be able to make your employees millionaires, but the way you treat them makes a lasting difference. In fact, how you treat your employees often has more to do with the morale of the company than the individual income levels.
- In the short term, your business may thrive under high-pressure management. Your employees may work twice as hard to meet your rising expectations. In the long term, however, there are significant consequences. Specifically...
 - High healthcare costs and increased health problems among employees
 - Disengagement among employees
 - Lost loyalty – high turnover rate
- The number one issue that arises from high-stress businesses is the toll it takes on your employee's health. A study conducted by BMC Public Health concluded that individuals who work at high to medium strain jobs visit their general practitioners 26% more than those who work at low-pressure jobs. They also go to a specialist 27% more often.

- **A second issue that arises from high-pressure management is disengagement.** Workers who are disengaged are less likely to perform well, and far more likely to have an accident or make a mistake.
- **Another issue with high-stress jobs is that they lead to high turnover rates.** Employees don't feel loyal to jobs that leave them feeling unhealthy and unappreciated. The cost of replacing an employee is high and should be avoided when possible.
- **So how can you be sure that you're treating your employees well?**
 - **Compensate them well.** You don't have to pay your employees so well that you forfeit a healthy budget, but paying your employees a fair wage will go a long way.
 - **Offer flexibility.** There are a growing number of employees who desire flexibility in their work schedule. Many people are looking for jobs that allow them to work remotely or to have the ability to work from home some of the time. They want the freedom to work shifts based on their needs.
 - **Listen to your employees and show them that you care.** Taking the time to listen to the people who work for you will make a difference in how they feel about their time at work. Do your best to give them your undivided attention.
 - **Show your employees appreciation.** Almost everyone needs to feel that the work that they do is seen and appreciated. Some personality types need more affirmation than others, but most people need to know that the work they do is important and valued.
 - **Have reasonable expectations.** Remember that people learn and acquire skills at different rates. Something that you're completely comfortable doing may take a new employee some time to master. Be patient with them while they're learning and refrain from becoming easily annoyed.

- **Teach your employees well the first time.** When you're teaching your employees new skills, it's better to teach them well the first time. It may feel like a laborious task, but it's far better to teach them well at the beginning than to have to keep retraining them on the same tasks.
- **Don't be afraid to loosen up a little.** Work is a place of work. But there's also power in play.
 - For example, Google, one of the most successful tech companies in the world, knows the value of happy employees. They allow employees to bring their pets to work, and they also offer gyms and swimming pools, video games, foosball tables, and loads of other perks.
 - You may not be able to give your employees as many perks as Google, but you can take a page out of their handbook.

CREATE A GREAT WORKPLACE CULTURE

- In addition to finding employees that fit your culture, you also want to cultivate a culture that people work well in. There's more to managing a great team than just being kind. Here are a few practical ways that you can help grow a workplace culture that's functional, sustainable, and productive:
 - **Create clear roles and expectations.** When you bring on a new hire, it's imperative that they understand their roles and responsibilities. When a job description is vague or open to interpretation, it can often become confusing and frustrating.

- This also opens the door for unnecessary conflicts with you and their fellow employees.
 - Before you post a job position, know exactly what you need help with. Include this in the job description.
 - If you feel that your employees are outgrowing their current position, consider promoting them. Try to avoid tacking on a neverending list of responsibilities to a strong employee.
- **Give employees a sense of purpose.** More and more, people want to do more than punch in and punch out. They want to feel like the work they do is meaningful and purpose driven. Andrew Sillitoe has outlined five major areas of change that can be used in the workplace:
 - **Shaping the story.** Let them help create the story of your business.
 - **Ask, don't tell.** Instead of telling your employees everything they should be doing, ask them questions.
 - **Create leaders.** You want people to follow your directions, but you also want them to be able to lead.
 - **Embrace failure.** It's important for your business to work smoothly, but your employees shouldn't be afraid of failing.
 - **Hold each other accountable.** Holding your employees accountable is a necessary part of being their boss.
- **To create a harmonious work culture, you also want your employees to work well together.** Here are some practical ways that you can keep teamwork strong:
 - **Strengthen your leadership.** A team without strong leadership struggles to thrive. Leaders should set an example for the rest of their employees.

- **Team building retreats and activities.** Team building activities help break down barriers between employees, give them a common goal, and give them time to work together in unique ways. Think about your goals ahead of time and ensure that your activities reinforce your vision.
- **Keep everyone on the same page.** From entry-level positions all the way up to upper management, your work team should have the same mission. When everyone is working towards the same ultimate goal, it's much easier for your workforce to work together as a team.
- **Include ideas from all levels of employees.** Let all your employees know that they have a say in the business and that leadership is willing to listen to their ideas. You may be surprised by how much your employees are willing and able to offer.
- **Encourage employees to communicate with each other.** You want your employees to communicate well with management, but you also want them to communicate with each other. Give them time to work together on projects, share lunch breaks, and throw work socials.