How to build a successful team

Building a team is an art form and a science. Some people are born with the skills to do it. But most of us must develop them.

You're probably reading this because you've inherited a team, you've started a new role, or you're building a new team. Whatever it is, you can do it.

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Building a good team involves hard and soft skills that can be learned. Get started with SEEK's team building tips:

1. **Establish a team purpose.** A good team has a common purpose, says Donna Lynch, of Adecco. For a team to be successful, everyone from the top to the bottom needs to understand the "why". This enables team members to identify what makes the team important to the organisation and assists in creating a passion for the purpose, says Lynch. "It is not enough for me as a leader to communicate just the how and what." Explain to the team what you want done.

2. **Define roles and responsibilities.** Every member of your team needs to know his or her function. It's part of the team puzzle. Teams need to have a mix of systems and talent players in order to be successful, says Lynch. "Just like in a game of rugby there are those who have the base of skills that see them propel the team forward to the try line and impact players who come into the team and create excitement and energy at a specific time or to achieve a specific event."

3. **Master the art of people.** Start by finding out about your team members' strengths and weaknesses and study the group dynamics, says Lynch. It's a good idea to provide very regular feedback to your team members and encourage 360 degrees communication. It's also important to look for diversity such as gender, age, background, ethnicity, when hiring or choosing team

members. Diverse teams have a better chance of creating unique and innovative solutions in a way that wouldn't happen with a more homogenous team, says Lynch.

4. **Lead by example.** If you're forever skiving off to the pub your staff will do the same. If you put yourself boots and all into the work, others will follow naturally. A good leader, says Lynch, provides clarity and consistency, resolves conflicts quickly, is accountable to the team, and ensures everyone has the tools and knowledge to perform. "Be an active team participant leading with passion and belief," she says. Articulate clearly the team's progress, talk about the good and the bad – build trust. It's also a good idea to understand your own style and keep working to improve your leadership skills. Working on your own emotional intelligence will pay dividends and help to motivate staff. You're going to need to care about your team, groom staff, and embrace their differences.

5. **Celebrate success.** Whatever industry you're in, find a way to measure success in your team. It inspires them. Have both individual and team based formal and informal recognition programmes in operation, says Lynch. "Take time to analyse what's working so that it can be replicated." The team then remains focused on the goals and understands what success looks like. Don't forget that a simple thank you and acknowledgement goes a long way.

Finally, becoming a team leader for the first time is a great challenge. Don't be afraid to ask for advice from your boss or mentor. A problem shared is a problem halved.