

How to Lead A Team of Other Leaders

Many of you lead a team of other leaders. You lead VP's, managers, directors, administrative or volunteer leaders (who are leading other people.) People who lead a team of leaders are wrestling with questions like:

- How do I manage a team of leaders?
- How often should I meet with my team as a group?
- How often should I do one on ones?
- What should one on ones involve?
- How do I balance management with equipping and coaching?

Leading a team of leaders requires a commitment to BOTH managing and coaching those whom you oversee. Looking to get it right?

Six essential components for successfully leading a team of leaders:

1. The Right People

Do you have the *right people* on your team? Have you inherited a team without the freedom to make changes? Never agree to take a role where you are unable to assess the current team, make changes where necessary, and add new team members. Look at the team of leaders that you lead and ask:

- Would I hire each of these people again?
- On a scale of 1-10, how good is each at his role?

Trying to lead a person who is ungifted, unteachable, or lacks work ethic is a losing proposition. Make sure that you have the right people on the team. A helpful book on how to make sure that you have the right people is Patrick Lencioni's *The Ideal Team Player*.

2. Role Descriptions

Does every member of your team have a clear and written job description? Has it been updated in the past few months? Written clarity is necessary for paid leaders but is also wise and helpful for volunteer team leaders.

Here is a format for a basic job description:

- Title:
- I report to:
- Reporting to me:
- Effective Date:
- Primary Win: (*One Sentence*)

- General Description of Role: (*One Paragraph*)
- Priority Tasks: (8-12)
- Compensation:

Every leader that you lead needs clarity on what you expect of her. After you have a clear and written role description, meet quarterly with each leader to keep this document updated and to evaluate the team member according to her written job description.

3. Annual plans

Every leader that you oversee should be writing an annual plan for the area that he leads. An annual plan is a foundation for nearly everything that a person will work on over the next year. Annual planning for the team that you lead is critical to a collaborative management process.

Here is what the process looks like:

- The leader writes an annual plan.
- You then review and suggest edits to the plan.
- You both agree on the plan.
- The plan is rolled out to the other leaders on the team.
- The leader reports back to the other team members monthly. (Quarterly with volunteers)

This process empowers the team to manage each other rather than you having to coach, equip, and manage all in one meeting. We have consistently seen that management by a team is more effective than one-on-one management. A person may fail in front of you many times but will not want to fail in front of a team of peers. When leading a team of leaders, there is simply no substitute for annual planning.

4. Twenty-Four Hour Offsite

After each person on your team has written an annual plan, get offsite as a team for 24 hours. The goal of this offsite is for each to share her plan with the other team members. A team of leaders writing and sharing annual plans breaks down silos and produces an environment of collaboration and participation. Each of your team leaders will communicate to the others on the team the components of her annual plan which will begin the collaborative management process. After this offsite, the team knows what everyone else is working on, and you are removed as the primary managing agent. Management shifts to the team. Keep reading to see how.

5. Monthly Updates

Once annual plans are in place and have been communicated to the rest of the team, meet monthly (or quarterly for a volunteer team) for a few hours to have each person report back

to the team on his annual plan. Have him explain what he has accomplished in the past month, what he will be working on in the next month, and how he is doing with his annual plan. Ensure in this meeting that each person has a copy of every other person's plan. As you stick to this process monthly, it will become clear who is productive and who is struggling. The whole team will participate in seeing a person's successes and failures. The team becomes an agent for accountability and support.

6. One-on-Ones

The final component of managing a team of leaders is to meet for one-on-ones. We recommend doing these meetings monthly for volunteer staff and every other week for paid staff. One-on-Ones are not for management because management is happening in your monthly team meetings. One-on-one meetings are for coaching and caring for members of your team.

Ask questions like:

- What is going well?
- Where are you struggling?
- Where are you making progress?
- How can I help you?
- What do you need from me?

Listen more than you talk! Every person on your team needs one-on-one time with you to be reminded that you believe in him and are there to support him. These one-on-ones are critical for maintaining team morale and helping your team members grow as leaders.

One final point – You cannot commit to only three or four of these and lead a team of leaders well. Each is important! The whole system is necessary as each component is a part of excellent leadership. Which of these six are you missing?