

7 WAYS TO BUILD TEAMS OF GREAT LEADERS (WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR TEAM IS LACKING)

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Ever done this: looked at other businesses and organizations and thought to yourself “I wish I had their leaders?” And then you look around your company and think...” But I do not have leaders like that. And I have no idea how to get a great team to take us into the future.”

If you have thought that you’re not alone. In a connected world, it’s easy to look at businesses that have amazing leaders and then focus on the leaders you don’t have. According to a survey I did of over 1400 business leaders, developing teams was their #1 pain point. They just do not feel like they have enough great people.

Not having enough people and not having the right people also keeps your company from growing. It’s almost impossible to grow without the right teams. This impacts businesses old and new, good ones and bad one, profitable and one’s penniless, businesses stuck in a rut and businesses experimenting and creating new services and products. Not having enough team players or the right team, is a significant mission-inhibitor.

I can empathize. I started ministry by pastoring three very small, declining churches with average attendances of 6, 14 and 23 (not making this up). Needless to say, they weren’t exactly overflowing with leaders. And none of the churches had grown in literally a generation.

I’ve also been in the scramble of a start-up church, launching locations and rapid growth. That’s another kind of pressure entirely, but again, you can easily get to a point where you feel like you don’t have enough leaders and you also need more leaders who can take you to the next level. But you just don’t see any.

While it can feel like all is lost in situations like that, it’s not. Wherever you find yourself, you can find the future from where you are in the present. You *have* to. It’s the only way forward. Great leaders don’t randomly assemble.

The reason your people aren’t like the people of the businesses you admire, is that you haven’t led them there.

Get on your knees, look in the mirror and start leading or find someone who can. When you lead with all diligence, you call something out in people that God planted within them. People who have lived ‘ordinarily’ can begin to live ‘extraordinarily’ under the right leadership.

So how do you do it...with 7 keys?

1. START WHERE YOU ARE

As difficult as this may feel, you need to start where you are, not where you want to be. Starting where you are means starting with who you currently have. I know, that's difficult. But too many leaders get lost in a world where they think they *can't* do anything with their current situation. They focus on what they *can't* control, which is terribly unwise.

Smart leaders focus on what they can control, not on what they can't. Want your team to actually crush their goals? Building a team starts with who you have, not with who you don't have. So, look around and honestly assess who you have.

Resist the temptation to live in the imaginary land where you have different people, a different business and even a different you. If you start where you are, you have a much better chance of getting where you want to be.

2. LOOK FOR THE BEST LEADERS YOU CAN FIND

Believe it or not, you have leaders in your business. Maybe not Fortune 100 leaders or start-up entrepreneurs who are going to light the world on fire. Maybe not (yet) the kind of people that can lead great movements.

You know how you can tell who the leaders are? They are leading something/someone. Maybe they're not leading what they want, but they're leading somewhere. Bottom line...look for the people who are leading something—who are leading *anything*.

How can you tell if they're leaders? When you look behind them, good people are following. These are the kinds of people who make things happen in life. And they are the kind of people who can help make things happen in your business.

3. LOOK BEYOND YOUR OFFICIAL STRUCTURE

Just a point of clarification: the best leaders you have may not be on your board or on your current team. So, this conversation could be an awkward one. I get that. One of the realities of life is that leaders don't always end up in positions of leadership.

Board positions and career roles often aren't always filled by people with the gift of leadership. Often, they're filled by people who have simply been around a long time, or by someone who didn't even really want the job...it's just nobody else stepped up.

Don't blame them. It's admirable in one sense that when nobody else wanted to do it, so some good-hearted soul stepped in to fill the void. But here you are, a decade later and they're still in the role, unable to handle the future.

But at some point, you'll have to have an awkward conversation with your existing leaders about who is best positioned to lead your business forward. It can be hard. Some of them may need to step aside for the business to thrive in the future. You may as well be the bad guy who tells them this. And besides, the healthy people will understand exactly what you are doing and why.

You have to build the business of the future in the present, and you do it by finding the best leaders you can find whether they're officially in leadership or not. As your business grows, one of the things that will happen is that *leaders* will take up positions of leadership. And when that happens, your business will thrive. But if you're not there, start by getting real leaders into as many positions of leadership as possible, even if you need to create some new ones.

4. RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO BUY LEADERS

As your business grows, you may have a little money for the first time. The fantasy is that you'll buy amazing talent from outside your business. That may be a wise move from time to time, but for the most part, it isn't. You will never have enough money to buy a team, occasionally you may be able to hire a great leader from the outside, but 99% of your day-to-day leadership will come from building leaders on the inside.

And that's the secret. Great companies don't buy great leaders, they build them. Building leaders will always get you far more results than buying them. First, it scales. And second, outside people take a long time to learn your DNA—your unique way of doing things. And the failure rate for an outside hire is always greater than for people who were raised up from the inside.

5. CAST A CLEAR AND COMPELLING VISION

How do you attract the best people? First, realize that great leaders aren't attracted to stagnant, chaotic or dying environments. Even if that's what you have now, you have to show them that's not what you intend to have in the future. The journey from where you are to where you will be always starts with vision. Great leaders love a clear and compelling vision of the future. If your vision isn't clear and compelling, your future won't be either.

6. EMBRACE EXCELLENCE MORE THAN INCLUSION

Another awkward reality of small business is that you often have non-leaders leading. One of the dynamics you have to wrestle down is whether you value inclusion over excellence. Most business choose inclusion, not excellence. Theologically, putting people in positions for which they're not gifted is a denial of the diversity and giftedness of the body of Christ.

You wouldn't buy a cell phone designed by non-computer engineers, or bad computer engineers. You're not going to get your heart operated on by a non-doctor. You want the best.

7. PRAY FOR MORE LEADERS

Prayer deserves special mention when it comes to building the team that will carry you into the future. Prayer is an essential ingredient. Some leaders ignore the practical and focus on the spiritual. Others ignore the spiritual and focus on the practical. The best leaders ignore neither. If you don't have enough leaders or the right leaders, make sure you pray for God to send more. And then get to work with those you have.