

Seventeen Gorman

ADVISORS LLC

"Innovation through Collaboration"



Creating Individual and Organizational Excellence via Leadership Development, Management Development, Mentoring, Coaching, Team Building, Skill Building

Achieving Excellence

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In This Issue

[Welcome](#)

[In Your Quest for Excellence](#)

[The Recipe for Building High Performance Teams](#)

[Building Trust - Top 10 Tips](#)

[Our Offerings](#)

Welcome

Welcome to the June issue of "Achieving Excellence" which is inspired by clients and friends of **Seventeen Gorman Advisors**. We enjoy new ways of thinking and new ways of helping you achieve your goals.

Seventeen Gorman Advisors is a consulting practice focused on improving individual and organizational performance through skill building programs and developmental services.

Our approach to problem solving and issue resolution involves client participation at

all points in the process. Above all, we listen to our clients to understand their needs and goals so that the solution we develop together - as true partners - provides a sustainable business advantage.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey C. Leventry
Principal

In Your Quest for Excellence

"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude." - Colin Powell

The Recipe for Building High Performance Teams



Note: This is an updated version of an article I wrote several years ago that was published by Chief Learning Officer magazine in June 2012. It is based upon my personal experience building teams that consistently exceed performance objectives to achieve outstanding business results.

While high performance teams possess many attributes, there are five ingredients that are essential when developing these teams - all of which are critical to success.

Trust

Trust is the foundation of the high performance team and the basis upon which the team is built. Team members must respect, support and trust each other in every aspect of their work life, as they endeavor to build positive relationships. They need to be honest with one another and feel comfortable providing each other with candid and constructive feedback formally or informally. When these qualities are present the team develops chemistry and team members genuinely enjoy working with one another in good times and in challenging, stressful situations. Teams that are built on a foundation of trust and mutual respect stand firm in the face of adversity and succeed where other teams fail.

Exemplary Leadership

The high performance team must have an exemplary leader who provides the vision and goals for the team, which are aligned with organizational goals. This allows for quicker execution of company strategy and proper allocation of resources. The leader must act with integrity and should place team goals before individual goals. He or she inspires the team members and motivates

them to accomplish team goals. He or she selects the right people who possess team values and attitudes and then places them in the right role based upon their experience, education and expertise. The leader then creates an environment where performance can flourish by generating opportunities for success, ensuring team members have an opportunity to lead an initiative and be profiled for their contributions. He or she promotes continuous learning and ensures that rewards are commensurate with performance. Teams that are led by exemplary leaders are driven to achieve the team's goals and are more likely to succeed.

Complementary Skill Set

The high performance team must be composed of individuals who possess diverse and complementary skills. Each team member must understand the relevance of his or her skills to the goals of the team and be willing to contribute to the success of the team based upon his or her skill set. He or she comprehends that a blending of skills, experience and expertise is required in order for the team to meet its goals. Team members are also willing to share what they know with each other and are eager to learn new skills that will improve each person's performance while contributing to the team's collective performance. Every team member seeks personal growth opportunities as part of his or her ongoing development. Teams that possess diverse and complementary skill sets have the advantage of tapping into members' unique abilities to achieve their objectives.

Commitment to a Common Goal or Purpose

High performance team members must understand the team's goals and be committed to achieving them. They consistently act in ways that support the team's mission and objectives. They also appreciate how their individual contributions support the team's efforts, and they take a collaborative approach in their work. Additionally, they value partnership and are eager to contribute to initiatives being spearheaded by their teammates because they accept mutual accountability and know the team shares the ultimate reward. Teams that are committed to common goals consistently outperform those that are not.

Honest and Open Communication

The last hallmark of a high performance team is the commitment to communicate openly and honestly. All communication must be transparent, with no perceived "hidden agendas." Team members must be honest about any matter impacting the team's goals or performance. As a result, the team can operate more efficiently, and meetings can be more productive since the focus is on getting things done rather than spending time deciphering the meaning of the communication. Honest communication breeds productivity, and improved productivity leads to achievement of team goals. Teams that adhere to open and honest communication are more productive and efficient.

Once you build a high performance team, you can start to enjoy the benefits and value generated by the team. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Increased productivity and efficiency
- Improved innovation and quality
- Improved morale and increased employee satisfaction



As indicated in the feature article above, Trust is the foundation of the high performance team and the basis upon which the team is built.

With this in mind, I have created a "Top 10 List" of ways trust can be created based upon my experience managing high performance teams. While this list may appear daunting to some, in reality these are Management Best Practices that have been used with success by the best Managers and Leaders for many years.

1. **Leading by Example** - Building trust within your team starts at the top since team members are always watching and taking cues from the leader. Leaders need to model the desired behavior and demonstrate what trust in others looks and feels like. This involves trusting your team members, your colleagues and your boss.
2. **Honest and Open Communication** - Team leaders must mandate transparency in all facets of the working relationship. It should be made clear at the outset that honest, meaningful dialogue is expected on the part of all teammates. In addition, important and relevant information is shared by all members of the group so that informed decisions can be made routinely and consistently.
3. **Team Building Exercises** - Make time to engage teammates in team building events and exercises that encourage the development of interpersonal relationships. Whether this occurs during normal work hours or at after-work gatherings, an effort should be made to have teammates get to know one another in a personal way (not just as professionals) to discover common interests and connections so that everyone feels comfortable working together toward a common goal or purpose.
4. **Regular Team Meetings** - Conduct regular team meetings where all parties are expected to contribute to the dialogue. Also, create an atmosphere where everyone feels free to offer ideas and suggestions that benefit the group. Encourage respectful, thoughtful debate on all relevant issues so that everyone feels part of the final decision.
5. **Ongoing Candid Feedback** - Ensure that all teammates receive routine, candid feedback regarding performance, accomplishments and areas of improvement. This helps to manage expectations and provides everyone with an idea of where they stand with the team leader, as well as with their co-workers.
6. **Clear Team Values** - Develop, document and communicate guidelines for team behavior so that everyone understands how they should conduct themselves. Make sure that all parties agree to the team values and then address deviations from the expected behavior promptly and honestly so that issues can be resolved quickly and respectfully.
7. **Honoring Commitments** - When promises and commitments are made to team members, they should be respected and honored. In situations where

promises cannot be kept, teammates need to explain the reasoning for the deviation and offer alternative arrangements that support achievement of team goals or objectives.

8. **Rewarding Performance** - The leader should evaluate performance in a fair and objective manner, timing rewards to teammates' achievement of desired results. The reward should be communicated to all parties so that everyone realizes how the reward ties directly to the accomplishment. Conversely, those who are not rewarded need to understand the manager's reasoning and rationale, as well as the action steps that should be taken to achieve a reward in the future.
9. **Recognizing Achievement** - The leader should recognize employee achievements in a timely and meaningful manner. Regardless of the approach that it utilized, the best managers ensure that employee recognition is a normal part of their repertoire and becomes part of the team culture.
10. **Responsibility and Accountability** - Great managers take their responsibilities seriously and feel a duty or obligation to support their employees so they reach their potential. They create special opportunities and assignments that lead to career growth and development. Team members take notice of this and admire, respect and trust managers who act with genuine concern toward their direct reports.

Our offerings include the following:

Developmental Services

[Coaching](#)
[Management / Leadership Development](#)
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[Mentoring](#)
[Team Building](#)

Skill Building Programs

[Influencing Skills](#)
[Presentation Skills](#)
[Project Management Skills](#)
[Decision Making](#)

Seventeen Gorman Advisors looks forward to collaborating with you.

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