

# Building a World Class Team

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# Words of Wisdom

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"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."

--Andrew Carnegie

"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships."

--Michael Jordan

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed. It is the only thing that ever has."

--Margaret Mead

"If you want to walk quickly, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk with others."

-- African proverb

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The world's most successful organizations and teams are built on one essential ingredient:

VTP's = Very Talented People

# A Field Guide to VTP's

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Five things you need to know about VTP's

1. The DNA of a VTP
2. Which types of VTP's do you need?
3. The challenges of finding and recruiting VTP's
4. Assessing the fit of potential VTP's
5. Keeping your VTP's and helping them excel

# The DNA of a VTP...

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## Intelligent

- In growth businesses, many problems are new and benefit from novel solutions

## The four “E’s” of GE leadership

- “Energy, ability to energize others, edge to make tough decisions, and execute. They are connected by P for passion”, from the book *Jack*

## Self-motivated

- High levels of energy
- Can generate great results with minimal direction and push

## Self-aware and Self-correcting

- Can address most problems without involving their supervisor
- Understands that even problems caused by others can be fixed by taking action themselves

# Which VTP's Do You Need?

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## Varies with the stage of your company

- Early stage (less than \$5 million in revenue) needs generalists
- Mid stage (greater than \$10m in revenue) needs specialists

## Yin and Yang

- One person can rarely be everything to everyone – the most impressive VTP's come in the form of two people with complimentary skill sets

## The big resume paradox

- Question: which is better, the strong willed, seasoned exec with a mile-long resume or the unproven up and comer who is out to make a name for himself?
- Answer: I don't know – a resume is not the most important predictor of success. Do they compliment the existing people? Are their values aligned with your organization's?
- Conclusion: don't be intoxicated by big resumes – the best teams have a mix of seasoned and high potential people

# The Challenges of Finding VTP's

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Very Talented People are extremely hard to find...

- They are almost always employed
- They are already paid well and not easily motivated by more money
- They want to work for someone smarter than them so they can become VVTP's
  - ... *So much for the old adage of hiring people smarter than you – it's much easier said than done...*

# Recruiting VTP's

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## Techniques for finding and recruiting VTP's

- Every VTP tends to know a few other VTP's
  - IBM offers a \$5,000 bonus to anyone that helps recruit someone new into the company
- Try hiring a Junior VTP and help them develop into a world class VTP on your team
- The biggest attraction for VTP's is to be on a team of VTP's – make sure your best people are active and visible in the community
- Hiring VTP's is not an HR function –your top people need to be at the core of your recruiting efforts
  - Remember the words of Steve Jobs: A players hire A players and B players hire C players
  - For your top candidates, act like a concierge and deliver an amazing “customer experience” during recruiting



# Will the VTP you've found be successful?

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## Spend some time together outside the office

- Dinner, golf, drinks
- If you really want to understand someone, meet their significant other

## Look for common values

- How do they feel about family, past-times, work ethic, competitors, working with customers, and dealing with colleagues?

## Will you enjoy working with them?

- This is an important and fair question that is often overlooked

## Interview them, interview them and interview them some more

- The more diverse the interviewers, the better the perspective

## Reference checks

- Floss your teeth, wear sun screen, and always, always do reference checks

# My Favorite Questions for Candidates

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## Interview questions

- If I call your detractors from your last job, what would they say about you?
- What's your largest professional accomplishment?
- Describe the biggest mistake you've made in your career
- Tell me why you are leaving your previous job?
- *If this is a particularly critical hire, consider asking the candidate to prepare and deliver a presentation to your team (e.g. redesign your social media, create a product demo, deliver a webinar)*

## Reference questions

- Would you work with this person again? If so, why aren't you working with them now?
- What kind of working environment allowed this person to do their best work (borrowed from Southwest Airlines)?
- What situation would you NOT put this person in? (from Amazon)

# Keeping A Great Team Great

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For your best people, don't focus on tomorrow's IPO; focus on today's OPI (opportunity for positive impact)

- Rosabeth Moss Kanter

# Keeping a Great Team Great

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## Slow to hire, quick to fire

- If you are beginning to worry that someone on your team is not making the cut any longer, you can be sure that the rest of your team figured it out long ago... (hint: you will usually be the last to see it)

## The founder's paradox

- Very often, the people that got the company off the ground become the largest hurdle to future success - there is no more gut wrenching but potentially fatal issue faced by young, growing companies
- Founders know their companies exist because they ignored the early advice they would fail – unfortunately, when the company is larger, it's hard to convince founders they now need to rely on the input and judgment of others

## The Magic of Small Wins

- From Theresa Amabile's book, "Progress Principle" and Zappo's Tony Hsieh, create small, incremental milestones so people have a constant sense of tangible progress

## Have fun and celebrate

- Provide opportunities for people to remember that they like and respect each other - get together outside work from time to time
- Make sure to celebrate successes – this is one of your most important jobs as a leader

# Keeping a Great Team Great

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## Manage their results, not their activities

- Directing actions rather than managing to results is a very common mistake by rookie executives (and by human beings in general)

## Give people autonomy and ownership

- VTP's operate best when they have the latitude to approach things their own way – if they know they can survive failure, they will be more creative and take bolder initiatives

## Inspire people towards a greater cause

- Nothing is more motivating than working towards something bigger than themselves
- Frame your business vision in terms of outcomes that truly impact the world

## Boldly recognize extraordinary contributions

- Avoid treating everyone the same – great people are motivated by the opportunity to stand out from their peers
- Provide constant feedback – VTP's thrive on feedback, both good and bad – don't wait for the annual review
- Netflix's HR manual, "Sustained A-level performance is rewarded with greater opportunities. Adequate performance gets a generous severance"

# Organization and Work Environment

Motivation Factor Analysis by Manpower

## Employee's Viewpoint

## Managers Viewpoint

1	full appreciation for work done	8
2	feeling “in” on things	10
3	help on personal problems	9
4	job security	2
5	good wages	1
6	interesting work	5
7	promotion and growth	3
8	management loyalty to workers	6
9	good working conditions	4
10	tactful disciplining	7

# Conclusions

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- The single most powerful competitive weapon is a great team
  - A well oiled group of B players will always beat a loose confederation of A+ resumes
  - Hiring great people is an executive function, not HR
  - Really great people have unique needs – if you are prepared to meet those needs, you will create a team that can transform your organization and industry

# THANK YOU

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# My favorite books on teams...

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