



## HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS:

### The Lifeline to Results

BY DONALD F. HADLEY, CHFC, CPC, CBC, MSM

JULY 2013

Being a leader in business requires not only the “know how” to develop a true team, but also increase individual performance that requires less dependency on the leader. Having this component as part of your organization will make an immediate impact and improve your long-term business fundamentals.

#### CHALLENGE

Many organizations have very capable people that perform at very high levels. However, the teamwork may be weak between highly performing individuals if the focus is too much on individual results. Additionally, the “performance contract” of the individuals can be directly with the leader rather than a commitment to the organization and the team that runs it. In other words, the leader is the glue, rather than the team being the glue for each other and the organization. Accountability and results suffer in this type of environment.

By actively engaging the team together and directing them towards a cause that is much larger than themselves, as well as teaching them skills and tools to achieve that vision, a group of individuals can become a true team while having more fun and accomplishing better results.

#### SITUATION

Our client owns a manufacturing company that is second generation; Dad retired and two of the sons were running the business. There was conflict within the team of people that were supposed to be the leaders of the organization. The brothers were constantly mediating disagreements and communicating what one person or department really meant to the other individual or department. Conflict was avoided and excuses were becoming common.

The company operates in two states and was considering an acquisition. Despite having good financial results, the brothers noticed that gross margins were beginning to erode and overhead was beginning to increase. The situation was complicated further with departmental miscommunication, resulting in projects that were over budget and off schedule with too many safety issues. This was threatening several relationships with “A” customers as well as their families, since most of the brothers’ time and energy was put into the business.

The brothers were asking us how to improve communication, reduce conflict, and get things back on track, both in the business and with their most important relationships – their families.

#### VISION

By actively engaging the team together and directing them towards a cause that was much larger than themselves, as well as teaching them skills and tools to achieve that vision, the group became a true team while having more fun and accomplishing better results. The results from the team’s efforts allowed the two owners not only to have better lives but also to develop other segments of the business.



This client had a good business with a bunch of very capable employees. The missing piece that needed to be developed was a clear leadership team that would be accountable to each other for a clear vision and progress in achieving the goals. Then, as problems occurred, the owners were no longer pulled into the tactical day-to-day issues which prevented them from the work that was needed to develop their team.

## RESOLUTION

In this case, several tools were used to fully investigate the situation prior to making recommendations. Engaging in interviews with the management team, we uncovered some leadership and team dynamic issues – in particular, the management team did not see themselves as a team and was depending on the owners to prevent, coordinate and fix issues both within the company and externally, rather than depend on each other. Focusing on and recognizing the individual strengths of each person that were previously ignored or not recognized was accomplished through use of Kolbe Indexes. The team learned to focus on strengths of individuals and the team overall, rather than on the perceived weaknesses of individual members. The blame and excuses seen previously stopped as the team began to concentrate on the big picture.

Three important steps were taken to address all of the issues uncovered:

- 1) We focused on identifying the best use of each of the management team member's capabilities and what measurable results their positions required. This combined with additional exercises began to get everyone comfortable with their own and other's differences. They began to have a true understanding of why it would take them working as a true team to have a great company.
- 2) In the discussions, it was realized that there was no common vision for the future of the business. Not having a clear vision made it difficult for the team to know what they wanted to achieve and what tools were needed. In response, we built a picture of their World Series, Scoreboard and Game Plan (the 10 Year Vision along with a Strategic Plan) that would be monitored monthly by the team.
- 3) Weekly, the owners meet with the team for 30 minutes to discuss and plan production, upcoming projects and longer term initiatives. The owners also quietly attend the monthly monitoring meetings.

## APPLYING IT TO YOU

To benefit from the lessons learned in this case study; focus on building a leadership team that has a common vision, common values, and different styles with varied backgrounds and experiences. The skills can be taught if you have these other pieces.

Some strategies to use in your high performing team endeavors:

- Teach employees how to have good conflict before conflict occurs.
- Help your people prevent bad conflict, and when it's possible, before a problem is about to occur. It is much better to over communicate and deal with the problem than let it grow and risk losing a valuable member of the team.
- Teach the basics. In this case it was important for the team to understand how to ask the right questions, use appropriate body language and learn how to run a great meeting to get results.
- Develop and create a future, long term vision. It is the vision that creates the need for the team to become a truly great team. Without the need, building a team can become a flat intellectual exercise.



## SPECIAL OFFER: THE HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS EXPLORATION SESSION

If you are interested in learning more about The High Performance Teams Exploration Session and how to develop your team, avoid or escape a declining business and life, contact us to schedule your Exploration Session with one of our Expert Guides.

You may also wish to learn more about our unique process for Organizational Leaders called The Comprehensive Independence Builder™, in which we address all of the obstacles you face and then help you use innovative strategies to protect and enhance your organization, improve your quality of life and better achieve your goals.

Contact our Expert Guides at Applied Vision Works, Inc., to schedule your High Performance Team Exploration Session or for more information on our services and our processes. We may be reached by calling 800-786-4332 or by emailing us at [JSabatini@AppliedVisionWorks.com](mailto:JSabatini@AppliedVisionWorks.com).