

# How to build teams that deliver growth

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You need to build the right teams to spot and seize new growth opportunities. But, as Helen Brown argues, personality type is just as important as technical skills.

There's magic in a great team, not just because of the way they work together, it's more than that. A great team creates its own kind of alchemy that pulls people together with a passion that delivers exponential growth.

How to assemble that perfect team is often regarded as more luck than judgement but that's not the case. It's a result of many years' worth of experience by a leader who, as a result of being an expert in their field, can spot the combination of skill and attitude required for their needs.

For examples, look to legendary Robert R Gilruth, director of the 1969 NASA lunar landing, Steph Houghton, captain of England women's national football team and Manchester City, and X-Men leader, Professor Charles Xavier – who can argue with his ability to pull together a 'super' team?

Science fiction aside, there's a fair bit of scientific fact that can be used to enhance every team. You may not get into space, or win gold at the Olympics, but you can put together some pretty powerful talent combinations by following some simple principals.

In 2016, Google published a report based on many years of interview data. In it, they stated their best-performing teams were defined not only by their mix of technical capabilities but on the group's level of emotional intelligence and communication skills.

That analysis was backed up by the Harvard Business Review in 2017, which published a report looking at the scientific evidence that supports the hypothesis that the make-up of personalities in teams has more of an impact on performance than skills alone.

Is it fair to assume therefore that businesses that hire talent predominantly through a skills lens may not attain the same performance levels as those businesses that look into the personalities, behaviours and attitudinal competencies of their teams?

## Winning personalities

Our own research into the teams that deliver the greatest performance for our clients would support this theory and we have found they generally include a combination of five distinct behaviours:

1. **Altruism.** Those who demonstrate an altruistic approach have a concern for the wider ecosystem and create more opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing. This results in a share and reapply mentality reduces time and associated costs and shares tested success factors.

2. **Creative Thinking.** Focus on innovation, creating the new and different. Examples of companies that have over-indexed in this dynamic include Uber and Airbnb.

3. **Adaption.** Employees are able to assimilate and be comfortable with constant change at pace and know when to move on if a direction or idea isn't working. This personality type has been key to the 'fail fast and learn faster' attitude adopted by companies such as Tencent and Adobe.

4. **Pragmatism.** Team members who are comfortable with detail and process, who can clarify the need and can maintain focus during stressful situations.

5. **Results focussed.** Those who naturally take charge, are organised and energetically focus the team on group success. These are the specialists who often become the future coach or leader.

### Keeping a performing team engaged

Whilst clarity of purpose and management of time can be delivered by any competent manager, fulfilling the emotional needs of the team requires the coach to be skilled in the area of emotional intelligence.

That's because it's about more than just assembling a team with the right skills and attitude. Smart selection can quickly come undone without clear goals and constant course correction from a skilled leader.

The work the team are undertaking and the way they are being led also needs to meet their emotional and intellectual needs. Teams that thrive are bound by the same mutual understanding and respect for the vision and values of the team. This shared connection requires the coach, or leader, to be intentional about a common goal, even when the people they are working with have different personal values.

Famously, Claudio Ranieri led English football team Leicester City to win the 2016 Premier

League against huge odds. While skilled in their own right, the team had been playing as a group of individuals. Ranieri needed to find a way to bring them together. His solution was to invite them all to his house for pizza.

On the face of it a simple gesture, he was creating a culture of openness and illustrating by his actions that they were all equals playing for the same prize, as one team.

In summary, teams that grow and thrive have three core components; individuals with relevant skills and a desire to continually hone them; collective attitudes that complement the team in most situations and consistent leadership that can both set the course and steer them unfailingly towards it.

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