

LEADING & SCALING HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAMS



As a leader, always be prepared to take the fall for your team. Your fault or not, YOU need to take responsibility. This not only builds trust but personal credibility and psychological safety for your team. Be greedy, yearn for more and 'earn' as much trust as possible.

VISHAL NAITHANI



When it comes to building high-performance teams, finding the right skill-set isn't the only thing that matters but it is the capable leadership that paves the path to success.

Through some of my personal learnings on effectively leading high-performance teams and working with leaders whom I have looked up to over the years, I have come to conclude that high-performing teams are led by a leader, and not managers. In order to achieve superlative team goals, leaders must earn the love and respect of their people. Honing and developing some of these learnings will require conscious efforts (acceptance and willingness) and subsequent behavioural changes (the tough part) over time.

Start With Absolute Trust

Trust is the invaluable currency that every reporting relationship deals in. Trust is hard earned but easily spent (lost). More often than not people will reciprocate trust, at times even when they didn't plan to, just because you trusted them! Rather than scrutinizing, questioning and doubting decisions and intentions, analyse objectively and observe fully before jumping to conclusions.

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Making Mistakes is a Part of the Journey

Most people are not perfectionists and will surely not get it 100% right in one go. Make it clear to your team that making mistakes is part of their learning journey. Patiently

explain the right way to do it. Lead, show how it's done and then move out of the way.

While it's okay to make mistakes, it's also unacceptable to repeat the same mistake again. A second time it becomes oversight and a third time becomes a plain habit which is a hallmark of complacency. That is where the buck should stop.

Make Their Growth your Personal Agenda

As an able leader make it your personal responsibility to ensure that your team becomes a better version of themselves, not only professionally but personally as well. Acting as a coach, mentor, and guide to your team is of paramount importance as you play a key role in how their careers and individuality shapes up.

When your team sees you invested in their success, completely contrary and away from a normal transactional, bartered relationship that is when the magic happens.

Different Strokes for Different Folks

If it's only about reaching office on time, killing your KRAs and having a good night's sleep, probably robots will fare better (without even sleep being a necessity!) People bring a LOT of personal baggage

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(good or bad) rife with emotions that surely drive their professional interactions. Thus, it's always good to know WHO the other person is, WHAT drives them and what doesn't. As an able leader, you would have to don multiple hats, at times even acting contrary to your natural demeanor to just establish that personal rapport with your team.

Give Full Context on Work Deliverables

Even if people don't ask, still give context. It's important for people to know why they are doing what they have been asked to. Understanding the bigger picture will help your team connect the dots and understand the impact of their work, however small it may be. Which metric gets impacted? Which needle moves if we deliver well? How do the small steps he/she takes contribute to the larger success of the organisation?

Do Not Try to Solve for Everyone

It's not about keeping everyone happy, but the RIGHTFUL ones. Solve for people who deserve, act with ownership and reciprocate trust; the ones who are self-driven and need the least 'managing'. Once

again, do not try to keep everyone happy, you'll fail miserably.

Empathy Goes a Long Way

Humans first, 'resources' later (or never!) We are emotional beings who make daily choices governed by our emotions. Scientific research says that high emotional quotient (EQ) is one of the most critical ingredients for a leader's success.

Acting empathetically sends a strong message to your team saying, 'I care for you'. Yes, there will be instances where people might misuse empathy and trust, go ahead and do it anyway.

About the Author

Vishal Naithani is currently the Head of Human Resource, North at Oyo Rooms. Prior to Oyo he was the Head-HR for Shuttll where he built and scaled the function from ground-up since inception. In his earlier stints he has also worked with larger MNCs like Xerox India Ltd, Sapient Consulting and Essar wherein he donned multiple hats within the HR function. His keen areas of interest are Organisational Culture, Leadership Development, Performance Management, Compensation & Benefits and Employer Branding. He has more than 11 years of rich experience post his MBA from MDI, Gurgaon and is intrigued by People & Culture challenges in new-age organisations.

