

# 5 ways to improve team synergy and create high-performing teams

Every leader wants a team that performs well to drive strategic objectives and achieve outcomes. Yet, it can be a challenge for leaders to create. One must enhance collaboration amongst team members to improve team synergy while also focusing carefully to develop each individual member of the team's skills and abilities.

High-performing teams can be a challenge to blend and encourage. While some believe that a group of high performers will naturally collaborate and work well together, that may not always be the case. Many individuals who may be star performers on their own may not be used to sharing the spotlight in a team environment. Still, blending together high-performing individuals can be achieved by knowing how to motivate individuals to see the benefits of team synergies. High performers look for purpose, belonging, and achievement.

These challenges don't apply to high performers only. All teams can be difficult to motivate and align toward shared goals and objectives. Taking steps to form or reconfigure teams can help leaders ensure their teams are advancing performance.

## Five things you can do to improve team performance

### 1. Talk to each team member

You may already be familiar with the importance of "Stay Interviews." These meetings with key team members help you understand what keeps team members motivated, engaged, and performing within their roles. While this can help leaders understand individual wants and needs, it can also help leaders see where there are overlaps or gaps between team members' wants and needs. This, as a first step, can help a leader define where they may need to realign work, roles, and responsibilities to help individuals and the team perform more effectively.

### 2. Define, or redefine, a team mission or purpose

Just because we have job descriptions or organizational goals, doesn't mean that these drive purpose amongst teams. Find time to meet with your team and have an open discussion on what the team thinks priorities are in relation to the organization, how they want to work and communicate with one another, and what they love about the job. These types of open discussions can help realign the team in a more holistic way.

### 3. Encourage feedback to drive accountability

Sometimes high performers move on to new opportunities when they feel those on their team are under-performing. Find ways to increase feedback amongst team members through team meetings, 360-feedback, or performance reviews. Using feedback to drive accountability is key but can also be a way for teams to enhance performance and challenge one another. Plus, feedback coming from peers can be more motivational and helpful than that which just comes from the manager.

#### **4. Reward and recognize**

While you may be able to offer financial rewards, high performers are often more driven by intrinsic motivators. While money matters, stretch assignments, positive feedback, and exposure to new people/teams/projects can also drive high performance. Taking the time to develop rewards based on an individual team member's motivators can help leaders find new ways to recognize team members in new and creative ways.

#### **5. Step back**

High performers and even core performers want autonomy and ownership of their work. No one wants to be micromanaged, especially when opportunity may be knocking. As Steve Jobs once said, "It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do. We hire smart people so they can tell us what to do." Find ways to "step back" and let your team members figure out how to tackle new projects and challenges. It will help them grow and develop and may be the challenge they need to stay stimulated.

### **Keeping high performing employees**

In today's "Great Resignation" having a sense of purpose and belonging can aid in retention making these steps critical for leaders to take now to retain their key and core players. Plus, having a high-performing team can benefit the leader in knowing they have a strong team that delivers, freeing them up to focus on other tasks.