

The
Manager's

High- Performance

Handbook

How to Drive Winning
Performance With
Everyone on
Your Team



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A high-performance team is like a well-oiled machine.

Each team member has a specific role.

Each possesses complementary talents and skills.

Every person understands, aligns with

and is committed to a common purpose.

Individually, and as a group, members consistently show

high levels of collaboration, innovation and trust.

Together they produce superior results.



Introduction



It's Friday afternoon. Your boss calls you into her office to discuss the team's performance, and she looks serious.

She tells you, “Right now our actions aren’t producing the results that are needed. Now, more than ever, we need to be achieving our targets. We have this quarter to improve our outcomes before leadership starts looking at our department and making some tough decisions.”

After a pause, she adds, “We have to find a way to improve our results, especially with your team. Over the weekend, let’s think about what we can do to drive performance, fix any shortcomings and quickly get that impact.”

You know that your boss values you and the work you do. You know you have a talented team, but performance can improve. Each member must produce results and be engaged.

You need breakthrough results instead of more breakdowns. And, based on your boss's remarks, you need to drive that higher performance quickly.

When you lead team members with high potential and they don't perform, it can be frustrating. In many ways, it's like owning a high-performance race car that only operates in low gear. The car has the capability to win, but the pit crew can't make it work properly and get it back in the race.

As a leader, your job is to inspire your own crew to focus on performance, make improvements, negotiate roadblocks and drive results where possible. You need to diagnose any possible issues with operations, strategy or your environment that could cause problems.

Imagine the opportunities that would result if your team members systematically and consistently performed at their highest level every day.

Whether you lead two people or 200, this book is designed to help you improve performance and obtain winning outcomes. You'll see approaches to accelerate your success and warning indicators to help you avoid problems. Specifically, you'll find practical tips to help you and your team:

1. Attract, qualify and select motivated people with the right talents.
2. Understand, align and commit to a common purpose.
3. Build high levels of collaboration, innovation and trust.
4. Focus on and produce superior results.

The solutions provided in this book are based on 25 years of helping high-performing leaders achieve results in a variety of roles and organizations. Also, ideas come from survey results of more than 800 professionals who shared their experiences and best practices on achieving high performance.

In every chapter, you'll be able to test your leadership strategy and identify specific tune-up areas to focus your efforts. In addition, you'll be able to create a personal high-performance action plan to help you maintain performance and drive winning results.

Are you ready to improve your leadership and your team's performance?

If so, buckle up.

Start your engines.

And get ready to fast-track your journey to high performance and winning results.

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*Desire is the key to motivation, but it's
determination and commitment to an
unrelenting pursuit of your goal –
a commitment to excellence – that will
enable you to attain the success you seek.*

– **Mario Andretti,**

Formula One legend and author of
*Race to Win: How to Become a
Complete Champion Driver*





Drive Team Collaboration & Innovation



Within seconds, a pit crew can change tires, refuel a gas tank, make minor adjustments to a car and have a driver ready to re-enter the track. Like the crew, high-performing teams work together like a well-oiled machine. Individually and as a group, performers show strong collaboration and innovation.

Teams won't trust each other or work successfully together if they are unclear about the direction, strategy or people's roles. Your people must be clear about where their organization is headed and what is expected from them by upper management. As the leader, the most effective ways to get people and teams to work successfully toward a common goal or direction are to:

- Provide clear directions and hold people accountable.
- Communicate strategy from leadership.

- Develop a high level of trust.
- Understand everyone's role.

Clarify Direction

Most people need clear directions and accountability before they can work effectively together. When direction is vague, people are left to create their own interpretations and determine priorities. Therefore, the leader and organization's expectations aren't met. In addition, people are frustrated and everyone wastes time and energy.

Occasionally, you'll find people comfortable working with ambiguity. However, more than 75 percent of our survey respondents said they want clear directions and accountability.

As a leader, the most effective ways to provide clear directions and hold others accountable are to:

- Set clear expectations of tasks to be performed and desired outcomes.
- Evaluate your people's performance based on expectations.
- Measure results and know when results are not occurring.
- Create a process to help people diagnose and correct when issues occur or things aren't working to plan.
- Provide regular and candid feedback.
- Acknowledge and give people credit for their contribution.
- Regularly review outcomes to ensure members are producing what is required and what they promised.
- Monitor to ensure team members are not overburdened and taking on more than they committed to do.

Communicate Strategy From Leadership

Organizational objectives and periodic communication from upper management are not enough to drive high performance. As a leader, make sure to communicate your organization's strategy and share how your team's efforts fit into the bigger goals. When people understand the reasons they perform work, their results improve and your team is more dedicated to the strategy. Also, team members are more likely to interact with other groups in a meaningful way and make decisions to accomplish objectives logically.

Develop a High Level of Trust

Driving performance requires more than communicating strategy and providing clear directions. Trust accelerates performance and makes your life as a leader easier. Great leaders surround themselves with people they trust on several levels.

How trustworthy are the people around you? Can you:

Trust their capabilities? High performers know the need for possessing competitive skills and expertise. When needed, they seek personal development, including self-study, as well as coaching or training to learn new skills and to keep them current. They know whom they can trust to gain reliable insight.

Trust their decisions? High performers know the importance of dependability and having others rely on their judgment. They pay special attention to accurate information, provide valid data, and can access reliable contacts.

Trust their integrity? High performers know the value of honesty. They don't cheat – even if no one would know – or lie – even when news isn't pleasant.

Trust them to maintain confidences and sensitive

information? High performers know that releasing trade secrets, client data or sensitive personnel issues hurts organizations.

Drive a Higher Level of Trust

Here are ideas to accelerate a higher level of trust in your team:

- Recognize those who stay current in their expertise.
- Support team members who wish to seek additional training to increase knowledge or improve a skill.
- Introduce them to your trusted advisors.
- Encourage them to seek their teammates' opinions and insight.
- Identify who is trusted and relied upon by his or her peers.
- Have members shadow or train others in their function and roles.
- Partner members on projects to acquaint them with each other's talents, skills and reliability.

High performers also value trustworthiness in their peers. Trust is enhanced by defining and appreciating each member's role.

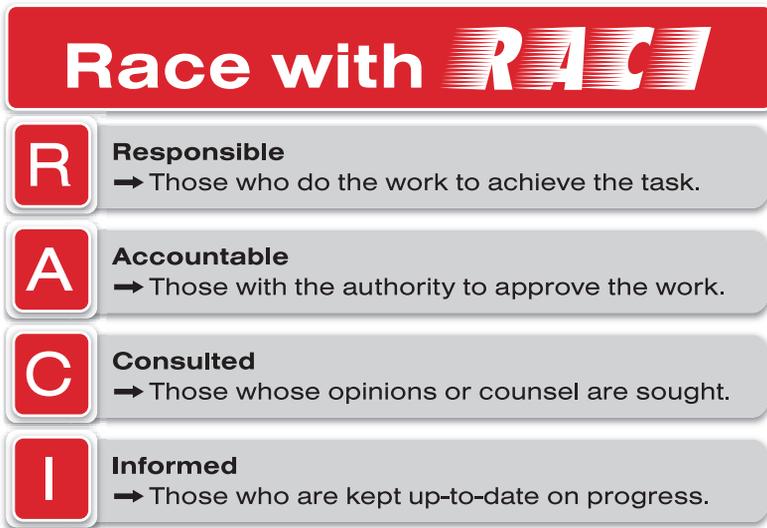
Understand Roles

Teams are less likely to idle and delay action if they have knowledge of what everyone on the team does and how each role serves to drive results. Visibility of roles helps clear up assumptions and prevent confusion.

Race to Performance with RACI

High-performing teams use a responsibility matrix or "RACI" chart when there are a number of people involved in the completion of a task or in the making of a decision. A RACI

chart defines who is **R**esponsible, **A**ccountable, **C**onsulted and **I**nformed. Like a dashboard, a RACI chart clarifies expectations, participation and roles required. Basically, RACI shows who does what, with whom and when.



Inspire High Levels of Collaboration

Team members who know and trust each other’s capabilities, decisions and integrity multiply their influence and outcomes. Collaboration is one of the keys to effectively use your organizational knowledge.

Many teams work independently or in “silos.” In silos, members of the same organization don’t pool knowledge, effectively use resources or even communicate well. When challenges and best practices aren’t shared among different groups, it causes confusion, wasted time and duplication of effort.

Instead, direct your team members to reach out to their peers in other groups for insight into processes, to understand issues or to gain additional resources.

Drive Collaboration

High performers are always reaching out to others for help and to help. Give people the chance to provide input, grow, think creatively and stretch beyond their daily duties. Encourage your members to reach out when they want to:

- Seek knowledge when they are inexperienced in a particular area.
- Generate ideas to form a more complete solution.
- Gain direction at the onset or opinions on how to proceed.
- Include stakeholders or others affected by the decisions or results.
- Fine-tune, identify gaps or explore other options.
- Avoid unintended consequences and make adjustments before a negative result occurs.
- Engage others, foster teamwork and enlist support.
- Gain agreement, seek cooperation and build alliances.
- Ask for help before the situation becomes overwhelming.

Remember, the power of collaboration and openly seeking feedback must be demonstrated by the leader. Let team members see you assist your peers and ask for help. Show how you involve others in your decision making.

Create a Safe Approach to Ask for Help

There is a risk to reaching out, especially when you don't know the answer. Your people may have a legitimate fear that others will judge them or they'll receive bad advice. Make collaboration safer by encouraging your people to:

- Pick advisors who have their best interests at heart.

- Find “safe” people to answer questions without judgment.
- Seek knowledge and honest feedback from high performers or subject-matter experts.

Encourage Innovation

You and your team need agility to take advantage of opportunities and to react to setbacks. Your members may have a solution but not the confidence to act. Ask them for suggestions and creative help. Even if you don’t think you need or will use the input, asking it is worth the effort. Responses you receive may result in insightful ideas; plus, members feel more empowered and included.

Often, people innovate when you give them time and an issue to solve. Make it a practice to have your team analyze what works and what could be improved on a project or a process. Once your team knows innovating is part of their work responsibility, they start proposing solutions to the problems they spot.

Perform a Team Diagnostic

Ask your team to do a “diagnostic” on their team. Have members examine the team’s current effectiveness. Ask them to diagnose what areas of innovation are needed to upgrade the team’s performance. Below is a sample format.

Perform a Diagnostic



Driving Forces

What would increase our team's power or influence?

Drag

What areas create resistance to our team's performance?

Efficiency

Where could we save steps or be more efficient?

Breakdown

What processes do we have to get us back in the race when communication or systems break down?

The results of an analysis can reveal precise areas where changes, upgrades and solutions are needed. Be prepared for high-speed, innovative suggestions.

Boost Innovation

Look for people who spark ideas, collaborate and make your life as a leader easier. The ways to boost innovation include asking team members to:

- Lead a project.
- Present a key part of a presentation.
- Shadow another leader.
- Be a shift or team leader.
- Give their ideas or thoughts on an issue.
- Attend a meeting *for* you. Attend meetings *with* you.

High Performers are Innovators

Your high performers have the ability to innovate and generate creative solutions if they know what areas need upgrading or repair. When you expose them to issues and challenges, you encourage a higher level of thinking, problem solving and innovating.

Consider bringing team members to meetings with your boss or peers, especially those that involve strategic decisions. Attending gives them an up-front perspective of your job and a bigger picture of what is expected from the team by your organization. Your people also gain insight regarding the expectations placed on you and other leaders.

Keep Your High Performers Engaged

High performers have a proven track record to deliver results on a consistent basis. They are your “go to” people to get the job done quickly, effectively and with little supervision.

Often, performers prove themselves, obtain outstanding results and aren't rewarded for it. People with talent have options. If they don't see a potential for growth or future opportunities, they learn what they can and move on to another organization. Some of your highest performers will leave if you don't help them grow and recognize them for their contribution and innovation.

Fast-Track Your High-Potential Leaders

A few of your high performers also possess a capacity for leadership. These high potentials or "HIPOs" can perform successfully in leadership roles if given the opportunity. Some managers are afraid that if they invest their efforts in growing a high potential, the person will outgrow the team.

Not only is it *possible* to lose the HIPOs you develop, it is *probable* they will be promoted. Your goal is to leverage your high potentials' leadership performance while you have them.

A strong leader knows that developing and influencing a potential leader is good for the organization and part of a manager's job. It is better to contribute to the growth and success of an organization's future leaders than to ignore and lose those talents altogether. Having a friendly leader you helped advance is preferable to competing against one who leaves to work for a rival.

Turbo-Charge High Potentials

To retain HIPOs and maximize their contributions to your team, they must be challenged. Encourage your high potentials to take advantage of:

- On-the-job tasks that expand functions.
- Stretch projects to reach higher outcomes.
- Job transfers, rotations or loans to develop competencies.

- Feedback and coaching.
- Opportunities to “showcase” their talents.
- Mentoring and sponsoring.
- Professional or executive coaching.
- Training programs, including instructor-led, e-learning and self-study.

Observe reactions when you offer additional training and development opportunities. Those who show interest often possess the potential to lead. Those who don’t respond may need encouragement or perhaps to be left alone. Some of your high performers may be happy in their current role and/or as an independent contributor without additional leadership commitments.



High-Performance Dashboard:
Collaborate & Innovate

The secret to winning results is to have everyone on your team understand, align with and commit to a common purpose and operating practices.



Gauge how well your team collaborates and innovates by answering below on a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest).

To help drive my team’s collaboration and innovation efforts, I

_____ Ensure all members have clear instructions, understand our team’s roles and rely on each other.

_____ Encourage team members to reach out to collaborate, to seek knowledge, and to ask for help from others.

_____ Champion my people’s ideas and encourage their innovation.

_____ Give members permission to take risks and/or to make mistakes.

_____ Acknowledge and give my people credit for their contributions.

Total “Collaborate & Innovate” Score (Insert this score on your High-Performance Dashboard on page 57.)

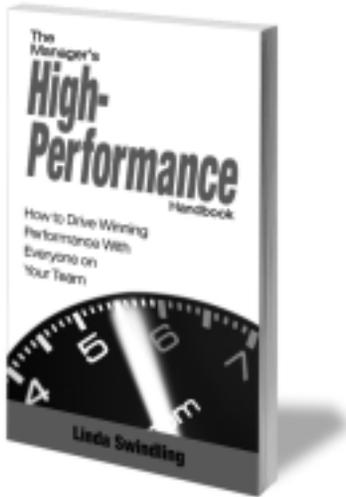
Your High-Performance Action Plan

To improve my performance score, I need to:

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Linda Byars Swindling is a workplace communication expert. She developed negotiating strategies to drive high performance first as a successful attorney and mediator and later as a keynote speaker, executive coach and strategic consultant. A Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) and president of Journey On, she is the author of *Stop Complainers and Energy Drainers: How to Negotiate Work Drama to Get More Done*. Learn more about Linda Swindling's professional services and resources by visiting her website at LindaSwindling.com

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DRIVE A HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORKPLACE

LOFTY ASPIRATION OR ATTAINABLE GOAL?

With *The Manager's High-Performance Handbook* you will understand what drives high performance ... and how to lead like a champion!

Learn the skills and techniques to:

- ◆ Locate and promote high-performance team members.
- ◆ Align with a common purpose and operating practices.
- ◆ Encourage a climate of collaboration, trust and innovation.
- ◆ Focus on and produce winning results.
- ◆ Create a personal action plan to fast-track your leadership.

Are you ready for High Performance?

If so, buckle up ... start your engines ...
and we'll see you and your team in the Winner's Circle!

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