

## Creating ELITE teams for Business Success

*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." Henry Ford*

No matter how talented, passionate, and determined to succeed you are in your chosen business, your level of success will be determined by your ability to inspire and lead a team. The game of business or any endeavour is both simple and complex. The simple bit is to have a great idea which you turn into a set of business goals. You then have to attract support for your idea be that in the way of clients, a talented crew and if you're lucky, a crowd. If you find yourself being one of the lucky ones, albeit combined with hard work and perseverance, whose idea takes off, it is then just a case of measuring and adjusting your way to success.

Of course, that's not what usually happens. At some point, you'll want to scale your business and this means adding more people to the equation which adds complexity. As the team become bigger, tasks become harder to complete for several reasons. One being that the channels of communication grow dramatically. Another phenomenon that arises is the by-stander effect. The more people you add to a group, the more people will assume others will pick up the slack. Levels of management are brought into police everybody. This all comes down to the myth that people can't manage themselves but they can if given the right conditions. Having worked in such autonomous and high performing teams, I examined some of the characteristics of such teams I refer to as **ELITE** teams.

I've spent a lot of time helping organisations and entrepreneurs create **ELITE** teams in their businesses and I base the concept on my experiences within the Special Forces combined with research of what peak performance looks like in teamwork and leadership. Basically, the entrepreneur has to evolve into the visionary leader role. That requires learning about human behaviour and slowly transforming power to the team. It also means equipping the team with the skills and tools to work as an **ELITE** Team such as ecological decision making and internal team coaching.

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So, what do I mean by **ELITE** Team?



There are several types of groups or teams that can be identified. Some groups of people working in an organisation don't need to be a team as they're just working towards a personal goal. A sales person will probably be working with a company and be referred to as part of the sales team but actually, they're not really working in a mutually accountable situation. I would liken these to golfers in a sporting parallel. They're all out to win the prize and occasionally come together to work on something but mostly it is a solitary competition.

Pseudo teams are a group of people who should be working as a team but have not been given the appropriate amount of ownership, training and have no idea what the organisation's strategy is. This could be likened to the **storming** stage in Tuckman's model of **forming, storming, norming and performing** stages of team development. As such, because they're not aligned, they perform badly as a collective group, often pursuing personal agendas.

A real team have a shared mission and purpose. They're performing better as there is some mutual accountability. They may suffer performance challenges because of a lack of experience and training. They may not be clear about the overall strategy. Leaders of high performing teams have realised that there is a lot to be gained from investing in personal development and are on the path to excellence. There is mutual accountability and psychological safety within the team so that team members can

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challenge each other to do better, without the team becoming disunited. Marginal gains become important, with incremental improvements being sought in processes and behaviours. A formula one pit team would be an example of a high performing team.

In the transformational era we're facing in the future whether it be due to technological advances or social-political influences, there is a need for more than high performing teams. There is a need for teams to become autonomous, creative and enterprising so that the people who receive feedback from the coalface can influence the direction of the group or organisation. This next level of team I refer to as **ELITE** teams.

**ELITE** Teams are on the path of **Excellence**. Just like high performing teams, they strive to become better each day. They are **Liberated** from a command and control mentality. As such they can all take the lead on a project or make decisions which influence the rest of the team. They are **Interdependent** which means they have a keen sense of camaraderie and excellent communications skills. **Training** becomes vitally important as few of us are equipped with the tools to operate in a high performing environment straight off the bat, or would know how to make ecological decisions which can positively influence the direction of the organisation.

*"You can never step into the same river; for new waters are always flowing on you. No man ever steps into the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he is not the same man." Heraclitus*

And lastly, **ELITE** teams are **Evolving**. As Heraclitus realised, everything is subject to change and so **ELITE** teams are willing and able to evolve and adapt to new ideas and disruption. An excellent way to manage disruption is to be responsible for the change you want to see in the world. Imagine a pit crew suddenly deciding that they're not going to race formula one cars but use their abilities to create some other machine that is just as exciting and more beneficial to society.

**ELITE** teams are the future and are the next collaborative advantage. Moreover; entrepreneurs would do well to focus on creating these types of teams if they want to successfully scale their business and then exit effectively. **ELITE** teams become a standalone business asset which allows the leader to focus on high leverage activities or move onto their next adventure. Like a parent giving birth to a child, both parent and child can only reach their full potential when they have successfully become independent of each other. By developing the environment for an **ELITE** team, the entrepreneur can fully tap into the collective intelligence and creativity of

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the group and this leads to some pretty amazing increases in productivity and innovation. Want to know more? Get in touch!