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6 Hard Truths For Leaders

If you want to have a high-performance team working for you, here are six hard truths that you need to hear.

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As a service business owner, you've got a lot on your plate. You're juggling marketing... hiring... financials... and somewhere in there you have to manage your team.

The good news is: if you manage your team effectively, you'll have a high-performance team of thoroughbred A-players who crush it for you every single day.

The bad news is: if you don't manage your team effectively you'll struggle with a weak team that doesn't live up to your expectations and constantly frustrates you.

Which one of those things do you face most often?

I hope you enjoy the first one—the high-performance team—but the problem is that many service business owners face the second one—the weak team.

If you want to have a high-performance team working for you, here are six hard truths that you need to hear. (Hint: no one else will tell you this, and you may not want to hear these truths! However, if you take them to heart and implement right away, you'll see that these hard truths are actually powerful wisdom that will help you grow.)

Hard Leadership Truth #1. Weak Leader, Weak Team; Strong Leader, Strong Team. Want a great team? You need to be a great leader. A team will never grow if the leader is not strong. It's like your team is each holding onto a rope. As the leader, you need to grab that rope and pull it where you want your team to go. They will follow when you are a strong leader. But how does that happen? That leads to Hard Leadership Truth #2...

Hard Leadership Truth #2. Stop Managing. Start Inspiring. I admit it: I tricked you earlier when I used the term “manage.” If you see yourself as a manager or as a business owner who manages your team—STOP. Do not “manage” your team. Lead and inspire them. There is a huge difference in mindset between managers (who just maintain a team) and leaders (who inspire a team). Before you expect your

team to step up, you need to become an inspiring leader. Help your team to feel like they are part of something bigger, and learn about the causes and passions that motivate your team.

Hard Leadership Truth #3. You Need To Be On Your Game 100% Of The Time. We're all just human, and it's okay to have flaws and imperfections. However, your team is watching you closely and they will mimic how you act. Do you get stressed out because there are too many calls? Guess what: they will also get stressed out when they get too busy. Do you get worried about money at the end of the month? Guess what: they will also worry about whether they will get paid at the end of the month. You are a leader, which means it's okay to have flaws and imperfections, but you also have to be "on" the entire time and present a strong front of leadership to your team.

Hard Leadership Truth #4. No One Will Be As Good As You. When you started in the trades, you were probably a rockstar. That could be a reason why you chose to start your own company instead of working for someone else. Service business owners who started in the trades, did well, and then became owners, face a difficult challenge: they struggle to find employees who are as good as them. So the owners often end up back in the field doing work because no one else can work to the same standards. So, the hard leadership truth is: you can continue to work in the field if you want but it will always limit you. If you want to grow your company, you have to accept that other people won't be as good as you. Of course they need to meet quality and safety standards, and you can always provide training and build processes that will help them improve, but forget the notion that you will find someone as good as you.

Hard Leadership Truth #5. Fire Faster Than You Are. Removing employees from a company is something that many service business owners struggle with. Maybe they feel guilty about the employee's family who will experience hardship; maybe they listen to the employee beg that they will improve; maybe they just don't like confrontation. No matter the reason, the result is always the same: people who should be fired but stay in your company are a poison to your company culture and

are slowly destroying it. You may think that you're being nice or avoiding a difficult confrontation, but all you're doing is slowly hurting the rest of your company and creating a bigger problem.

Hard Leadership Truth #6. Your Team Doesn't Care About What You Pay Them. Oh, most people will disagree with this but let me explain what I mean. You only think your team cares about what you pay them (and even your team would say that they care). But, what your team REALLY cares about is what their pay will buy. Sure, they say they want a raise but what they really want is to afford payments on that nicer car or that bigger house. If you want to get the best out of your team, stop allowing the conversations to be about money, and whether someone deserves a \$2.00/hour raise, and start getting to know your team and helping them understand the connection between working hard getting more hours, earning more spiffs, and being able to afford the thing they want to buy. Many team members slow down and stop giving 100% in the workplace when their mind disconnects their paycheck from their passion. Help them reconnect it and you'll see a more motivated workforce.

Summary

You work had to build your company, which means working to build a team. But building a team can be challenging because you're dealing with humans who don't always think and work the same way you want them to. The opportunity lies in accepting what it means to be a leader—not only the reward of having a high-performing team but also the hard truths that push you to becoming a strong, inspiring leader for your team.

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