



Building and Leading High Performance Teams

Overview of High-Performing Teams and Their Leaders

- High-performing teams thrive on shared goals, collaborative dynamics, and mutual trust, effectively leveraging each member's strengths to achieve exceptional results through collective effort and engagement.
- Leadership of a high performing team requires assembling a diverse team of people in various groups to execute highly complex tasks in order to achieve strategic goals.
- Leaders must take full and absolute responsibility of the teams' failures and attack weaknesses and consistently work towards building a better and more effective team.

Build the Foundation



Define a clear mission, vision and purpose.



Identify and align individual strengths.



Create an environment of psychological safety where team members feel safe to express ideas, take risks, ask questions and admit mistakes.



Establish clear expectations and company “norms” from the beginning; teams that know what's expected are more confident, consistent and comprehensive.

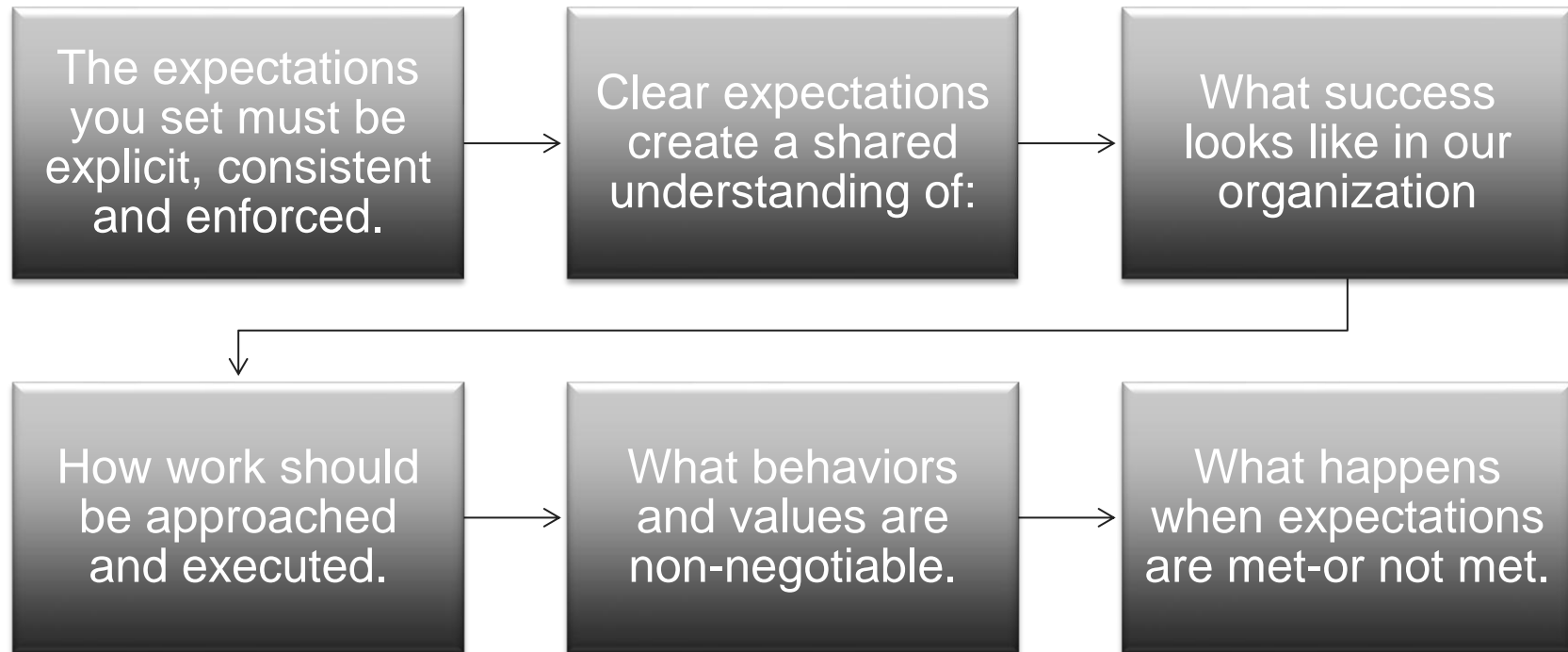
Recruit the Right People

- Recruiting the right people is one of the most critical investments in building a high-performing team. It's not just about finding the most qualified individual on paper, it's about finding someone who compliments the team's skills, aligns with the organization's values, and thrives in its culture.

Characteristics to Hire For:

- Team Fit and Company Culture
- Diversity
- Behavioral and Situational Awareness
- Hire for Potential, Not for experience
- Think Long Term: Hire for What You're Becoming

Set Clear Expectations



Some Examples of Expectations

Bottom Line Up Front “BLUF”

Don't lie to me, Do your best work, Take care of your teammates, if I ask you to do something, do it.

Represent and seek out ideas and concerns

Support a problem-solving process using ingenuity, imagination and creativity

Support our organizational goals

Own your job: tell the truth and speak up when there are problems

Openly communicate with the rest of the team

Believe

To build a mission-driven team, the leader must deeply understand and believe in the mission themselves.



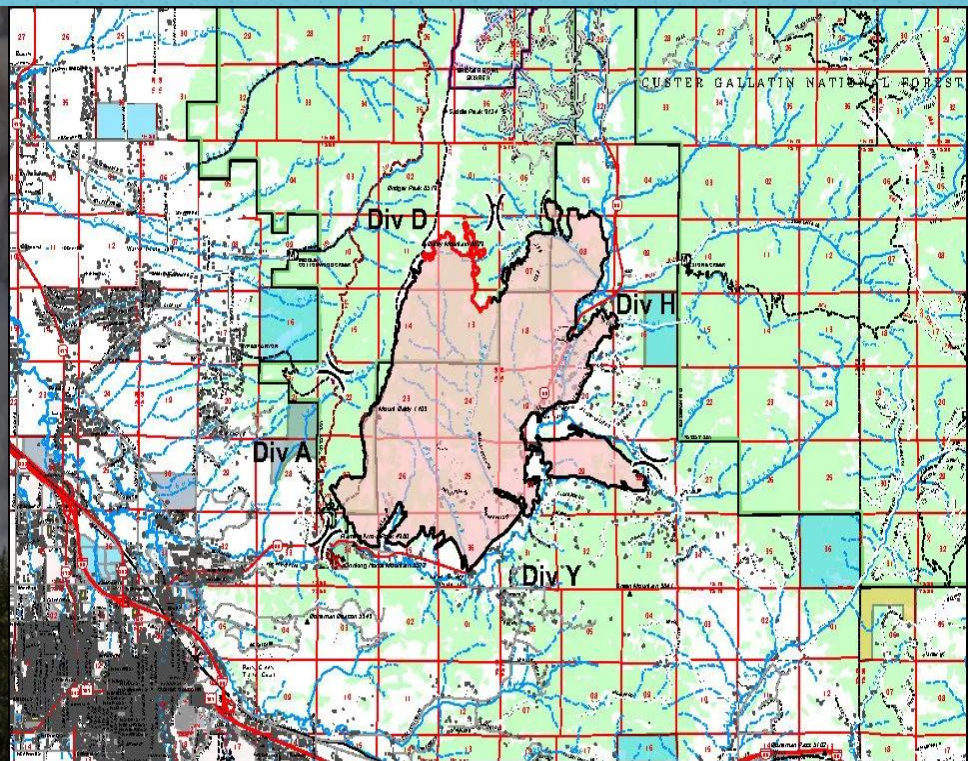
It's not enough to just assign tasks, you must explain the "why" behind them.



Ensure clarity of the purpose, explain the smallest of actions and how they connect to the larger objective.



Belief cannot be forced; it must be cultivated. That means leaders must be willing to answer questions, clarify confusion, and if necessary, challenge the mission themselves to make sure they can defend it with integrity.



Public Information

Bridger Foothills
MT-CGF-000214
Sept. 18, 2020
8,224 acres



Fire perimeter updated
from IR on 05/01/2020 2100 hrs

X Division Break
Wildfire Perimeter

Uncontrolled Fire Edge
Contained Line

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

The Concept of Absolute Accountability

- Understanding the concepts of accountability.
 - Leaders must take full accountability for their team's actions, decisions, and outcomes, fostering a proactive culture of accountability.
 - Eliminates blame-shifting and encourages a mindset focused on solutions which cultivates resilience and adaptability within teams.
 - A team can only deliver exceptional performance if a leader ensures the team works together toward a focused goal and enforces high standards of performance. With a culture of **Absolute Accountability** every team member can contribute to this effort and ensure high levels of performance.

“No Bad Team’s, Only Bad Leaders”

- The performance of a team is a direct reflection of its leadership.
- Leaders set the tone, expectations, and accountability.
- Poor performance is often due to unclear direction, low standards, or lack of accountability at the top.
- When leaders demand excellence and support their teams, performance rises.



Takeaways for Your Team

- When your team is struggling, look in the mirror first.
- Ask: Have I set the vision clearly? Am I leading by example? Have I created accountability?

Check Your Ego

Ego-driven decisions can erode trust, cloud judgment, and isolate leaders from the truth. In contrast, humble leaders who check their ego build stronger, more resilient, and more loyal teams.

What It Means to “Check Your Ego”:

- Recognize that leadership is not about personal glory, it's about serving the mission and the team.
- Be willing to admit mistakes, ask for help, and listen to others, regardless of rank or status.
- Understand that titles don't equal competence, respect is earned through actions not authority.

The “Kiss” Principle

- Snow removal has inherent layers of complexities.
- Simplifying as much as possible is crucial to team success.
- When plans and orders are too complicated, people may not understand them.
- Plans and orders must be communicated in a manner that is simple, clear, and concise. Everyone that is part of the mission must know and understand his or her role in the mission and what to do in the event of contingencies.
- You must brief to the “Lowest Common Denominator”
- The enemy always gets a vote.

Planning in Depth

PACE stands for Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency

This is a structured approach to planning communication or operational methods.

Primary: Preferred method

Alternate: Backup if the primary fails


Contingency: Less ideal but viable option under stress

Emergency: Last-resort solution to ensure continuity.


This method builds redundancy, minimizes risk, and ensures your team can adapt and stay operational in any scenario.

Planning in Depth Contd.


Task, Purpose, End State



Task- Define the “What”; what needs to be done, who is doing it, and any timelines on the project.



Purpose- Define the “Why”; Why is this task important? How does it support the rest of the team? How does it align with the strategic interests of the company?



End State- Describes what “done right” looks like, what are the indicators we have succeeded?

Risk Management

Effective risk management is essential in the snow removal industry to prevent accidents, minimize liability, protect employees, and ensure service reliability during hazardous winter conditions.

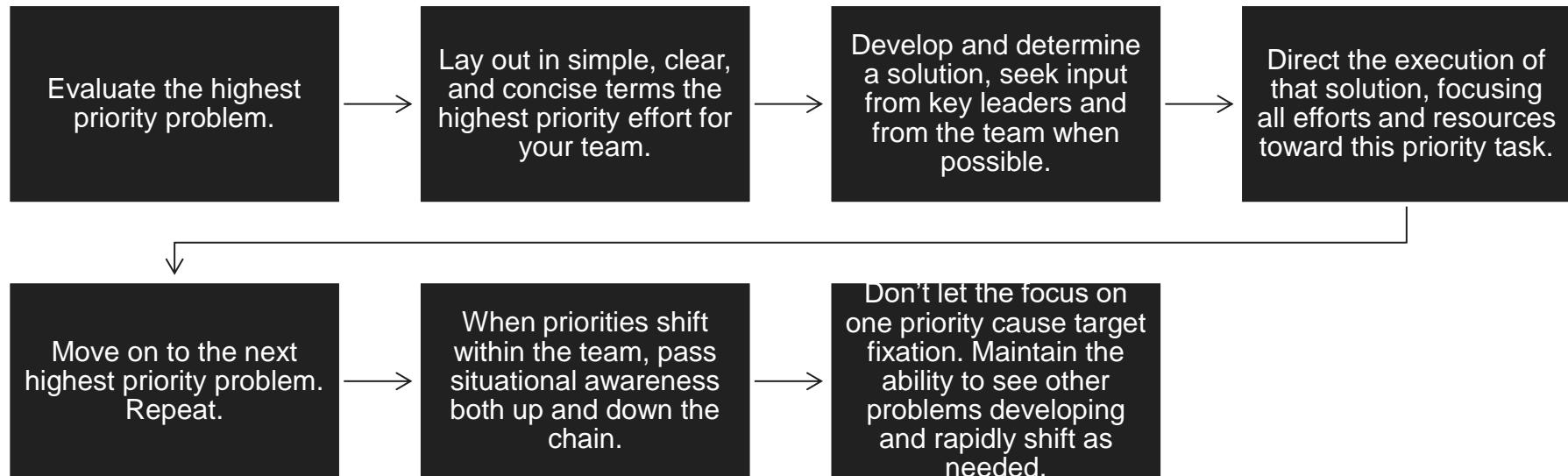
Common Risks:

- Slips, trips, and falls (STFs)
- Equipment malfunctions or accidents
- Property damage (e.g., curbs, landscaping)
- Inadequate service documentation
- Legal liability due to missed service or injury claims

Risk Management Checklist:

- Pre-season Preparation
- Operational Safety
- Operator Briefing and Safety
- Site-Specific Planning
- Post Storm AAR's

Prioritize and Execute



Communicate



Open communication is the lifeblood of effective teams. It fosters trust and prevents misunderstandings.



Be Clear and Direct.



Practice Active Listening.



Encourage Feedback.



Use the right channels for the message.



Ask questions to make sure the task and purpose are understood.

Keep Things within your Span of Control

- A leader can only effectively manage a limited number of direct reports. The ideal span of control, commonly accepted to be between 3 and 6 people ensures that leaders maintain visibility, communication, and influence without becoming overwhelmed or ineffective.

Why the 3 to 6 rule matters:

- Enhances Leadership Effectiveness
- Improves Communication Flow
- Reduces Bottlenecks and Burnout
- Supports Decentralized Command

Decentralized Command



Empowers individuals and teams to make decisions without constant oversight or approval from higher authority.



Clear Intent from Leadership: Leaders must provide a clear understanding of the mission, priorities, and desired end state.



Trust and Training: Teams need to be well-trained and trusted to make sound decisions without micromanagement.

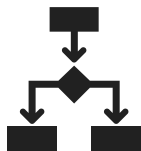


Two-Way Communication: Leaders listen as much as they direct, ensuring information flows up and down the chain of command.



Aligned Autonomy: Individuals have the freedom to act but stay aligned with overall strategy and values.

Be Decisive Amid Uncertainty



Indecision is a decision within itself and is often the worst one.



Momentum is critical, teams need direction, especially in chaos. Decisiveness prevents paralysis, keeps operations moving and builds confidence in leadership.



Uncertainty is inevitable, leaders who accept that uncertainty is a constant learn to focus on controlling what they can and adapting to what they can't.



OODA Loop and the 80% Rule

A Good Leader **Must** Be:

Confident but not
cocky

Courageous but
not foolhardy

Embody integrity
in their actions,
and have a set of
moral principles

Competitive, but
a gracious loser

Attentive to
details, but not
hyper fixated on
them

Strong, but have
endurance

A leader and a
follower

Calm but not
robotic, logical
but not devoid of
emotions

Aggressive, but
no overbearing

Able to execute
amid uncertainty

To Cap it off...

High performing teams don't happen by accident.
They're built intentionally by leaders who
combine absolute accountability with
unwavering character.

“Mission First, People Always.”

To lead Elite Teams, you Must:

- Own everything in your world.
- Lead with integrity and principle.
- Empower decentralized leadership.
- Communicate the “Why” behind every task.
- Model discipline, decisiveness, and integrity.



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