

Building a Dream Team of Leaders

By Ann N. Gatty, Ph.D.



To build a successful business, there needs to be clear direction, purpose, and strong leadership. Building a dream team of leaders within the organization creates the much-needed component for clarifying the vision and executing the plan. Strong leadership is needed in all areas of the organization, not simply within the top echelons. [Identifying and training emerging leaders](#) should be an integral part of every business model to keep healthy and robust business growth.

Leaders provide expertise, direction, understanding, and emotional support for those working in the organization. But no one enters an organization with a complete leadership skill set, especially in a dynamically changing world. Leaders need to be developed over time to grow and improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities. To optimize your workforce, leadership development should be ongoing and begin soon after hiring. We have long encouraged [mentoring programs](#) as one example of leadership development that is diverse and inclusive.

Building a Dream Team of Leaders Includes the Following 5 Activities:

Hire life-long learners.

We know that learning is a continuous process, not limited to formal schooling and education. Lifelong learning allows people to expand perspectives and enrich their lives. One of the characteristics of lifelong learners is that they are motivated to continuously build on their knowledge base as they improve their skill sets. Lifelong learners love making progress as they grow. And they are not afraid of changing perspectives because they actively seek answers and solutions to whatever challenge arises.

Since the business world is ever reinventing itself in many ways, having lifelong learning as a part of the company culture DNA allows the company to stay ahead of competition. In today's turbulent economic environment, being able to gather a deeper understanding of how the business can modify and improve is essential.

Build an atmosphere of trust and respect.

Employees need to feel psychologically safe at work to be effective in their output. Such an atmosphere is developed through building trust and respect throughout the company culture. We have written many times in our published articles that people want to know that they matter. That their opinions matter. And they need to feel safe in offering their perspectives, their opinions, and their feelings about the work they are performing.

Respect and trust start with the business owner or CEO. We often talk about managing by walking around. Get out of your office and meeting with staff at their workstations. Listen to them as they offer advice or voice concerns. The atmosphere of [trust and respect](#) starts with the leader, but transcends to include everyone so that you create a team of leaders throughout the organization.

Create stretch goals for employees.

As we stated with lifelong learning, allowing staff to stretch themselves and build on the skill sets they currently own provides an avenue for employees to continuously grow their leadership skills. By continuously adding to their skills, knowledge and abilities, your employees become more proficient and can more easily step into more complex leadership roles. Creating a [professional development plan](#) for each employee allows them to create a path of improvement that is specific to their needs.

Leadership is not limited to positional authority. Being a leader includes sharing expertise with others, assisting other's performance, and contributing to team efforts. When you create an atmosphere of continuous learning and build in stretch goals for the employees, you are sending a message that you value their overall development. The results of such efforts include stronger employee retention, boosted employee productivity and a team of leaders on all levels of the organization.

Be inclusive encouraging different points of view for problem solving.

If you have created a lifelong learning environment, then you have created a way for people to learn from one another. Sharing different perspectives is an important way to learn from one another and show respect for others who offer varying experiences and lifestyle customs. With trust and respect, people feel safe expressing their points of view.

Building a culture where everyone is encouraged to offer opinions regarding how to improve operations and better serve customers allows for creativity and innovation to become the mainstay of problem solving. Businesses that [embrace inclusive cultures](#) are more likely to stay ahead of their competition and create a more productive, happy work environment.



Be the visionary who inspires.

Every company needs to know where it is going. Leadership must [clearly explain that vision](#). However, employees most often state that a leader who inspires is their number one leadership trait. Being able to inspire takes a certain level of emotional and social intelligence with a splash of optimism added. And you are not going to inspire people if they don't trust and respect you.

This is a challenging time for our society. When these 5 activities are woven into the overall fabric of the organizational culture, great things happen. The result is a dream team of leaders.

About the Author

Dr. Ann Gatty is a business development strategist. She helps her clients clarify the vision for their businesses, boost their leadership capabilities and add quality talent to help the clients reach their goals. Through a collaborative mentoring process, she and her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. Dr. Gatty is a frequent writer and contributor www.AllBusiness.com, www.MarketingInsiders.com, and www.WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills that they can immediately apply in the workplace. Join her [Facebook Group, Strategic Thinking Summit Elites](#) for strategies you can implement to grow your business success and enjoy camaraderie with others entrepreneur members.