

## People first

HOW TO DEVELOP THE RIGHT TEAM

BY MEREDYTH MCKENZIE

**S**cott Bowling grew up in a family of business owners, with his father and grandfather both running businesses.

From these two men, Bowling learned many of the lessons that he has incorporated into his role as president and CEO of Exceptional Children's Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides services to the developmentally disabled.

"What I learned was to be good to people, treat them well, be consistent and have integrity — do what you say you're going to do," Bowling says.

Bowling also learned how important it is to have the right team of people. He has developed his team of 440 people at his organization, which has an annual budget of \$27 million, and he makes sure they are an important part of decisions.

*Smart Business* spoke with Bowling about how to develop the right team and how to develop relationships with employees.

**Q. What qualities do you look for in your team members?**

Of course being smart in their particular area of discipline or business. I also look for people who have a good work ethic, are hardworking and who believe in the spirit of working well with others — teamwork is of paramount importance. Assembling a good team is where it needs to begin.

An employee demonstrates his or her work ethic in a variety of measurable and visible ways, including time spent at work, productivity meets or exceeds expectations, works well with others, as evidenced by good communication, approachability and positive relationships.

**Q. Once they're identified, how do you develop team members to work together?**

Involve everyone in the development of the organization's strategic plans and emphasize everyone's role in the plan's successful implementation. You constantly reinforce this is where we're going, this is why and this is what we're going to achieve together.

Communicate regularly on the progress everyone is making on the organization's plan and regularly acknowledge and celebrate progress and success. Celebrate those milestones along the way. Everybody has a part, everybody has a role in the success, and that's important that you communicate that to them.

On a quarterly basis, each person who has a specific responsibility to carry out the action needed to meet a strategic objective will provide a written quarterly progress report. Reports from members of the team are compiled and distributed to all team members to acknowledge the progress we're making. It also gives me the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the progress, which tends to generate momentum to continue along our productive path.

**Q. How do you encourage employees to excel in their jobs?**

Acknowledge and reward good performance. There's not a day that goes by that I'm not giving someone kudos for a job well done. There's the oral communication, the pats on the

back. Then there's the more formal acknowledgements in writing a memo to their personnel file acknowledging a success story or an achievement that's been made.

Provide opportunities for employees to step up to handle additional responsibility within the organization. Stay abreast of best and current practices and encourage and provide ongoing staff training. Review performance informally and formally on a regular basis.

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formance objectives for each employee. These objectives are established using the organization's strategic goals and objectives. On a regular basis, each

employee's progress made on their individual performance objectives is monitored through written reports or other measurable outcomes.

As employees demonstrate their ability to meet objectives, over time, they are given additional responsibility within the organization.

**Q. How do you deal with a person who may not fit in with the team?**

Identify privately, clearly and professionally how and why he or she is not meeting expectations. Offer the tools and time he or she needs to get on board and produce the desired results.

If there are other areas in the organization where his or her skills would be better utilized, offer that alternative opportunity. If necessary, separate employment before he or she becomes a drag on the rest of the team.

**Q. How do you develop trusting relationships with your employees?**

Do what you say you're going to do. Give credit to and acknowledge those who achieve desired outcomes. Developing a system to identify, track and monitor tasks and priorities helps to ensure things get done according to the timelines we've established. ...

Recognition along the way is important. We like to celebrate progress, and when we reach a goal not only celebrate it and acknowledge the individual but also the larger picture we need to celebrate and communicate to all of our employees what the team has accomplished. <<