

Building the A team

A performance-based culture starts at the top

Great employees outperform competition any day, are self-motivated, self-managed and free up your time to work on strategic and customer-facing activities. They even allow you to enjoy your vacation when you take one.



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Michelle Remoaldo was named 2014 Female Employee of the Year at the global Stevie Awards in New York on Nov. 14, 2014. While it may not have been front page news, I have been following it closely. The thing is, I know Michelle Remoaldo.

In fact, I'm her boss.

Reach for the best

It starts with a focus on hiring the very best employees. The best employees do not accept poor performers as colleagues, so be consistent. Fortunately, A players tend to hire A players. The real problem is having a B player as a hiring manager. B players are more insecure, and they typically hire C players. Then the B player manager micromanages the C players, "proving" how indispensable the manager is. This "I just have to do everything myself, if it is to be done properly attitude" is a sign that your team is not adding A players.

Rather than being micromanaged, the A player needs to be part of goal-setting discussions to ensure that activities are aligned with overall goals, that success is defined and that goals are being reached within the parameters of corporate culture.

Within a short time interval, the A player will create results and bring value to the organization. A players need a performance-based culture and

compensation system and they will leave organizations where their efforts and talents are not recognized. They get frustrated with obstacles and bureaucracy and may find a workaround, or decide just to leave the organization. When you have A players, you need to refrain from micromanaging and focus on recognizing, rewarding and facilitating.

Worth the expense

Small businesses often feel they have problems attracting A players. They typically share that they cannot afford the salaries. While the difference between a low and a high salary may be 50 percent, the difference between a low- and a high-performer can easily be 1,000 percent. A high-performer is 10 times more productive, creates 10 times more results and, by the way, is 100 times more fun to work with. It pays to hire fewer people and prioritize quality over quantity.

Small business owners often have trouble letting go. But by hiring an A player, the team adds skills that often greatly exceed the owner's or founder's skills. Then it is time to let the A player do the job and switch focus to alignment.

Remoaldo was challenged to lead the ALOM team to achieve ISO 13485; three years later she was again challenged to achieve TL 9000 — a certification for the telecommunications industry. All the while, she has maintained ALOM's ISO 9000 certification, developed metrics, been part of designing new electronic quality management systems and managed our group of quality inspectors, while also driving the company towards six sigma results. ●



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