

LEAD

Great Leaders Do These 3 Things to Build Winning Teams

They focus on strengths, safety and communication.

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All managers want their teams to take [ownership](#), work [collaboratively](#) and exhibit [growth mindset](#). But what concrete steps can they take to supercharge others and bring out their best?

In my [work](#) with leadership teams, I've noticed that managers of high-performing teams consistently broaden and build the talents of the people around them. These leaders recognize that making adjustments to their management style is the key to building winning teams.

They play to people's strengths.

In a survey I conducted among nearly 500 employees in the professional services industry, members of high-achieving teams said they felt "empowered to do their best work" and that team leaders "encouraged them to use their strengths every day."

This is hardly surprising. A recent [report](#) by Gallup showed that strengths-based leadership has the potential to deliver improved business outcomes: Employees who say they use their strengths every day are 8 percent more productive and 15 percent less likely to quit their jobs. They are also more likely to strongly agree that they like what they do each day. When people are untethered from management, their strengths can rise.

They create a safe environment.

The litmus test of team effectiveness is psychological safety, the ability of group members to think and act without worrying about social repercussions - in essence, to just be themselves. Google [discovered](#) this firsthand when it studied 180 of its own teams to learn why some were successful and others were not. After a series of trials, research analysts turned up only one reliably consistent pattern of high performance: psychological safety.

Managers can promote psychological safety by modeling vulnerability. When leaders acknowledge mistakes, ask for feedback, and demonstrate a willingness to listen, they show that failure is just the first step towards progress.



They rally around common goals.

Great teams need a shared roadmap for success: What does it look like, where are the challenges, and how will they get there? Developing a common vision means that all team members know what's expected of them and how their role fits into the team's larger purpose and priorities.

Naturally, managers are at the center of this -- it's their job to help challenge and develop their reports to identify and practice these values. When managers pay attention to their employees with greater frequency, providing just-in-time feedback and holding regular conversations focused on coaching and development, the better their teams will perform.

There's no secret formula for winning teams. They are built over time and assembled from the ground up. With the right tools -- a focus on strengths, safety and communication -- managers can design something that's built to last.

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