

How to Build a Highly Effective Marketing Team

with Tim Parkin, President of Parkin Consulting

- Find people with the right aptitude and skills.
 - It is surprising to us how often hiring the right people is a struggle for companies and managers. And this goes to the point in the intro, which is that this often becomes a one-off approach of "what this single person will do" vs. looking high level at the entire team and what is needed.
 - We have talked before about hiring not only for skills but for aptitude and this is extremely important as well. What can this person do when they arrive, but also, what are they capable of? Do we feel like they can grow and achieve more with the proper guidance and the support of the other team members as well as the broader organization? Existing experience and skills are great, but when we are thinking about a high functioning team, every member should be on a path to growth and learning new things.
 - Fit within the team is hugely important. We often talk about the fact that you will not always like the people you work with, but that there has to be respect. And the culture of the team is important to how well it functions. Respectful debate is at the crux of this. Do the team members feel comfortable and are they committed to being the very best they can be each day through open and honest communication focused on elevating team performance? The people on your team MUST believe that they are stronger and better together and that no one person is more important or capable than another-meaning that an individual's performance will never trump that of the collective ability of the team.
- Have a process that keeps everyone aligned yet is flexible for growth.
 - By now you all know us, and you know that I (April), in particular with my OCD ways and control issues, like to have a process. However, you have also heard me talk about the fact that there is a point of diminishing returns if the process is too restrictive to the right type and level of work that needs to be done.
 - Process is SUPER important on a team, because it shows everyone how their individual role and responsibilities plays a part in the bigger picture. It also shows very transparently what that bigger picture is and HOW the work is going to get done. And finally, it eliminates the need for micromanaging, because every person can work autonomously when needed and together when needed because the process is integrated with the team.
 - It is important to note that the process should be a direct path to performance and performance review, because in outlining roles the team should know how they are going to be held accountable and what success looks like. To the previous point, this proves out to the team that together they will achieve more vs. what an individual can achieve on their own.
- Conduct regular reviews to ensure people and process are working well together.
 - We have talked about finding people that believe in a team approach, and the power of process. The role of the manager becomes to ensure that there is continued and constant alignment of these two things. In the intro, we talked regular reviews of the team and their progress, growth, and success. The manager should regularly be evaluating and optimizing.
 - Because the manager is not (or at least should now be) a doer, they have the ability to see everything at a high level and assist the team to continue to elevate.
 - Team goals and progress against those goals both individually and together helps people understand what they are achieving and how. It is also important to note that communications should flow both ways. The manager is NOT a dictator- this would be the opposite of a highly functioning team. Rather, he/she should be always asking for feedback on how to do things better, smarter and faster from the team members. The point here is more that the unique role of the manager is in seeing the bigger picture and keeping tabs on progress and optimizations at that level.
- The manager needs to take the lead for prioritization and action.
 - When you do not have a highly functioning team, there is a best a level of inefficiency and at worst complete paralysis. And this happens because without the right people, process and integration, people do not understand how and why their time and get things done.
 - Again, we will speak to the role of the manager here. We have talked about setting the team up for success and continued and ongoing evaluation and optimizations. The manager has to be able to assist the team in using the process flexibility and in the ability to pivot without resulting in complete misalignment. You will be able to tell as you take action and continue to take action whether you have the right people and process to get the work done, or if changes need to be made.
 - Culture also comes into play here, meaning that it is important to make sure the team is "jiving" with each other and the culture is rich and authentic. This comes from the leader as well. The leader should also be looking to the broader organization and making sure his/her team is integrated effectively there, but also insulated to any distraction/bad cultural behavior that does not serve the team.
 - The leader must have clarity in their own role of what to focus on when and how to make sure they are also efficient and effective as the leader.

