



Team Building 101

Now, the big question: how do you build and manage a winning team? Revisit that list of four tasks; do you notice that hiring isn't one of them? I'm a big proponent of outsourcing hiring functions for two key reasons:

1. It is too important a job to be done incorrectly. I say that there's no such thing as a bad employee – only a bad hire. Inevitably you'll hear someone call an employee horrible. Look at who hired the person, that's where the real responsibility lies.
2. Objectivity. Too often hiring decisions are made from emotion alone without an objective look at the facts. I believe a third-party perspective is healthy and it saves you from entering the non-dollar productive work zone. There are plenty of options available: a temp agency, a recruiter or a coaching company like mine can help.
3. Nevertheless, if you choose to go it alone, here are some valuable tips that you should consider when building a team:

Scan Your Plan

Ask yourself a couple of important questions. When you entered real estate, did you just jump in the river and let the current take you where it was going? Did you set a direction and start paddling?

I've seen far too many agents do the former. One day they realize, before they even know what's going on, that the river has taken them to the edge of an ugly and steep waterfall. Suddenly, they're overwhelmed and they have to hire out of desperation; they rush to hire without thinking what or who they really need.

Another common pitfall is that agents often believe that because they're good at selling they're good at reading people and can therefore, choose the right person for a job.

A more frequent mistake I see is agents hiring from their sphere of influence; someone recommends a friend. I've heard it many times, 'Well, if my friend recommends him, he must be great.' Or I hear, 'She's connected and knows everybody in town.' The only problem is that she couldn't sell water in a desert.



Add all this to being rushed and you have a recipe for disaster. (I'll give you an example in a minute.)

You can combat all these problems by following a plan, that's where everything starts. If you feel the need to hire more staff or build a team, you have to go back to your business plan and ask what's happening in the marketplace that's causing the need for more employees and adjust your plan accordingly.

It is fine to change your plan (it's a living document), but just keep in mind what you need to do to compete more effectively in the marketplace and include that information in your business plan. The plan is your map; it tells you where you're headed and how to get there. Without it, you're adrift in a raging and unforgiving river.

Personally, I think the most vital person in the real estate industry is the assistant for two reasons:

He or she adds balance in the office and your life.

He or she frees up your time so you can spend more time in front of customers.

“DISC'O” Revival

As a consultant (and a former head hunter) who helps real estate companies hire staff members, I know hiring is a tough job that absolutely requires objectivity. The consequences of a bad hire are far too serious to rely on instinct and gut feelings. A tool I've found to be extraordinarily useful is the DISC profile system. DISC is an acronym for the following four personality types:

Director – The ‘boss type’, who wants to make money, save time and be efficient. When you deal with a director, you need to be to the point and know how what you're proposing impacts the bottom line.

Interact/Socializer – These are the folks who like to have fun, talk about themselves, share jokes and avoid details. They can also make great first impressions. Explain the fun part of a project and you'll get the interact/socializer's attention.

Supporter – A supporter wants security, safety and sense of belonging. They put a lot of emphasis on relationships with others, so when you're dealing with supporters, ask for their opinions and feelings.



Careful Thinker – The careful thinker wants practicality, logic, fairness and a systematic approach. Give these folks facts, documentation and some extra time to make decisions.

Understanding each type helps you be a better communicator not only with employees, but also clients. All four types can add tremendous value to a team whose job it is to sell real estate.

The key is for you to look at your specific needs and build a team that makes sense for your situation.

- In fact, if you want, I invite you to visit this page on my Website, <http://www.CorcoranCoaching.com/BehavioralStyle.php>, and take a survey that will help you better understand how you interact with others in everyday situations. It only takes a couple of minutes.

No matter which type, D, I, S or C, you choose to hire, remember, you're building a team. A team is not a group of individuals each with his/her own agenda. A team is a group of individuals striving to reach the same goal. It is up to you to define that goal in your business plan, then rally everyone to move in unison toward that goal.

Here is the example that I promised you. I had a client, a broker-owner, a few months ago who insisted on hiring a lady she had just interviewed. The job candidate was a classic "I" and I have no doubt she made a great impression in the interview. After I tested her, I realized she was likely to be short on patience. An "I" will often react to stress with sarcasm and may even verbally attack others, but my client was dead-set on hiring her.

Two weeks later, when my client had to fire her, the lady called my client a #%&\$* as she stormed out the door.

What is the lesson? Hiring isn't easy and it should be handled slowly, carefully and with a heavy dose of objectivity.

Clues for Reviews

After you get new hires on board, the best tool you have to keep them on the right track is the performance review. Don't wait too long to give reviews. Some people wait a full year to give any kind of feedback. This is a big blunder. I recommend three reviews in the first 90 days of employment. That may sound like a lot, but I'm a firm believer that it will save you tons of time in the long run.



These early reviews really widen the communication pipeline. Communication helps you avoid confrontation. Too many times an agent will simply avoid communication with an employee and eventually the agent has to fire the person with no warning. This type of situation can lead to lawyers. No one wants that!

Adopt this notion of reviews: they aren't about putting mistakes under microscopes. Think of reviews as opportunities to help your employees develop themselves. Tell employees that and it will take the apprehension out of the air.

For the first review, let employees review themselves. This will give you a quick snapshot from their perspective and that can help you prepare your feedback in a way that's much more meaningful to your employees.

Use subsequent reviews to help employees identify where they need improvement and set specific strategies and goals with timelines to help them improve on those areas. Choose four areas to focus on and refine in each of those first three reviews. That's 12 areas of improvement for employees who are on their way to success.

After those first three reviews, move to one review per quarter. In that first year you'll have 24 total specific tasks that have been highlighted for improvement, things will be looking good!

Looking good is exactly what you want a team to be. I invite you now to look at your business, your plan and production levels through new eyes. Write down where you are and ask yourself if you truly are where you want to be? If not, perhaps it is time to start building that team - with the right players in the right positions, a team that can put the big numbers up on the real estate scoreboard. I know you can do it! Good luck!

Make A Commitment: I will decide where I want to be and write down my goals.

Deadline: _____