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The first step towards building a great group of people is building a great place for them to work.

There's a lot more to this than just paying people well. Salaries need to be commensurate with market value, but just paying above the market rate won't guarantee you can attract (and keep) the best performers.

Working out the right mix of recognition, financial incentives, working conditions and opportunities to motivate your team members is important. What works for one person might not work for another, so being flexible, and understanding that different people have different priorities is crucial.



Very few people like to be micromanaged, so to build a great team you're going to need to let go of the reins and learn how to delegate. Make your expectations clear to your team members and then get out of the way and let them put their own stamp on their work.

It's also important to give people a sense of purpose: an understanding of where the business has come from and why it exists. Spending time talking about the business's culture and values gives your team a sense of the big picture and what they're working to achieve. A great team isn't made up of people who come to work and do their daily tasks well; it's made up of people with shared goals and values.

Conversations with your team about goals and values shouldn't be one way. Give every member of the team a chance to talk about their view of the business and the way it works. This will let team members know that their point of view is valued and help to improve the business. It can be worthwhile using an external consultant to have the conversation with people to reinforce that it's a professional exercise.

Once you're confident that your business is the sort of place that great people will want to work, you'll need to attract some of them.

Make sure you spend plenty of time working out what your business's needs are and what sort of person will be the best to meet them before you advertise a position. These things need to be clearly communicated to your prospective team members at each stage of the recruitment process. Discrepancies between what people expect to be doing in their roles and what the job actually entails can lead to dissatisfaction and can make it hard to hang on to good people.

When you're recruiting your team members, it's important to find out where people see themselves in the future. To build a great team, you need to make sure your team members' expectations and ambitions match what your business can offer. That's not to say their long-term future is with the company, but it should be part of their journey: you'll only be able to attract the right people to your team if they feel they'll be given opportunities to develop the skills and experience they need to reach their goals.

A great team will be made up of people with tenacity. Some people may have the skills and experience to do the job well, but if things go badly for some reason – and mistakes always happen, particularly with new employees – a person who quits at the first hurdle can mean you're back at stage one of the team-building process before you've even really started.

Apart from tenacity, I like to look for people with a broad range of experience. There's no one-size-fits-all model for businesses today: to be successful, teams need to be able to work in different circumstances and with different types of clients.

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