

1. Everyone committed to the project goals

This is the most critical element. Without this, it is impossible for a team to be the best that it can.

The team leaders have no more important job to do than to achieve this. Therefore it will take substantial time and effort.

The 'project' can be as small (and personal) as individual tasks (e.g. rigging up to run casing) and as 'intangible' as 'bringing out the best in others by keeping them informed and engaged' (e.g. producing a newsletter).

A high level of discipline is necessary, so as not to dilute the power of targeting perfection. We must be prepared to identify every deviation from perfection and work out a way to rectify it, in order to maximise results.

Systems are designed to help, but are only as effective as the intention of people to apply them relentlessly. This is a useful measure of people's commitment.

Continuously develop people's thinking and they will create the world-class systems that they need to deliver their vision of success.

Don't be tempted to compromise on the vision of what's possible, for example by setting 'lower expectations' just to make ourselves feel more comfortable and avoid looking bad when we don't achieve what we set out to do. We get what we plan for, so don't plan for mediocrity.

A difficult one to live up to. .. that's what the "relentless pursuit of perfection is about".

2. Taking responsibility for personal growth

If the destination is "Getting the right people, doing the right things, with the right tools & equipment, in the right time and the right environment", then we must look at the capability of the people who are on the journey with us.

Everyone is imperfect, having incomplete knowledge and skills and, from time to time, motivation. There is no such thing as an incompetent person .. just someone who is "not-yet-competent"

The team and its leadership must be able to identify all of these limiting factors, so that appropriate support or training can be applied. This can take the form of learning, formal and informal, on the job or otherwise; sometimes it's as simple as a few words of encouragement or a "have you thought about doing it this way" ?

Individuals, their peers, supervisors and subordinates all have a responsibility to help one another to rectify these shortcomings. An essential step is *recognition* of the need for personal growth and it is everyone's responsibility to help identify and acknowledge these needs.

Before you condemn another, ask yourself "have I done everything I can to assist this person to grow into the task they are being required to do?".

3. Full disclosure of errors and opportunities

Each of us must feel *compelled* and empowered to disclose every imperfect aspect of our work, so it can be dealt with positively to improve.

Once we recognise that most shortfalls are due to inadequacies in the system, and not with the individual, we will feel more comfortable about discussing them and then we can then identify the action to address the inadequacies.

There's a safety analogy here .. we have come to expect our colleagues to take their own and OUR safety very seriously indeed. We expect full disclosure of injuries, non-injurious events and unsafe acts. Why ? .. so we can make it safer next time. It should be the same with performance

This isn't about blame, it's about finding out what doesn't work, so we can make it better next time.

As one crew member put it, "errors need to be disclosed but not dwelled on". This is different to keeping "quiet", so it is important not to make an issue of errors on anyone's part.

4. Only Support and never 'put-down'

There are only two outcomes for any activity : "success" or a "learning opportunity".

Criticism without understanding and empathy is 'put-down' and likely to destroy "full disclosure"

Continuing the Safety analogy .. if someone reported an unsafe act, maybe one of their own, and they were "put down"; imagine the probability of them reporting something like that again ? This is not about a blame-free culture but failure-tolerance.

Unconditional support for people who have disclosed deficiencies, or errors, creates a high level of confidence and encourages quick recovery from mistakes. It also encourages more disclosure, which is the essence of performance improvement.

The opposite can also be true and it is very easy to fall into negative reactions as things go wrong. It takes strong leadership to uphold this principle.

A good guide is to avoid making anyone feel any worse than they already do about a failure. If in doubt about their commitment, ask yourself if you have done everything you can to gain their commitment.

5. Every team member is as important as the next

Not to be confused it with a person's *value* (how much they get paid), which is a supply-and-demand issue.

The most positive outcome from applying this principle is that all team members become proud of the role they are playing in the success of the project.

They feel appreciated and, as a result, are likely to respond with special effort whenever they are asked. Free discussion and feedback should then come naturally.

Supervisors who are working to this principle pay more attention to everyone's problems so that barriers to high performance are eliminated.

6. Equal opportunities irrespective of employer

This principle is aimed at getting rid of any discrimination based on company allegiance ("what colour coveralls you wear").

All people on the project should expect equal consideration of their needs in execution of their job. Equal rights to a safe and efficient workplace, to be heard, to be valued.

7. Clear priorities, results focused

This is the link between what we are doing and how it contributes to the project goals.

Clear priorities will allow quick resolution of conflicting needs. They will guide procurement of services, equipment and consumables so that maximum well value is achieved ahead of lowest cost.

In order for the whole project value to be optimised (= the best it can be), some sub-Projects (e.g. Departments) may have to accept that their own activity may have to be sub-optimised.

Performance tracking and review is an essential element of any activity. It allows early identification of best practice and improvement opportunities.

8. Shared information, open communication

Only people within each skill area know the full extent of information they need for most effective execution of their job. They should have access to whatever they consider they need.

In many cases, over-communication can simply allow the person to feel more connected to the project and therefore more motivated. The more open the communication, the more likely it is that those in need of information will get it.

Knowledge is power and the more project team members that have it, the more empowered and successful they will be.

Some people call this 'transparency'.

9. Celebration and recognition of every success

With a team functioning within this type of environment, very special achievements will be happening all the time, some small, some big.

These successes will provide the 'kicks' for the team and should be used often to bring team members together to reinforce goals and recognise everyone's contribution.

When we compare ourselves to perfection, we will often find ourselves lacking – we therefore have to celebrate our successes when they happen. The lingering taste of success will often carry us through those moments of doubt.

10. Trust and respect for each other's professionalism

Trust generates goodwill, which sustains the relationship when one party does something that the other dislikes.

Once selected, trained, motivated, inducted and engaged, team members *must be trusted* to do their job, with confidence that they will be supported if they have difficulty. This is true empowerment.

This principle works to give the team confidence and belief in their abilities (= morale) and encourages innovation; an essential component of high performance.

If an individual or team has to defend themselves from outside, they have to waste energy on self-protection and image control that could be better used on disclosure and improvement.

The Supervisor's job is to bring out the best performance from the team, which requires an understanding of their capability, something that does not happen overnight. There's a good Russian proverb, loosely translated as, "Trust but verify". Bear in mind that the more effort spent verifying the less time available for facilitating excellence.

Trust cannot be "blind" and can be explained as "the residue of past promises fulfilled".

A final thought ..



Listen

In every workplace you hear the threads
of joy and fear and love and guilt
and the cries for celebration and re-assurance

And somehow you know that all you are supposed to do is
bring these together and that business will take care of
itself