



Quick start guide to building high-impact teams in 2024

7 practical strategies to build highly effective teams and scale your business





Today's business leaders face a complex and ever-changing landscape. Economic, geopolitical, cultural and organizational trends are interacting in ways that could open doors to new opportunities - or spell doom.



45%

45% of CEOs think their organization in its current form won't be economically viable in 10 years. (PwC)

This uncertainty has led many to seek cost-cutting measures. But that's not a solution for long-term value. Change is coming so fast, and from so many directions, that transformation is the only way to ensure success. High-impact leaders understand that increasing productivity and cutting costs is only part of the picture. They are data-driven, improvement-focused, and strategic. They foster a collaborative and supportive culture. They set clear goals and track progress closely.

Above all, high-impact managers build effective teams by looking beyond short-term results to meaningful, measurable and sustained growth.

Are your teams genuinely effective, or just productive?

Although productivity and effectiveness may seem synonymous, that's not always the case. The key to scalable and sustainable success in business is a workforce that embodies collaboration, accountability, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. These teams work in harmony, contributing their individual best efforts to organizational goals.

This quick start guide is packed with actionable strategies to ensure your teams are effective, not just productive. You'll learn how to:

- ✓ **Evaluate projects to identify high-impact initiatives**
- ✓ **Align your team's efforts with revenue-driving goals**
- ✓ **Nurture a culture of high performance**
- ✓ **Plan an impactful, effective transformation roadmap**

So, if you're ready to supercharge your team's effectiveness, let's get started.

What do effective teams look like?

Effective teams don't just perform well, they also contribute to big-picture business growth. They prioritize projects that drive business value and move the needle on strategic goals. They have a clear sense of how their work fits into the larger company vision and use this knowledge to inform what they work on and where to focus their energy. In other words, they work smarter, not harder.

These teams are focused, organized, goal-oriented, and results-driven. This doesn't happen accidentally. Effective teams are carefully crafted and nurtured by leaders who lay the foundation for these building blocks (below).

By focusing on these strategies, you can not only elevate your team's effectiveness but also create a resilient workforce that's ready to take on any challenge.



Clear communication

Effective teams communicate openly and transparently, both within the team and inter-departmentally. Leaders don't just pay lip service to communication but demonstrate how every voice and idea is valued.



Shared goals, impactful roles

Every member has a clearly defined role, with work that ladders up to organizational strategy. Team goals enable focus, accountability, and a sense of shared purpose.



Effective collaboration

Teamwork is the key to success. Regular brainstorming sessions, cross-functional projects and a culture of information sharing are the essential components that keep the collaborative engine running smoothly.



Continuous learning and adaptability

Effective teams share a growth mindset and a culture of continuous learning. They take lessons from both successes and failures, and quickly adapt to changing circumstances.



Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #1

Set clear goals and expectations

Effective teams need to know what they're working toward. In one PwC study, 83% of employees said that visibility into how their work contributes to the organization's purpose was essential in their roles. If your team understands what they need to achieve and why it matters, they'll be more engaged and effective.



Clearly communicate company objectives

79%

79% of leaders say that purpose is central to the business's ongoing success

27%

yet only 27% help employees make the link between work and organizational purpose (via PwC).

Find ways to communicate the organization's direction with everyone, using evidence from customer stories, employee stories and leadership stories to show people why their work matters.



Tie team goals to revenue-generating activities

Identify the specific activities or initiatives that directly contribute to revenue and align team KPIs accordingly. Ensure that the KPIs make an impact on big-picture business goals. For example, if your company's goal is to increase monthly revenue by 15%, your customer service team's goal could be to reduce churn by 20%. Frequent feedback ensures your team is effective and not prioritizing less impactful work.



Clearly define individual roles

Ensure that individual goals, roles and responsibilities are also clear to optimize team efficiency and help employees understand which projects and tasks have the largest impact. Go a step further by giving employees the autonomy to self-monitor their performance. By assessing their impact, setting goals, and making adjustments as needed - with your guidance - they will develop a keen sense of responsibility and drive for continuous improvement.



Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #2

Prioritize ruthlessly

The average employee spends nearly 60% of their time on 'work about work'. That time could be spent on tasks that contribute to the bottom line. Effectiveness isn't just about doing things right; it's about doing the right things.

The trouble is that employees often don't know which

tasks are strategically important because leaders have failed to communicate clear, consistent priorities. As a result, every project is treated as priority #1. Resources are spread too thin, and teams lose motivation because their work feels meaningless. You can turn things around for your team, leading by example to prioritize work that matters.

Delete

Delete tasks and projects that don't support company goals

Conduct a thorough audit and eliminate projects and tasks that stray from the path of core company goals. This process of elimination frees up valuable resources—time, energy, and attention—that can be redirected towards initiatives that have a direct impact on success. This creates space for high-impact work and minimizes wasted effort. Remember, saying "no" to distractions empowers you to say "yes" to progress.

Delay

Delay less important tasks for when you have more time

Not all tasks are created equal. Some are critical for immediate success. Others, though necessary, can wait. Understanding the difference allows you to prioritize workloads and ensure your team's efforts are concentrated on what truly matters. Schedule non-critical tasks on calendars, create clear to-do lists for later dates, and communicate the reasons for the postponement to stakeholders. This ensures they stay on the radar without hindering current priorities.

Delegate

Delegate tasks of equal importance to other team members who have more bandwidth

Delegation ensures that high-priority tasks get the attention they require without overloading anyone in your team - or yourself. Assess individual strengths and skillsets, distribute workloads fairly, and provide clear instructions and support. This not only helps in distributing the workload more evenly but also empowers team members by trusting them with significant responsibilities.

Diminish

Diminish the amount of time it takes to complete high-priority projects

In situations where you can't delete, delay or delegate a task, the next best strategy is to diminish the time and resources required to complete it. This could mean eliminating or shortening meetings, reducing meeting frequencies, or prioritizing specific aspects and delaying the rest for later.



Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #3

Encourage cross-functional collaboration

Effective teams don't work in silos. Not only do they work well together as a unit, they also champion cross-functional collaboration.

They understand that working together drives continuous improvement, reduces costs, solves problems more creatively, and enables agility in the face of challenges. Most importantly, collaboration reinforces a sense of shared purpose to keep everyone aligned with the company's overall goals.

Asana's latest Anatomy of Work report found that nearly twice as many collaborative organizations turned a profit in the past three years compared to non-collaborative organizations (55% vs. 28%). Workers at collaborative organizations were also four times more likely to feel well-prepared to adapt to business challenges.

While many organizations have elements of cross-functional collaboration, around 75% of those cross-functional teams are dysfunctional, according to at least one study. Collaboration across departments takes effort, especially when information silos have built up over years. But that effort has meaningful, measurable benefits for bottom-line growth, organizational agility and employee engagement.



Open communication channels

Establish open channels for communication and information sharing between different departments. This can include regular cross-departmental team huddles to provide a platform for quick updates, constructive feedback sessions to proactively address issues, and organization-wide project management tools for information sharing and real-time collaboration.



Cross-functional training and workshops

Bringing together employees from different departments facilitates the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and best practices from different perspectives. Employees also gain a deeper understanding of how various roles connect, which in turn enhances their ability to work collaboratively towards common goals.



Joint projects and task forces

Look for opportunities to form cross-functional project teams when input from multiple departments will lead to better or more efficient outcomes. By assembling cross-departmental task forces you can build bespoke teams with specialized skills and knowledge, allowing for effective resource allocation swifter decision-making, and shared accountability for success.



Technology and tools

Implement a standardized set of collaborative tools like workforce analytics or project management software that facilitates cross-functional visibility. Ensure the selected platforms work for everyone and integrate with specialist software. These integrated tools can serve as a centralized hub to share what individuals and teams are working on and identify areas where people can collaborate.



Make data more accessible

36%

Employees spend 36% of their day searching and consolidating information scattered among 4-11 different platforms,



and 44% of the time they can't find the necessary data to perform their jobs.

Data silos are costly, uncollaborative and frustrating for people and progress. Standardizing and centralizing data provides a single source of truth and reduces the likelihood of double-handling. This will also provide managers with a better understanding of overall organizational performance, supporting better decisions that improve outcomes for both people and projects.





Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #4

Benchmark and optimize performance

The measure of success for effective teams is their ability to deliver exceptional results time and time again.

Benchmarking effectiveness requires visibility into two outcomes. The first is your team's working habits, which tells you (and them) how productive they are with the resources and direction given to them. The second is

organizational performance, especially the metrics that your team's efforts directly impact.

With this holistic insight, you can identify opportunities to tweak your team's processes, make informed decisions, and prioritize revenue-focused tasks - all of which are crucial for business growth.



Schedule regular check-ins

▲ **3.2x more motivated**

▲ **2.7% more engaged**

Employees who receive weekly feedback (rather than annual) are 3.2x more motivated to do outstanding work and 2.7x more likely to be engaged.

To see these benefits in your team, make feedback constructive, two-way, frequent and honest. Use team meetings as a dedicated space to assess progress, tackle obstacles together, and nurture open communication. One-on-one, let each member speak freely to voice concerns and get guidance. This openness helps build trust and accountability, driving effectiveness through an ongoing feedback loop.



Track KPIs and implement reporting systems

Business success relies on making data-driven decisions. As we recommended earlier - but it's worth repeating - translate organizational goals into team and individual KPIs so you can track progress closely and adapt in real time. KPIs differ across teams, so work together to establish the right metrics that align with the specific needs of the team. Here are a few areas to address first:



Quality of work

Monitor defects or mistakes, note any re-work that caused delays, gather qualitative feedback from customers and stakeholders through surveys, interviews, or reviews, and analyze sentiment and satisfaction levels.



Productivity and efficiency

Measuring the amount of work an employee produces in a given period can be helpful, though it rarely tells you much in isolation. Monitoring productivity and quality together is more helpful. Even better, assess productivity, quality and resources consumed to gauge efficiency.



Development goals

Setting development targets that link to team KPIs and organizational goals will help you and your team work on continuously improving effectiveness. It also provides a platform for discussions when one of your team needs support.



Utilize workforce analytics

Understanding how, when and where the individuals in your team work best is essential for providing the resources that lead to better outcomes. Tracking performance doesn't have to be negative. When you prioritize effectiveness over output, and accountability over adherence, you tap into incredible opportunities to empower employees and optimize projects, processes, and tech utilization. You can also trace issues to identify bottlenecks or inefficiencies.





Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #5

Manage resources effectively

While your employees are your biggest asset, they are also your biggest cost. By allocating and managing your people in the most effective way, you can make a significant difference in the overall success of your business. High-performing teams are greater than the sum of their parts. Playing to your strengths will improve margins, project performance, budget and quality control, not to mention team performance and employee engagement derived from satisfaction in a job well done.

It's proven: Organizations that transform from traditional hierarchy-based role allocation into value-driven decisions are **more than twice** as likely to outperform their peers. All in all, proper resource allocation can be a powerful tool in improving the effectiveness of your team.



Assign the right people to the right projects at the right time

Once you understand where individuals thrive (an insight gained through workforce analytics), you can reallocate them to where they're most valuable. By assigning the right people to the right tasks you can optimize productivity, deliver projects on time, and improve customer outcomes. Most importantly, by allocating work according to strengths, you can maximize each individual's contribution and engagement with work.



Prevent burnout and overutilization

Keep an eye on your team members' workloads to ensure they can manage the responsibilities you allocate. Asking them to multitask on too many projects will lead to bottlenecks, or worse, burnout. Watch out for over-engagement here, which is evident in overtime hours, weekend work and long days.



Automate where possible

Automating repetitive and time-consuming tasks will free up your team's time for more valuable and creative work. These are tasks like data entry, timesheet generation, reporting, or even small time-savers in daily tasks like templates for shared projects. By automating these tasks, you can increase efficiency and productivity with the added bonus of reducing errors.

Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #6

Build a strategic HR function



Gone are the days of HR being viewed solely as a back-office function. Instead, it's time to reimagine the power of an evolved People and Culture team as a strategic function driving engagement and culture. This evolution means leaving behind top-down, mandate-style HR and empowering your People and Culture team to foster two-way communication about company vision and create pathways for professional development.

An energized, enabled workforce is an efficient workforce. A strategic People and Culture function acts on this truth.



Identify opportunities and challenges

Empower your People and Culture team to become front-seat drivers in identifying missed opportunities and challenges.

- 1. Uncover overlooked opportunities in people's underutilized strengths.** For example, many customer support agents likely have sales experience to upsell during calls - an opportunity that might otherwise go unseen. With a strategic eye, People and Culture can align talent and skills to add value.
- 2. Address talent gaps in the team and identify the fastest ways to help meet company goals.** For example, if the IT team needs more cybersecurity specialists, but talent is scarce, you can work together to make strategic decisions like whether to hire or contract based on what's best for the business and your team.



Make decisions with data

Data equips People and Culture with the information they need to collaborate on strategic decisions. In particular, workforce analytics provides visibility over KPIs like performance, burnout, turnover and engagement. These data-backed insights underpin resourcing, development and hiring decisions, as well as helping to analyze reasons for turnover or disengagement.



Invest in learning and development

Continuous growth is a key element of strategic people management. Create an environment where learning is valued, encouraged, and above all personalized. Offer your employees development opportunities that align with their strengths, address underdeveloped skills, and have a flow-on benefit for other effectiveness factors.



Adopt new organizational models

A strategic People and Culture function plays a pivotal role in enabling collaboration and agility. Traditional HR often becomes a gatekeeper for status quo; an evolved People and Culture mindset means rethinking organizational structures, capabilities and resources to achieve growth.

Your roadmap to improving team effectiveness #7

Cultivate a performance-driven culture



High-performance cultures empower employees to excel beyond their roles, guided by shared values, beliefs, and philosophy. This culture promotes accountability, ownership, and continuous improvement, ensuring both professional success and business growth.

92%

Research shows that 92% of executives agree that culture is tied to company value,

84%

yet 84% say their company culture needs to improve.

This isn't easy given the organic, spontaneous and bottom-up nature of company culture. But you can influence a high-performance culture by leading your team in a way that gives people confidence, creates a connection to work, and enables autonomy.



Promote a culture of calculated risk

Encourage your team to evaluate opportunities, take risks, and analyze the outcomes for continuous growth. By promoting a test-and-learn approach where data enables experimentation, you can encourage your team to uncover opportunities and solve problems independently. Although your role is far from hands-off: McKinsey's research shows that employees are 3.2x more likely to make quality decisions quickly when empowered and coached.



Offer regular feedback

Regular, informal conversations keep employees motivated, engaged and accountable. Effective leaders coach in real time, so don't wait for annual reviews. Praise good work immediately, address problems directly, and act on employees' feedback. Encourage your managers to develop their coaching and mentoring techniques and let two-way interactions guide your teams. With the right feedback approach, your people will grow and develop as individuals, and your teams will work better together toward organizational goals.



Reward and recognize efforts

Acknowledge your teams' hard work and dedication both privately and publicly - and make it intentional. You'll tread a fine line here, as over-emphasizing individual achievements can erode collaboration or encourage overwork. A good tip is to highlight specific actions or achievements that contribute to a high-performing culture or big-picture organizational goals.

Building effective teams together



Building a highly impactful team requires strategic intention and continuous attention, whether you manage a small team or a multinational organization. The potential for success ultimately lies in your team's hands. How you collectively organize work, communicate, make decisions and navigate conflict shapes how you perform as an organization.

Your role as a leader is to invest in your people's capabilities and support a culture of continuous improvement.

- ✓ Set and communicate clear targets
- ✓ Prioritize resources where they add value
- ✓ Clear obstacles from the path
- ✓ Dismantle data silos
- ✓ Play to people's strengths
- ✓ Measure, monitor and optimize performance
- ✓ Evolve the organization's approach to culture

Effective leaders understand what matters most and what's just noise. They know how to focus on the tasks and projects that fuel the bottom line while ignoring distractions that waste resources. With data-driven insights, a growth mindset, and an empathetic approach, you can become that effective leader and build a team that's greater than the sum of its parts.

Time Doctor helps teams become more effective by the minute

Reliable, real-time workforce data allows businesses to pinpoint growth opportunities and address inefficiencies at the source. As the leading employee-friendly workforce analytics solution, Time Doctor delivers granular insights that build to big-picture growth.

With a wide range of features, over 60 integrations, work-life balance alerts baked in, and customizable controls to empower employees, Time Doctor can turn potential challenges into opportunities for growth. You can measure and improve your team's efficiency, identify roadblocks, and track progress towards goals. Time Doctor empowers your team to work smarter, not harder, and build a more effective workforce by the minute.

Request a personalized demo to explore how workforce analytics can help you build and lead effective teams, transforming your organization's future success.

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