



Your Secret to Hiring a GREAT Team

BY [Peter S. Cohan](#) | September 25, 2013

You can't build a successful startup all by yourself. While some may be tempted to hire a group of friends to help, that usually ends friendships just as quickly as it does businesses.

Think about your own strengths and weaknesses and pick members of your team who complement you so that as a team your startup can build the product, win new customers, form partnerships, expand globally and do all the other things that are crucial to your growth.

One other thing is crucial for building a great startup team: You must create a culture for your startup and use it to attract, motivate and develop talent. You should spend about half of your time recruiting top talent.

But attracting and hiring top talent is exceptionally difficult as a startup because you won't be able to pay a higher salary than big companies. How do you overcome this challenge?

Recruit people who can do the things you can't. In short, attract and retain people who are better than you. For example, if you are good at marketing, hire people who excel at business development or customer support.

And to recruit such people, you have to be able to sell your vision. To do that, you must have a deeply-felt passion for going after that market opportunity and explain in a compelling fashion how big that opportunity is and why the timing is right now. Embrace the ambiguity of early-stage company-building, which is very different from the more black and white nature of managing a big company.

Your odds of building a great team will increase if your passion and vision inspires employees to work hard because they are building something bigger than themselves.

To make your team effective, you must build a culture and use it to manage the company. This starts with making a list of values that are important to you and your team. You should also agree on a subset of those values that are critical to creating value for your customers.

Use these values for hiring, motivating, and managing people out of the company. For example, Intel had a culture of constructive confrontation. Some people thrived in that environment and others hated it.

Whatever values you choose, you should design your hiring process to make sure only people who truly believe in them get hired. And while all your employees should believe in those values, this does not mean they should all come from the same background. In your effort to recruit people who are better than you, diversity in economic background, education and work experience can help your startup. After all, it's diversity that will lead people to a broader range of potential solutions, which leads to better decisions, and results.

The flip side of a strong culture is that by nature, it excludes some people. If an employee does not get along with others, seems isolated and unproductive, the CEO must manage that person out of the company quickly and effectively.

To build a winning startup team you should follow these five steps:

1. Identify the skills your venture needs.
2. Figure out the skills you're strongest in and where you need help.
3. Recruit people who are better than you in the jobs where you need help.
4. Create a strong culture based on values that are important to your founding team.
5. Use those values to hire, promote and manage those who do not fit out of the company.

Courtesy of Entrepreneur.com (<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/228564>)