

Building Great Teams

Azzip must have the best teams for it to be a fun place to work, eat and for 6★ experiences to happen. We have great teams right now, and we are going to continue to work to build even better ones. Every member of the team contributes to building a great team, but team leaders have an outsized responsibility and impact on the strength of the team. **As a leader at your store, you must work intentionally to build your great team and earn followers.** These are the fundamentals on how to make that happen.

Hire

Building a great team starts with getting the right people on the roster. Great leaders focus a significant amount of time on finding and carefully selecting the right people to join their team. Not only does approaching this step with intentionality lead to a stronger team, it will make everything about the store leader's job easier!

At Azzip, we hire for talent. To use the oft quoted phrase, "Pizza making isn't rocket science". We can teach and train the skills (the how-to's of the job) and the knowledge (the facts and experiences someone needs to be aware of) needed to be an exceptional Azzip team member. But talent, or how someone's brain is uniquely wired and their natural ability and enjoyment in fulfilling a role, is very difficult and slow to change. It's also difficult to fake over the long run. We need people who possess a talent for:

- Positive attitude - innate need to look on the bright side and bring an infectious attitude everyday
- Teamwork - driven to build a feeling of mutual support
- Hardwork - energized by an internal and self-imposed desire to achieve set goals and serve others
- Accountability - assume personal responsibility for their work and delivering on commitments

Could someone with five years of pizza making experience walk in our doors, require little training, and immediately start making some great looking pizzas? Sure thing. Would it be easier in the short term? Yep. It is the best for the long-term? If they have the talents listed above, then ABSOLUTELY! However, if someone lacks positivity, the negative attitude will soon start to overshadow any ability to make a great pizza. It will negatively impact the rest of the team and customer experience. **Experience is great, but it must take a secondary consideration to finding team members that possess the right talents.**

The process for finding people with these talents begins with generating an interest from people to potentially join the Azzip team. The biggest source of referrals will be from the current team. Great experiences for current team members will lead to more referrals for others to join the team. It is a great reinforcing cycle when functioning properly!

Azzip wide, we are trying to fill this funnel by being an industry leader in pay, communicating transparently about expectations (for us and them), and being active in building our Azzip employer brand. People have lots of options of where to invest their time working. We must provide a strong reason (even stronger than with customers because of the amount of the commitment required) for people to want to join our team.

Once interested, the application and interview are the screening tools available to evaluate how well someone likely exhibits the natural talents needed to contribute to a great team. It is not an easy task. You are going to get some of the evaluations wrong. **The important thing is to stay ahead of the game, learn from mistakes and successes, and always be active hiring.** If you get behind on hiring, you'll compromise on an applicant who you *know* might not be the best fit, and your team will suffer.

Start finding and selecting the best people who will create the atmosphere you are trying to create for your team and customers. Move from a focus of recruiting skill to recruiting talent. Make your team better, and always keep hiring as a priority.

Coach

Once your team is hired, your role as a store leader is to build your team using a coaching mindset. Most people have participated in sports (or theatre, music, speech) at some point in their youth and (hopefully) had the chance to grow and develop their skills and talents under some great coaches. These great coaches understand how to get the best out of the members of their team by communicating expectations, finding roles that play to each individual player's strengths, and holding the team accountable to delivering against the fundamentals and expectations set for them.

Each coach also has their own unique strengths that they bring to the role that makes you want to follow them and perform to their expectations. As leader at your store, we want you to **earn followers using your own unique strengths** and the same coaching fundamentals to build your own great team.

1. Communicate expectations

Expectations are going to be set about how your team will operate. It is up to you as a store leader to ensure the expectations adopted by the team are ones that will create the best possible environment for your team and ensure the right results are achieved. Your team members want to know what to do. A key driver of team strength has been shown to be strong affirmative answers from the members to the question “At work, I clearly understand what is expected of me”. Great teams must have everyone working towards a common goal. This common goal and the means to achieving it will be spelled out through the expectations we (yes it very much includes everyone at Azzip) set for each member of our team through our words, training, and - most importantly - actions.

How Expectations Get Set

- By Communicating - Your team wants to know *what* the expectations are, but they are much more likely to achieve your expectations if you help them **understand the why**. When they are involved and know the values or reasoning driving your expectations, it will help them truly *understand* the expectations that you have of them.
- By Training - When a new team member is joining your team, the training they receive will lay the groundwork for what you are expecting of them. They will learn what is the expectation for how to make a great pizza. For how to create 6-star experiences. They will also pick up on what you prioritize teaching and communicating about. If all you talk about is speed... speed is what you get, but likely at the expense of attention to detail. Spend time to ensure the right expectations are set from the beginning, because changing expectations is much more difficult and time consuming than setting the right ones the first time.
- By Example - We are naturally wired to spontaneously copy the postures and behaviors of those around us. Remember a yawn cascading through a room? And comedians are just funnier when you see them with others who are laughing. We mirror those around us automatically without even realizing it. Many of the expectations surrounding the values and acceptable behaviors of your team will be set this way. And this form of expectation setting will often override whatever you have communicated verbally. Actions will speak louder than words. **Be intentional about the example you set.**

By example. By training. By communicating. Everyone should know the outcomes we are seeking and the values that drive us. Everyone should know what they can expect from you and what you expect of them. If this isn't happening, don't be surprised when your own expectations for your team aren't met.

2. Bring out each person's best

The members of your team, and in turn the whole team, are at their best when they are doing activities that involve their strengths. What are strengths? In a definition that would make English teachers cringe..

Strengths are activities that **strengthen** YOU.

It goes beyond something that you are good at. They are activities that inspire and engage you. Activities that you naturally do and bring you positive energy. You can be good at something that saps you of energy - that isn't a strength.

As a leader, you must coach each member to be the best version of themselves by encouraging them to use more of their strengths. You cannot place your primary focus on improving weaknesses. **By just fixing weaknesses, you will never achieve true excellence as an individual or team.** When you move from improving the weaknesses of your team members to building their strengths, you will create a more engaged team because they will truly enjoy the role they each get to perform every day. When applying their strengths, they will be stretched and challenged to continue to grow their careers and skills. As a leader, you can focus on three specific activities to bring out each team member's best.

How to Bring Out Their Best

- Find the right role for each member of your team. This requires getting to know each person on an individual level and learning what **strengthens** them. If they really thrive and gravitate towards interactions with strangers, put them in a highly interactive customer role. Place someone who takes pride in building lists and crossing off completed tasks in a morning prep leadership role. Someone who loves analyzing numbers would excel in completing reports or orders for the store. Talk to your team. Observe their behaviors. Look for opportunities to challenge your team to grow their strengths.
- Great teams have a diverse set of strengths. If you hired everyone who had the same strengths as you, then when alternative strengths are needed

(and yes, you don't have strengths in every area), your team wouldn't have someone who could thrive in the needed role. A uniqueness of strengths creates a balanced team where complimentary skills can be utilized to achieve the highest performance of the **team**.

- When you see someone acting on their strengths, you must recognize them for it. Praise leads to performance more so than performance leads to praise. As a leader, **you initiate the process by letting your team know you have seen their unique strengths and value them for it.** As leaders, we can be quick to tell someone if they are screwing up. We need to be even quicker to tell someone they are doing some that really works! To create the maximum impact, let them know the impact their great performance had on you. Give details about what it made you think or realize. And praise your team often. Studies have shown that a 10 to 1 ratio of positive to negative feedback is often required to create the level of trust necessary for people to be receptive to the critical feedback when it becomes necessary.

Great teams are built from people's strengths and allowing each person's unique talents to shine. Play to their strengths, and they will deliver their best performance. And when they do, let them know you see their great work. Help your team members grow their careers by continuing to build their skills and find ways to use their strengths every day.

3. **Create Accountability**

You aren't going to create an accountable team **just** by "holding your team accountable" when mistakes are made. Creating an accountable atmosphere in your team requires doing the work up front to hire people with a talent to deliver on promises, providing the proper expectations, and giving frequent feedback (including positive) on progress.

How to Create Accountability

- Hire the right people to join your team. Some people are naturally wired and motivated by following through on commitments. They love to "check the box" as it gives them a sense of accomplishment to complete a task for themselves or for the team. Make sure your team has enough of these deliverers to help set the tone for the rest of the team.
- Set proper expectations for the results you want the team to achieve and the consequences if they aren't achieved. Setting the right expectations starts with modeling the right behaviors. **Hold yourself accountability to backing up your words with actions.** And don't expect to hold someone

accountable to something you haven't clearly communicated. Would that seem fair to you?

- We are most accountable when we know someone cares about the work we are doing. This means giving feedback, especially when someone is doing something right! Knowing someone cares and is going to recognize it when you follow through on your commitment will be a major motivating factor. Providing frequent feedback also helps to prevent "surprise" accountability.
- When an error is ultimately made that requires a discussion, ensure the decisions surrounding the consequences are fair. Fair to the expectations set. Fair to the expectations and behaviors you are modeling and others on the team are displaying. Fair to the crime. Be sure the person committing the error has a chance to provide their side. Be sure to listen. You may need to be providing some training or skill building instead of "accountability".

Ultimately, your team will be at its best when they feel a sense of accountability to each other. They care enough about supporting each other and helping the team achieve its goals that they don't want to let a teammate down. And when the ball inevitable gets dropped, any member of the team is comfortable reminding another member of the expectations and goals of the team.

We have to correct the wrongs so mistakes don't happen again. Be fair. Communicate often, and don't wait until just when things need corrected. Correcting mistakes won't create excellent performance, but letting critical errors go or handling inappropriately will be detrimental to efforts to build a great team.

Building Great Teams Scorecard

	Pass/Fail	Comments
Are interviews being scheduled outside of times of need?		
Is the ATS system being used to its full potential? <i>Interviews being logged, score cards completed appropriately.</i>		
Are regular sit downs occurring between the General Manager and their team? Has the team had a recent Shift Leader meeting?		
Were team members placed in roles that allowed their strengths to shine?		
Did you see a leader in the store give specific praise to a member of the team on your visit?		
Is the General Manager developing his/her team and future leaders? <i>Who is next up?</i>		
Have any documented conversations occurred in the last three months?		
Was the latest instance in which an employee was late or absent documented?		
Are managers leading by example? <i>Modeling behaviors and utilizing tools within Azzip Way.</i>		

Score out of 9

Comments: