8 REASONS

*You're Stuck
in the Day to Day*

&

You Don't Have a
Reliable Team

the *People* Plan™

Hi there!

This is Diana Southall, creator of the People Plan. After working with hundreds of small business owners and managers over the past 20 years, one thing I know we all have in common is People issues.

Business owners often say to me "I just want a team I can rely on – who I can trust to do a good job!"

If this sounds like you, you know it's not a simple problem to solve.

Most owners think the solution is to "hire a few good people" but that may be the wrong approach for your team [at least at first].

As with any problem, the key is to identify the cause and then apply the best solution.

There are many reasons that business owners struggle with this.

So that is why I wrote this quick guide for you, so that you can understand more about the underlying reasons you don't have a reliable team you can trust.

I am going to show you 8 possible reasons that the quality of your team is keeping you trapped in your business, working longer hours than you would like, and limiting your growth and profits.

Of course, you do have *a few good people who you do trust*, and you know they will go above and beyond to help you, your team and your customers.

You would love to clone them, you might even say "if I could only find 2 more like Steve and Jennifer, life would be great!"

So let's get started figuring out what is holding back the rest of your team….

-Diana

The (busy) life of a small business owner

When you started (or joined) your business, you did a lot of work yourself. As the business grew, you added staff to take care of the daily "work" yet you never seem able to get yourself out of everyday responsibilities.

- Your days are busy but progress is slow, and you go home feeling like you didn't accomplish anything. A 40-hour week seems like a luxury.

- You would like more free time, but you are afraid to leave since problems surface and you "pay for it" when you come back.

- You have a big list of ideas to improve your business, but these never seem to get started [much less finished].

The cycle repeats

You might even have hired someone new to take some of your workload, or started "delegating" some of your work to others.

But despite your best efforts and good intentions, your to-do list is long and your days are filled with endless calls, meetings, and requests that eat up your time.

Or someone recently quit, leaving you and the team hanging. Now you spend your precious time interviewing and training the new person (which you hate), and then catch up for the lost time.

Frustrating, isn't it?

It's an endless cycle. Every Monday you start out with big plans for the week, only to leave Friday with not much progress to show for all your hard work. Some days you feel so burnt out and overwhelmed, you think about exiting the business.

And deep down you know this can't be the way to grow your business.

What could be the cause? Why are you doing so much in your business?

Because you don't have the team you need to support you—
a trusted, reliable team.

If you did, you would be comfortable letting them handle the daily activities.

You would be confident that they are doing a great job: growing sales, caring for your customers, making great decisions, while keep you updated on progress and achieving your ambitious business goals.

So let's explore some possible reasons you don't have a reliable team.

Reason 1: You are under-staffed

Sometimes you truly don't have enough staff to cover the work to care for your current client base. People are spread thin and are just trying to keep their heads above the water. Obviously if everyone is handling a high workload, it's hard for for you to be confident everything is being done well.

Perhaps you just added a burst of new customers, or you have a seasonal bump in demand, or you are in the process of training a newbie.

Teams under pressure, overworked, and stressed are notorious unreliable.

You may think hiring is the answer, but it isn't always the best solution to start. When you address the other reasons (below), this usually increase the effectiveness, capacity, and therefore the reliability of your current team.

Reason 2: You have low performers

You likely have at least one person who is not performing well.

It might be someone whose job changed but their skills didn't keep up, or they are struggling with the workload or an aspect of the job, or they are slow in taking on new responsibility. They might have inconsistent output, working hard some weeks and slacking off others.

You tried feedback, coaching, or training with short-lived improvement.

When someone on the team has sub-par performance, of course you don't feel you can rely on him or her.

Reason 3: You have people with attitude issues

Sometimes you have people who do an adequate job, but it comes at a price. They give you or co-workers a hard time, grumbling and complaining when you assign work or ask for a status update. They might be toxic to peers, openly difficult to their supervisor, or continually resist change.

Just like the low performers, Debbie Downer and Toxic Theo aren't your go-to people either. They may do the work (if you are willing to put up with the negativity), but it's a good possibility they may not do the work well.

When you avoid performance correcting conversations with low performers or those with attitude issues you are not building a reliable team.

What most managers do is "reward" unreliable people by taking work and giving it to a more competent high performer. A great solution? No, but you would rather give work to the reliable. So you are stuck in this "catch-22."

*Both these types of employees drag down the reliability of your team, lower your confidence that everything is under control. Because it **isn't** under control.*

Even more importantly, "unreliable co-workers" is a main reason top performers quit, so ignoring these issues can force out your reliable ones!

Reason 4: Your "open door" has a line of people asking for help

When you let people pop on by to run things by you, you are enabling "problem bringers" instead of developing "problem solvers."

"Hey boss, what do you want me to do about this? Mr Z called and wants to know what is happening with the new thing" These continual interruptions fill up your day, and distract your ability to focus on anything else.

Remember the biblical parable about "teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime"? It's the same for decision making.

When you are the source of problem solving you also become responsible for the decision, and enables a co-dependence on your input and guidance.

If you can't rely on your staff to make good decisions without you, you will be chained to the office, worry when you are not there and be called 10 times on your vacation.

Reason 5: Your process is broken

Sometimes it's not the people who are unreliable, it's the process itself that causes problems, delays and customer issues.

If there are 5 people who are involved in the process to convert a proposal to delivery of a new sale, there are at least 5 places where the handoff can be incomplete or inaccurate or dropped entirely.

Sometimes your people are doing their best struggling through the convoluted and flawed process. To improve the human-side of reliability, check the underlying system.

If your good performers sometimes have issues with reliability, it might make sense to look at the work flow for effectiveness and efficiency.

Reason 6: You resist delegating

Hey, I get it. You need to trust first before you delegate.

If you can't be sure the work will be done timely and accurately, you keep control of that task yourself. Even if it is boring or you hate the task.

I find that owners I work with have two main reason they don't delegate.

One reason is the "it's easier to do it myself" syndrome. Yes, it will take 20 minutes to show someone once to do this 10 minute task, but remember it's 10 minutes every week (=500 minutes a year, 8+ hours.) So consider your time investment choices carefully.

The other reason is that a prior delegation was a disaster or just a big pain. You had to chase the person down for an update, nag them to finish it, they did it wrong, or worst of all created a big problem. Painful conclusion: brings you back to reason one- it's easier to do it myself.

If you want to build a reliable team, you must improve your skills in coaching and training to achieve a successful transfer of work that doesn't belong on the to-do list for a CEO.

Reason 7: Desired Results are not clear (or rewarded)

You may not realize it, but if you are like most business owners, you are not clear about desired results or clear about priorities.

Most decent employees try to figure out what "Done Right" looks like and to do their best with the resources and tools you give them.

If you don't measure or track any results, they may not know how they are doing. Absent of any data or feedback, most people assume that "no news is good news" and they are doing their job to meet your expectations.

So the "unreliable" don't know it and don't have any reason to change.

You also may not be rewarding the trusted reliable ones. Those that step up are given more work, those that duck and cover are given less work, and everyone gets a 3% raise and about the same year-end bonus.

Consider the messages you are sending with feedback, recognition and pay—is it rewarding reliability?

Reason 8: You can't find good people to hire

Yes, I advise that you should improve your current team performance first.

But the lack of "good people" to hire is part of the reason you accept low performance or poor attitudes. You feel hostage because if you address the issues they might quit, and a mediocre person is better than no person.

You probably also dread the hiring process and rush to fill an open position. You take the "best" applicant, even if you worry they won't work out.

If you settle for third-string players on your team and in your new hires, this is definitely a reason you don't have a reliable team.

How many reasons do you have?

How many of these issues exist on your team?

If you have 3 or more, you likely don't have a reliable who you trust to delegate work, run daily activities and work on projects to grow the business.

The Solution: Building Your Team Model

**To build a reliable team, you need the
Right People in the Right Jobs, Doing the Right Things:**

Right Things	Right People	Done Right
Job Role	Job Fit	Measure + Feedback
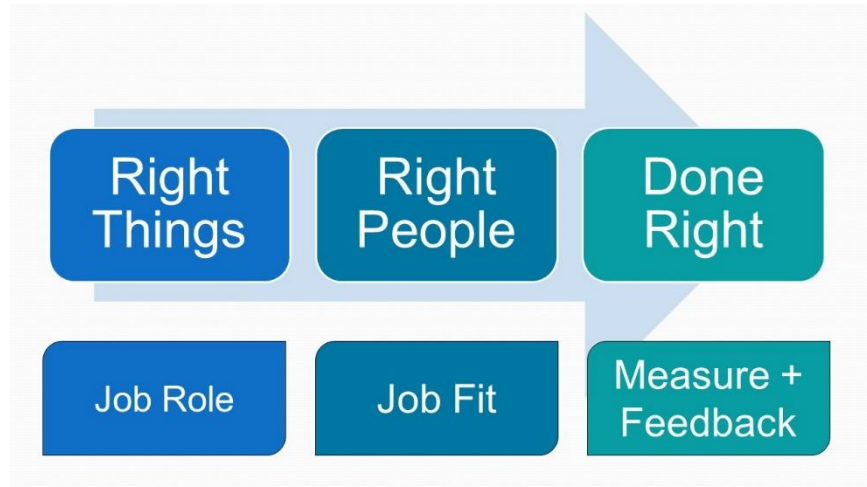
Next: Read the Guide

Would you like to learn the exact steps to go from stuck in the day-to-day to building a trusted reliable team?

Get the Guide

Building Your
TEAM
Right People ... Right Jobs

By Diana Southall

the People Plan™

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