

What is High Performance?

By Ruth Schwartz



High Performance is where every person within an organization is a contributing partner in the business. High performance teams are self-managing, multifunctional groups of people organized around a whole process and empowered with full responsibility for their success. If you make high performance the goal of your organization, there is a very good chance that your company and your employees will thrive.

In traditional organizations, managers set goals and policies and control information. Managers are the thinkers and planners, and employees are just the doers. For employees, this sets up an attitude of compliance. Their hearts are not in their work. As a result, they do the minimum required to get a paycheck.

High performance organizations create a culture in which all people participate in setting goals, making decisions and solving problems. When this happens, people are inspired to go beyond compliance to commitment. People want to be a part of the organization and are excited to contribute to its success and improvement. They feel valued for their contribution.

In order to make people feel and act like partners in your business, they need:

- 1. Access to Information.** Ask most workers and they will tell you they have no idea how or why decisions are made. They know they would be better at their jobs and have the ability to meet their goals more reliably if only they had enough information. People can't act like partners when they are in the dark.
- 2. The ability to solve problems.** Allow employees to wholly possess the tradesman and manager roles—even if initially this means they will make some mistakes. Eventually, they will get it right and you will be free to be the leader (visionary, designer and coach) that they need to become successful.
- 3. Meaningful involvement in making decisions.** Instead of getting your staff to “buy in”—which only means that you have made a decision and you want your staff to agree, get

them to “weigh in.” Ask questions and resist the urge to go it alone. Remember let people know they are valued and involve them in making decisions that impact them and your business.

- 4. Broad roles and responsibilities.** There is tremendous power in understanding how each person impacts the business and each other. To be a meaningful team member who makes decisions and solves problems, knowing what everyone does and what their challenges may be helps them have more imagination and understanding of decision they help to make. This is also true for business owners and managers.

If you apply these strategies to your business, you will soon see a shift in your employees’ performance, and a commitment to being a part of a team that is passionate about building the company’s success.

Ruth Schwartz started Mordam Records in 1983. By the time Nirvana hit the pop charts and Green Day went platinum, Schwartz was running a ten million-dollar company. In 2012 Schwartz chronicles her success in *The Key to the Golden Handcuffs – Stop Being a Slave to Your Business*. Published by Outskirts Press, and based on Schwartz’ business experience, the book gives entrepreneurs and business executives insight into shifts that can be made to create a transparent, open-book company. Today, Schwartz is an internationally certified business coach, motivational speaker, and the facilitator of business peer advisory boards. She owns High Performance Advocates, a management development and marketing company. Contact Ruth through www.highperformanceadvocates.com or by calling 530-288-0180.