

Cultivating a *team*

IN THE FIRST OF A SERIES ON PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, CATH VINCENT REVEALS THE FOUR KEY REASONS TO CULTIVATE A TEAM IN YOUR BUSINESS.

“You’re not a team player!”

As a young 20-something early in my career, this sounded like quite a criticism coming from my boss.

I instantly thought to defend the criticism.

“I get on well with everyone,” I told her.

“Oh yes,” she agreed mildly, “I’m not saying you’re not popular. I’m simply saying that you’re not a team-player.”

Maybe there was some truth in what she said. In my very first job, I had been the sole employee in a start-up company, so there was simply no one else to work with. In my second workplace, a stressful advertising office, deadlines were so extreme that you barely had time to breathe, let alone consult a colleague. So I concluded I really had become quite self-reliant.

Don’t get me wrong, independence is a great quality. But 25 years on, I can tell there are two things that will stunt the scale of your potential success:

- **Dollars for hours:** simple mathematics dictates that if the money you make is based on an hourly rate, your potential earnings must be capped by the number of hours you have available. If you earn \$10/hour, and you work a 40-hour week, your maximum earning is \$400. Even if you were willing and able to double the amount of hours you worked, your salary will still be capped at \$800.
- **Being an island:** the second thing that will cap your potential is an over-reliance on yourself. So many entrepreneurs make this mistake and find themselves trapped in the business they have created in order to achieve freedom. For one thing, it is simply ego to think that you can do everything yourself and that no one can do anything better than you. Sure, if you are a very detail-oriented brain surgeon, it is probably true that no one can clean your kitchen better than you. But is that really a worthwhile use of your skill? Also, you only have one perspective on the world, and it is naïve to think that yours is the only one that is real, right, and true.

I’m slightly ashamed to admit that it took me a very long time to realise I had overlooked the value of teamwork. For many years, I patiently sat through courses and team-building activities silently cringing when phrases like ‘There is no ‘I’ in TEAM’ were mentioned.

Even concepts that I agreed with logically took a while



for me to embrace practically. For example, I quite like the saying ‘It takes teamwork to make the dream work’, but it wasn’t until I actually started working on my own dream that the penny finally dropped.

When I launched my own TV show, I was suddenly faced with a huge learning curve, extreme deadlines and a serious financial investment. Two weeks before filming, I woke up at four in the morning and thought, ‘I literally cannot do this all myself’.

There are four key reasons to cultivate a team. What we’re talking about is the compounded energy of more than one like-minded person. Or put another way, ‘The sum is greater than the parts’.

When I started building my TV team around me, I realised I could:

- **Overcome my own resistance** – some tasks simply seem onerous on your own but become manageable with the momentum created by another person. (I noticed this in my personal life when I hired someone to help me overhaul our garden.)
- **Reduce risk** – It’s much easier to be brave and take on the world when you don’t feel you are completely exposed or by yourself. Imagine if you turned up at a party and you’re the only person in fancy dress. You’d feel quite exposed. Whereas if you’re in a group, you wouldn’t give it a second thought.
- **Use my skills** – When you choose the right team mix, you get to work on only the things that seem like play (for everything on your to-do list that you would procrastinate on, there is a person who would eat that up and ask for seconds!).
- **Increase enjoyment** – Plain and simple, it’s actually just more fun.

Being a self-starter is great; having an entire team of self-starters is better!



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