

Not alone! Build a TEAM around you that will help you conquer all obstacles.

Dave McMahon, Business Coach

"Go Dave! Go Dave! Go Dave!"

That is what I heard. It kept me going. It helped me overcome some major physical and mental challenges.

Over the past week, I participated in the California Ironman 70.3 (1.2 miles swim, 56 mile bike, 13.1 mile run) and the Shadow Tour Century (100 mile bike ride). They were both immensely grueling events that sapped my energy. There was 55 degree water, wind gusts up to 40 miles per hour, steep climbs, scorching hot sun, and the continual need to keep nourished. The physical part was half the challenge.

The mental part was even harder. There were thoughts of, "Why am I doing this?", "Why don't I just stop and walk?", or even, "I feel like quitting."

Sport, in its most basic sense, is the perfect metaphor for life's ups and downs. There are many formidable obstacles between you and your goals. It peaks and it valleys. To overcome the downs and experience the exhilarations of the ups you cannot do it alone. **Your team gives you the power to endure and the pleasure to enjoy.** That's why I participate; it's the experience of overcoming with others.

In a small business your team consists of your management, employees, customers, vendors, and family members. Seek to help and encourage them in their projects and pursuits, and you will get back this gift in return many times over. A team which works together well, enjoys the process, and supports each other will survive, prosper, and have the most fun while they are doing it. Here are some suggestions about how you can build the greatest team around you for the benefit of all in your business:

- Know your own weaknesses. Embrace people who are better than you. Help them improve and learn from them.
- Consider the lifestyles of your teammates. Are they in the image that you want to build for your operation? For example, if an active healthy image is important to your brand and direction, find people that are athletes. If faith is at the top of your list, find people who are active in their religion. It may be a combination, but make sure you consider lifestyle. It is relevant.
- You must genuinely enjoy each others company at work. It needs to click.
- Variety of experience is good. For example, if you own a furniture store, do not require furniture store experience as criteria for employees. By doing this you will cut your self off from a big portion of the talent pool and you may get unwanted industry talent. In fact, I recommend hiring from other sectors except where talent is unquestionable.
- Train. Use industry professionals to give your teammates all the knowledge and tools to succeed. Believe me, your competition does.
- Reassess goals, challenges, performances, and actions each week with members.
- Treat failures as opportunities. Never get angry at people. They will become unmotivated and eventually seek another team. A failure purely indicates that you need to redefine how you are going to overcome the challenge in the future.
- Respect your vendors and customers as equal team partners. They will reward you.
- Help your family members reach their potential. Train, expect, encourage, and reward.

- Encourage all members, often. Don't be invisible. Owners and managers need to be perceived as being (and really be) accessible. Lend a hand where needed.
- Communicate.
- Above all, have fun playing!

You are NEVER alone. A great team keeps you going. It is like a self-perpetuating entity where the sum of the members is bigger than all the individuals.

Professionally, I am a member of the PROFIT consulting team of furniture consultants. One of our specialties in furniture consulting is harnessing the power of our clients' teams. Email me at davidm@profitsystems.com if you would like a complimentary telephone consultation the next time I'm in the office. Let's push through to a higher level!