

Growth stage companies: setting up a good team is essential to win

When a startup is escalating its business –even if it has the necessary financing, the product, and the infrastructure to support the new volume of business– it has to assemble a good work team. Otherwise, it is unlikely that it will reach its objectives. The human factor is critical in this process.

The first step to setting up a team that will accompany the process of exponential scaling is to analyze the human capital available: what set of skills is necessary to scale the organization and what disciplines have the main knowledge gaps. This introspective work requires much honesty. If a talent shortage makes us reluctant to invest in more staff, or if there is a feeling of omnipotence, or if senior management is unwilling to assemble the right team to accompany the initiative, the strong likelihood is that its objectives will not be achieved be met.

The next step is the specific task of setting up the team. The challenge is relevant. It is not a question of merely incorporating a couple of people to meet a particular need. Instead, talent also needs to be scaled, including all the roles necessary to direct the company toward the scaling strategy.



Leading hybrid teams

Another challenge faced by companies in the scaling stage for talent is managing hybrid work teams. Very often, the staff actually located in the office need to work together with talent hired as partners or experts who work from any corner of the world. The project's goals and impact need to be communicated in all these cases. Additionally, engagement strategies have to be developed so that the individual purpose of each collaborator is aligned with that of the organization.

In that sense, periodic meetings –at present, this applies both to on-site and remote models– are an excellent tool to evaluate how the plan is progressing, clear up doubts, and realign the team around the scaling objectives. Everyone wants answers to questions. Are colleagues happy with the team's performance? Is there anything that needs to be improved? Or, even... Has the team performed above expectations?

Additionally, leaders face the challenge of conveying the courage to innovate. All team members should try new alternatives, even if they know they might fail. We learn from our mistakes, which is the starting point for our next initiative.

Moreover, we must develop a "fluid team" concept: maintaining the same team throughout a product's life cycle is a utopia. We must harness the unique talents in the team to maximize the success of each stage and add or remove members who specialize in innovation, scaling, and maintenance whenever necessary.

The importance of outside help

The issue of engagement can be a problem. Startups were created by people who have devoted their lives to them. However, collaborators who join the project – no matter how passionate they may feel about their work– will not likely reach that level of commitment. Hence the importance of managing the expectations of leaders so that they will not feel discouraged at the end of the day when the "new ones" want to go home.

That is why having partners with experience in similar projects guarantees that they will accompany the team's cultural development, the management of hybrid teams, or the building of optimized processes. At the same time, the new partners will prevent the unit from tripping over the exact stones that already got in the way of the success of other companies.

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