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From Mules to Mars & Beyond - Getting 100% out of 100%

After a blistering hot August day in 2016, Senior Superintendent, Mark Ford, and Field Engineer, Ryan Morris, took an evening break on a newly installed park bench on the campus of Wake Forest University. They sat partially out of exhaustion but mostly to admire the seemingly impossible feat they had just accomplished. Frank L Blum Construction Company had been tasked with completing the renovation of two residence halls over the course of only 75 days.

Morris, a year into his career, sat on that park bench and serious doubts began to swirl as he expressed his concerns to Ford. If Senior Superintendent was his intended career path, was that really what he wanted to do for the next 10 years? How do you even survive physically, emotionally, and personally doing these types of projects? He was engaged to be married just a month later and hadn't seen his fiancé that entire summer. Why would she want to marry someone that she never sees? How could they build a family with a career like this? As Morris sat there looking across the quad at three years' worth of projects in front of him just like this one, he knew that the only option to save his career and his love for construction was to have a serious conversation with the president of the company, Mike Lancaster.

Company Background

From Mules to Mars

Frank L Blum Construction Company wasn't always in the business of completing complex, multi-million-dollar, high profile projects with aggressive timelines. The company was established in 1923 by Frank Blum himself with founding assets that included a team of mules, a wagon and a harness. After several decades of initial success, the company was dealt a severe blow in 1954 with Mr. Blum's sudden death. Defying great odds, employees rallied to complete the projects that were in the middle of construction when Mr. Blum died and to ultimately save the company.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, the second generation made its mark on the Blum legacy by being known for projects that required attention to detail and an eye for quality. The culture, reputation of the company, and the approach to getting work in that era could be summed up as "we do good work and our phone rings." By living that strategy, the second

generation also left a legacy that was sharply focused on customer satisfaction and "you can count on us" relationships with repeat customers.

The third generation at Blum continued to grow the business in the 1980s through the 2010s. By that time, the culture among field management could be described as a "cowboy" approach. Cowboys were the commanders of their jobsites who did not want to, or need to, build relationships with other cowboys at the company. Most field superintendents came up through the trades and expected themselves to know everything there was to know about how to build. Asking for help would not only give the appearance of weakness, but not having all the answers would cause them to lose respect among their fellow cowboys.

While not ideal for building a pipeline of talent, the cowboy culture did have its benefits. Put simply, the culture of competition delivered for customers. Superintendents were often possessive over "their" customers and would go to great lengths to protect those relationships. This created an intense drive for individuals to be asked for by name on the next job and reinforced the "you can count on us" culture that Blum has always been known for and the culture that moved Blum toward that exhausted conversation on the park bench between Ford and Morris at Wake Forest University in 2016

The increase in project size and complexity during the third generation also created growth opportunities for individuals and forced a need for innovation. These opportunities began to demand a movement "from cowboys to astronauts" in the way Blum's projects were planned and executed. Mark Ford described his observations during this shift as going from "cowboys moving an ever-increasing size of herd at a quicker pace to astronauts planning and executing a trip to Mars," as he added, "and I want to go to Mars."

Development of People & Talent Strategies: Preparing to Go to Mars.

In 2014, Mike Lancaster became the president of Blum and the fourth generation continued to make its mark on the company. The new leadership team had a vision for continued growth but realized that the main factor limiting the company's growth, as well as its main driver of future success, was talent. In September of 2016, Lancaster hired Tess Sekhar as the first Director of People & Talent Strategies at Blum. Sekhar reported to Lancaster, and she was tasked with improving the company's effectiveness in the area of talent development – to attract, develop and keep the best builders in the industry.

As this focus on talent evolved, it was clear to Lancaster and Sekhar that the company was continuing to fall short in several areas. For example, the elusive "work/life balance" was still an issue after a couple of failed attempts to help employees better manage their workload. Personal development plans were also not taking root. Employees were setting goals once a year, but no deliberate structure was in place to enable them to continue focusing on those goals between semiannual performance reviews. Projects like the Wake Forest University residence hall renovations were still exhausting employees and turnover was still happening

after tough projects. As Vice President, Mike Powers, described it, "What I value most about Blum is that we are client centric. Customer relationships and our reputation are what is most important, especially when the chips are down. However, that culture can cause us to go into overdrive, grind people to a powder and work in ways that are not sustainable."

High Performing Teams

In the spring of 2018, Lancaster and Sekhar continued to explore and test options for making projects more enjoyable as well as more impactful learning and development opportunities for the project teams following conversations with employees like Ryan Morris who were feeling signs of burnout. "We needed to take a more proactive approach to how the project teams formed," explained Lancaster. "We needed to help people create healthy team dynamics from the start rather than letting it happen naturally over the course of the project. We needed to move away from a 'command and control' environment typical of construction and move toward a collaborative, caring environment." They got to work coming up with an agenda for several upcoming project kickoff meetings and the first one just so happened to be another summer residence hall renovation at Wake Forest University with Ryan Morris as the Superintendent.

Goals & Setup

The following goals were identified as part of what the High Performing Team (HPT) model would work to achieve:

1) **Enjoy the experience of achievement.** Looking back to the most successful projects completed by Blum, those teams performed well *and* enjoyed doing it.
2) **Maximize function as a High Performing Team.** This model would seek to get 100% out of 100%, having all team members working at their full potential to produce a high level of team performance.
3) **Maximize individual growth and opportunity.** Blum's construction sites were the most impactful classroom for the company's employees and this model would be expected to maximize that opportunity.
4) **Understand the "WHY?" of the project.** Increasing engagement and sense of purpose among team members by understanding why the project was important to customers and the communities they serve.

The first task in building consensus for these goals would be to identify the team champion for each project. Through some trial and error, it was determined that the field leader was the most effective individual to champion this process. In Blum's operational model, the field leader, often a Superintendent, is the person that is essentially the anchor on the job site and therefore the one who has the most influence on the team dynamic and the processes that the team follows.

Team Socials

The first step in creating healthy team dynamics and relationships of trust among team members was to spend time with each other outside of work ideally prior to the start of the project. Teams were encouraged to take the time to do something fun and many of them jumped at the opportunity. Superintendent Tommy Cheek described the experience, "When I got to know people personally, I developed an interest in them and what they are working on. When I see them struggling, I want to reach out and help. Before, I wouldn't notice if they were struggling. Because of the friendships, they are more receptive to the help, and it takes down the barriers."

In addition to a planned social gathering at the start of the project, teams were encouraged to continue carving out time for fun to further develop the connection between the members. "This is the first job I've been on where everyone on our project team would go out and have a beer or lunch at least once a month," Senior Superintendent Josh Pack shared. Pack's team was tasked with Project Apple, a 100,000 square foot birthing center and neonatal intensive care unit at Wake Forest Baptist Health with a crew of 350 people often working 24 hours a day in shifts. In addition to impromptu outings, the project team also created a "champion of the week" program for the Blum crew members working on the job. Each week an individual would be ceremoniously awarded a $25 gift certificate for exceptional performance along with the opportunity to take a picture with the coveted champion of the week wrestling belt. The silly gesture "created excitement among the team and rewarded people for doing a good job," explained Pack. (See Exhibit 1)

Not only did the social time increase engagement, but it also improved team performance. "If we know a little bit about what is going on in the personal lives of our teammates, we are better equipped to support them, and with that help and understanding during difficult times, performance is naturally enhanced," described River Landing's Assistant Project Manager, Anna Gallimore. "During a recent medical crisis, my teammates, and the entire Blum family, not only supported and encouraged me, but as a team we planned for my leave and return. Performances improved as teammates took responsibility for my workload and filled the gaps."

Project Kickoff

To begin the High Performing Team process, each team scheduled a four-hour kickoff meeting at an offsite location to include every person on the team, the Director of People & Talent Strategies and the members of executive leadership involved in the project.

Team Standards

The first activity during the kickoff meeting involved team members setting their team standards. These standards were focused on things like how the team wanted to work together, what was important to them, and how they preferred to communicate. To get the

team to start thinking about standards, they watched a video about Coach Mike Krzyzewski, the famed 5-time national championship Duke University basketball coach and 3-time gold medalist with the men's US Olympic team[1]. Like the Olympic team, each construction project at Blum brings together a team of very skilled people who may have never worked together and must figure out how to succeed under pressure. The video highlights Coach Krzyzewski's time coaching the men's Olympic team and his relationship with the players, especially Lebron James.

> "There are 14 standards that our US Olympic team had," Krzyzewski explains. "It's the way you live, the way you expect other people to live. We have no rules, but we have standards. When we talk to each other, we look each other in the eye. Another standard is we tell each other the truth. A standard that LeBron introduced to the whole team is no excuses, never make an excuse."

To come up with the team standards, each Blum team member was given a sharpie and a stack of sticky notes. The team was given 10 minutes to individually brainstorm standards writing one idea per sticky note to cite behaviors that they believed were vital to creating successful projects. Following the 10 minutes, everyone stood before the group individually and presented what they came up with. Individuals were encouraged to share the explanation about why the standard is important to them and this process began to create understanding among the team members. "Standards are not just sticky notes," explained Mark Ford. "The value of the standards process in the kickoff meeting is in standing up in front of the group and explaining why you believe a certain behavior is important to you, to the performance of the team and to the success of the project."

> Eventually, 10-12 team standards were created and everyone on the team signed off on the list signifying that they bought into the standards and would work to uphold them. In the Coach K video, Krzyzewski notes, "These are all things that I didn't come up with, we all came up with and as a result, it was ours. That's why our group got along so well together, because it was never anybody imposing *my* rule on somebody. It was all of us imposing and living our standards." What Krzyzewski was describing here was exactly the "astronaut" teamwork approach that the company was striving for. The standards would be developed through collaboration and expressed interest in what was important to every team member versus being told what the standards would be by the "cowboy" in charge.

> "I feel like the team standards becomes a rallying cry for those things we agreed were important," explained Senior Project Manager Ricky Touchstone of the standards on the River Landing team. "Not having them leaves room for interpretation about how we operate. Having them gives us something in black and white that we can point to and hold each other accountable to when the standards are not being met."

> One of the standards on the River Landing team was "Each Can Teach: Ask for help without shame, help without shame. Don't discredit team members for mistakes. We all have

something to learn" (See Exhibit II). Having this as a team standard helped the team members be vulnerable and open about what they needed help on or things they didn't know. Less experienced employees were able to help more seasoned employees with new technologies. The favor was returned by the seasoned employees teaching the less experienced employees about the work being put in place on the jobsite.

Standards were also developed around communication protocol. What is the appropriate response time to a text message? Email? Voicemail? Through the standards exercise, two employees realized that for years they had different ideas about the urgency of a text message which had caused communication issues in the past. The standards also helped manage expectations around engagement in meetings. The Project Apple team was able to develop standards around whether it was appropriate to answer emails during a meeting and have a blueprint to ask each other to stay off their phones during important team conversations. Lastly, many teams had standards around the team having fun together. These standards helped reinforce the importance of social time outside of work and these social times helped to create trust connections between team members.

Calendaring

In an effort to avoid burnout, a time off calendar was reviewed among the team members during the kickoff meeting. The following two topics were discussed during this meeting:

1) Team members were encouraged to bring important dates with them to the kickoff meeting including things like vacations, childcare schedules, or any time they would need to be off the jobsite for regular activities that helped team members recharge like playing on a softball team.

2) There is often overtime work involved in construction projects with weekend and after-hours work. A calendar of jobsite coverage was also developed for team members to trade off weekends and late days.

This calendar was developed, reviewed, and agreed upon during the kickoff meeting and adjusted accordingly over the course of the project. "Setting up a calendar avoided burn out and gave people flexibility if they needed to do things outside of work," Senior Superintendent Josh Pack described of his time on Project Apple.

Comparing this process to the previously described "cowboy culture," team members were able to plan their time off and be able to protect important commitments with the people in their lives outside of work. Several team members who had been a part of the previous culture as well as the High Performing Team model describe the feeling of needing to be at the jobsite no matter what in the old model. If the superintendent on the job was there, you felt like you needed to be there as well, no matter the time of day or day of the week. Also, team

members frequently did not know if they would be working the weekend until the end of the week, which often caused issues in their personal lives.

The calendaring exercise encouraged team members to protect time off. It also created learning opportunities for team members. Because more experienced team members were not constantly on the jobsite, less experienced teammates had an opportunity to step up, often forcing them out of their comfort zones.

Roles & Responsibilities

Another goal in launching HPT was to help provide clarity around job responsibilities from the start of the project. The project champion, which was typically the senior field leader, with input from other leaders on the team, was tasked with creating a list of roles and responsibilities for everyone to be reviewed as a team during the kickoff meeting.

Having clarity around everyone's responsibilities was an essential element in providing a road map for the team to figure out how to work together from the start of the project versus figuring it out as they went along. "Understanding roles and responsibilities helped a lot to know what I was supposed to be doing and be able to hit the ground running from the start of the project," explained River Landing Craftsman Carlos Castellanos.

Personal Development Plans

Through the High Performing Team model, individuals were encouraged to determine two goals that they wanted to work on over the course of that specific project. The first goal would be a technical goal such as learning more about how the HVAC system worked or to become more knowledgeable about the construction and installation of the elevators on the project. The second goal focused on developing certain leadership skills on the project such as improving their abilities to lead meetings or to be more assertive with subcontractors. Research shows that 70% of adult learning comes from on-the-job experience so it made sense to be as intentional about capturing on-the-job learning opportunities as possible.[2]

Prior to the kickoff, team members were instructed to submit their two goals to the Director of People & Talent Strategies. In a 2016 study conducted by Dr. Gail Matthews, a psychology professor at the Dominican University in California, found that participants of the study were 42% more likely to achieve goals by simply writing them down on a regular basis.[3] During the kickoff, each team member shared his or her two goals with the rest of the team. It was extremely important during this process that the champion went first to show vulnerability. By doing so, the leaders of the team communicated that it was okay and even encouraged for the team members to share that they might not be experts in an area and that they had things they wanted to improve on.

"Stating an aspirational goal publicly in front of peers puts it out there in a way that people work harder to achieve and reach their potential," explained Senior Project Manager

Justin Swanson who was part of the Project Apple team. Not only did Swanson feel that personal development plans were beneficial to the individual, but they were also a great management tool during his time at Project Apple. "One of my shortcomings as a manager is motivating others to do their work. I find that stating goals as part of the High Performing Team process gave me a framework for expectations and coaching."

Self-Assessments

Prior to the kickoff meeting, team members were asked to complete a Caliper self-assessment. Caliper describes their assessments as "an objective assessment that accurately measures an individual's personality characteristics and individual motivation in order to predict on-the-job behaviors and potential." A detailed analysis of each individual's profile was sent to the champion and other leaders on the team for them to get a better understanding of the people reporting to them along with a Team Caliper Heat Map that addresses strengths and potential gaps with the team as a whole. Following the kickoff, individuals also received their own writeups to get a better understanding of how they themselves are wired.

Check-ins

To continue to reinforce the work done during the team's High Performing Team kickoff meetings, regular team check-ins were conducted with the cadence being determined by the schedule of the project and what made sense to the team. For example, a fast-paced shorter project timeline called for more frequent check-ins. During these check-ins, the teams would discuss the following topics:

1) **Team Standards:** How are the team standards working? Are we living them and holding each other accountable? When are they not working well and why not?
2) **Communication Protocol:** How are the standards around communication protocol working? Is everyone on the same page? Does anything need to be updated?
3) **Personal Development Plan Updates:** Each member of the team gives an update to the team on the progress they've made, obstacles they've faced in working towards their established leadership and technical goal or revisions that need to be made to the goals.
4) **Calendaring:** How is it working and what adjustments and updates need to be made?

HPT Impact

There is no doubt that the High Performing Team model has made a significant impact on the individuals and teams that have gone through a project using the process. More specifically, improvements were seen in the three areas of individual growth, the overall performance of the team, and employee engagement.

Individual Growth

The High Performing Team model has shown that it can be impactful in driving individual growth on a project level from entry level employees to senior management. As Mark Ford described, "The High Performing Team Model sets the expectation of 'you are going to grow or you are going to get off the ship.'" Since its establishment, employees have been promoted following a High Performing Team project at a significantly higher rate than projects without the model.

Growth opportunities were also created through the calendaring exercise when an individual was away from the job and others had the opportunity to step up and cover for their absence. As Superintendent Claude Sales noted "It was like we became family. In the end we had each other's backs. My ability to grow when my direct supervisor was taking time off was 75% on me to get ready by asking questions and 25% on my supervisor to 'coach me up' about what I should anticipate."

The caliper self-assessments also helped managers be better equipped to coach individuals. As Senior Superintendent Josh Pack said of his experience as the senior field leader on Project Apple, "The satisfaction of seeing people grow is the next thing on my career path beyond just building buildings."

Team Performance

The High Performing Team model has also proven to improve team performance on projects. As River Landing Assistant Superintendent, Marlin Dabney, described, "You can put five people on a jobsite, and they may have no clear idea what their roles are but if there is a system in place, you can follow that system and figure it out. It's like being in the kitchen with a new team of cooks and a new recipe. Organizing the team from the start and following the recipe improves your chances of a better outcome."

The initial team social as well as the encouragement to continue to spend time together outside of work was vital in creating and developing relationships of trust among team members. These relationships promoted collaboration across the team, ultimately improving team performance. Team standards also enhanced performance as they were essential in creating a clear set of expectations discussed early and often to avoid unproductive team hang-ups. The calendaring exercise improved performance by providing a blueprint of how the team would work together and acted as a tool to communicate expectations of who was working when. The caliper self-assessments also contributed to performance by helping team members understand each other better.

Not only did the High Performing Team model improve performance on projects like River Landing, but it also continues to improve performance as the team members have moved on to different projects and maintained the relationships they developed. "I know I can pick up the phone and my previous team members will help with something on my next project. I know it's

okay for me to call somebody and be vulnerable," explained Superintendent Tommy Cheek with another example of how an astronaut culture outperforms a cowboy culture

Engagement – "Belonging in Action"

The High Performing Team Model has also been very successful in increasing employee engagement and creating a culture of belonging. "Historically construction professionals feel like they work on an island. The High Performing Team model helps break that down and creates stronger trust connections through the personal development plans, calendars and roles and responsibilities" said General Superintendent Mark Ford. "They have others around them they can trust to help carry the load when needed."

Ford also saw the benefit of the model with the grueling summer projects at Wake Forest University. "It was amazing to see how with the past blitz projects with the same scope, we finished and did not have anywhere near the same positive experience finishing. With the High Performing Team model, we thrived. Without it, we barely survived."

Through both individual growth and team performance, the teams ultimately came together to accomplish something on such a large scale and actually enjoyed the experience, offering the most engaging experience you could ask for. As Superintendent Tommy Cheek explained, "It worked out so well that it's just the way you want to live. I don't want to work without it. This is my new sword. I loved going to work 99% of the time."

In addition to the more traditional definition of employee engagement as an employee's enthusiasm and dedication toward their job, the High Performing Team model proved to usher in a sense of belonging when it came to a diverse group of people working together. As Senior Project Manager Ricky Touchstone explained, "Because the River Landing team was so diverse, we had to be more intentional about inclusion. Representation only works if the person can say their experience was a positive one." The High Performing Team model is a tool that helped create an inclusive environment for teams to get 100% out of 100% by fully sharing their knowledge and individual skills as represented in the following graphic from the Harvard Business Review Article entitled "Begin with Trust" by Frances X. Frei and Anne Morris:

Diverse teams
A diverse store of knowledge is partly shared.

Homogenous teams
A common store of knowledge is fully shared.

Inclusive teams
A diverse store of knowledge is fully shared.

As stated in the article, "If you create conditions of trust that allow diverse team members to bring their unique perspective and experiences to the table, you can expand the amount of knowledge your team can access – and create an unbeatable advantage."[3]

Reflections

"The best experience of my construction career…"

After interviews with 21 Blum employees who experienced the High Performing Team model on construction projects, the overwhelming feedback was that this model can have a transformative impact – to improving the culture of belonging at Blum, to the growth of Blum teammates and to the performance of Blum teams.

Mike Powers summed up that impact as, "I was sold on the Hight Performing Team process after we finished Project Apple on time and did not have anyone leave the company due to burnout. The High Performing Team process was the reason we were able to do that." That result was a stark contrast with Powers' experience on previous complicated projects with tight schedules where he and Blum often had, as he described, "quite the trouble preventing burnout." River Landing Superintendent Todd Johnson commented, "This was the best experience of my construction career in regard to the team getting along, everybody helping everybody, me learning more and the strong and productive team dynamics."

Sharpening the Saw

Despite the great success the company experienced by using this model, great performance does not just happen and continued high performance is never guaranteed. In the spirit of a growth mindset, the interviews also revealed several areas that will need to be attended to if Blum choses to make the most out of this model in the future.

Support of Executive Management

One consistent theme was the need for every member of the executive management team to be engaged in and supportive of the process. There is a desire for that engagement to include being present in the kickoff meetings both in mind and body. Showing up and being engaged sends the message that executive management believes this model is vital to Blum's success as well as providing valuable input from the beginning to the end of construction projects. Justin Swanson summed up this important element saying, "Having leadership in the kickoff and update meetings is important, but if you are there, be there. We are all busy and being there but not engaged sends the message that 'this meeting and the people in it are not really that important to me.'"

Keeping it Fresh & Effective

There was also a consistent concern about the process getting stale or too corporate, which has the potential to make it less effective. This concern points to the importance of who is leading the effort corporately, who the champion is on each project and who is advocating for and improving the model across the organization so that the process is consistently refreshed overall and truly lived by the entire team on each job. Mike Power's comment on this topic was "how do we give High Performing Teams its soul?" along with the idea of offering growth opportunities by assigning a team member to lead the kickoff meeting and champion the process from the beginning to the end of a project.

Another element of avoiding staleness in this model is to make the standards exercise "more than sticky notes." One idea that came out was that when the standards are developed in the kickoff meeting with all team members sharing their input, leaders should go last, so that everyone on the team feels heard and the team does not just piggyback on what they hear from leaders, which sometimes happens if the leaders go first in that part of the process.

Kickoff Early & Onboard Well

The timing of the project kickoff was another area that could be improved. It is important to hold the meeting as soon as possible in the project schedule. When a project kickoff meeting is held as early as it should be, there are often additional teammates that may join in the middle of the project or perhaps new employees that get hired on and assigned to a given project. Standardizing the way new team members are onboarded into items like the team standards or personal development plans will better incorporate those members into the already established team and strengthen the model.

Ensuring 100% Out of 100%

There was also a consistent view that it was important to be more deliberate about getting the most out of the growth opportunities that exist on Blum's jobsites. The importance of this point is reflected in the fact that this issue is at the core of Blum's ability to "get 100% out of 100%" and the significant impact that can occur by executing on the concept of "PDPs are me on me." Vice President Will Smelcer, Mark Ford and Ricky Touchstone provided ideas for retooling the process of developing and executing on project specific personal development plan goals:

Ford suggested that as the team leader, he wanted to hear about the interests and aspirations of each member in the kickoff meeting and then sit down with each person individually to let them know what he believes the project needs out of them and how that can be accomplished and hopefully meet their interests as well.

Smelcer suggested having the team leader meet with each team member ahead of the kickoff meeting to iron out matching project needs with team member interests and

capabilities. He believes that will reduce disappointment and thus lack of engagement when project needs don't align with the interest and capabilities of team members who have already publicly stated those interests to the team in the kickoff meeting.

Touchstone suggested a partner system with the personal development plans to make execution of those plans more effective as opposed to just having cursory reviews in update meetings that tend to create nonspecific updates like "I am working on my computer skills" or "I am working on being a better communicator."

Leaders Go First & Model Vulnerability

The value created in leaders being vulnerable was another common theme and something the company should continue to be intentional about fostering. Leaders and veterans going first with personal development goals in the kickoff meeting to show that even they don't know it all, is a good way to set a positive tone of authenticity for the project team. Leaders also holding themselves accountable to the team standards and being committed to leading by example drives a culture of belonging, growth, and performance.

Understanding How the Team is Wired at a Deeper & More Useful Level

Ensuring the effective use of Caliper assessments instead of these tools being viewed as a waste of time was also mentioned in several interviews. Justin Swanson and Mike Powers made several points about getting the most out of these assessments. Swanson said, "These assessments can be very useful when you go deep enough with explanations of what they can mean versus just trying to interpret the charts. They also help me to understand the makeup of the individuals on the team and the blind spots we need to work on." Powers pointed to the "value created in 1 on 1 sessions with a Caliper expert. Setting those sessions up for everyone sends the message that we care enough to invest in you, and these are some of the things that you need to be deliberate about working on."

The Value of Veterans

The value of having construction veterans as effective members of the High Performing Team model also came up in numerous interviews. It was clear that veterans who embraced all that the model has to offer were a big benefit to belonging, growth and performance for themselves and for the team, but veterans who held back as skeptical observers and did not fully participate could significantly deflate the team. Todd Johnson's comment summarized this perspective with "it is good to have questions from younger team members because those questions create teaching moments as well as cause veterans to question and potentially improve our own methods."

Looking Ahead: Going Beyond Mars?

The High Performing Team model has shown that it can provide a framework for Blum to address many of the factors that led to the moment on the park bench at Wake Forest University between Mark Ford and Ryan Morris. That new framework enabled the "you can count on us" culture to evolve into a collaborative, caring environment that could still create repeat customer relationships *and* drive higher levels of both individual growth and team performance along with greater engagement and belonging.

A lot has happened in the world since Blum launched the High Performing Team model. Events like the Covid-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and "the great resignation" have caused society and the business community to reflect on questions like:

- What does the future of work look like? How will companies utilize the tools of remote work and more flexible schedules?
- What are the root causes of racial disparities and what role can businesses take in closing those disparities?
- How do companies identify and genuinely reflect the purpose for which they exist? How will they inspire employees with this purpose?
- How will those decisions help companies be attractive to the full spectrum of talent and get 100% out of 100% of the hearts and minds of all team members to produce exceptional results?

The High Performing Team model has the potential to be a framework for strategies to find genuine answers to these questions and therefore enable Blum to attract, develop and keep the best builders in the industry. Those builders will be essential for Blum to continue to produce strong performance outcomes that exceed industry standards and to go from "Mules to Mars & Beyond."

Exhibits

    I.   Project Apple "Champion of the Week" Glenn Petrie

    II.   River Landing Team Standards

Project Team Standards
River Landing
August 2018

1. **Respect Each Other, Always:** *Treat each other like family. Show appreciation. Delegate don't dump. No gossip. Coach in private.*
2. **Be Safe:** *Everyone is responsible. Lead by example.*
3. **Clean Up After Yourself:** *Clean office, clean jobsite.*
4. **Respect Each Other's Time:** *Be on Time. Give your Full Attention. Try to answer questions before asking for answers. No complaining without action. Respect time away from work.*
5. **Be Positive:** *Leave negative attitudes at the door!*
6. **Do What You Say You Are Going to Do:** *Hold each other accountable. Take care of the tasks at hand. Tie up loose ends. Do the right thing, always.*
7. **Communicate in a Timely Fashion:** *Answer texts, calls, emails in a timely fashion. No one is ever too busy to bother.*
8. **No Surprises:** *Plan, plan, plan.*
9. **Spend Time to Understand:** *Show empathy. Respect each other's points of view.*
10. **Have Fun!**
11. **Be Open & Honest – Speak Up!** *Bad news does not get better with time. The solution to frustration is communication. Be direct when appropriate.*
12. **Each Can Teach:** *Ask for help without shame, help without shame. Don't discredit team members for mistakes. We all have something to learn.*
13. **Be Customer Focused:** *Continue to develop relationships. Respect staff and residents.*
14. **Work as a Team & Trust Each Other:** *Have each other's backs. Be flexible to help outside your "job." Don't give up!*

III. Team Caliper Heat Maps

Caliper Analytics Talent Analysis

Competency Lens: Management

Name	Leadership				Problem Solving				Time Management				Interpersonal Dynamics			
	Gains buy-in	Makes tough decisions	Establishes goals for staff	Is persistent	Recognizes problems	Analyzes data	Creates new concepts	Leverages resources	Sets own goals independently	Manages multiple tasks	Follows procedures	Works quickly	Develops new contacts	Helps others	Considers others' views	Copes with rejection
Group Potential	54	55	47	63	66	59	55	68	53	63	53	71	35	45	41	44

Sources

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