

# **Inc.** COLUMNIST

## **The 5 People Every Entrepreneur Needs on their Team**

You build a team not because you cannot succeed on your own, but because you can do more with the help of others.



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IMAGE: Getty Images

Too many entrepreneurs and leaders suffer from Lone Wolf Syndrome. They do everything on their own with little support, making their attempts to excel harder than they have to be. You build a team not because you cannot succeed on your own, but because you can do more with the help of others.

Building your team means identifying the people in your life who are smart, experienced, insightful, perceptive, challenging, and inspirational--and asking them to support you in your success.

By team, I'm not talking about your assistant, your employees, or your vendors. That team helps you get your work done, they exist for the betterment of the business. But what about you, and your vision? This distinction is subtle but key.

Your team should be made up of leadership all-stars: your role models, mentors and inspirations. As members of your personal support team, they are committed to you know matter what your vision, where you work, or what goals you choose. They advise you, champion you, advance you, and elevate you.

So how do you choose which people to include on your personal team?

**Pick someone who compliments your strengths.** Don't just pick people you like--pick people who challenge you, who have complementary strengths that will bring flexibility and balance to the team.

**Pick someone who gives you clarity.** This person is a long-term visionary, skilled in being able to look at the big picture, the picture on the box instead of all the little puzzle pieces, as I said in a [previous column](#) on scheduling your day. This way you'll always have someone to remind you of what the ultimate goal is, especially if you're engaging in a difficult decision process.

**Pick someone with laser focus.** To compliment the person mentioned above, choose a teammate with laser focus who can help you make sense of the puzzle pieces that generate the larger picture. This person can help to remind you of your short-term priorities, and keep your productivity levels high.

**Pick someone who thinks outside of the box.** This person is a true creative, someone who doesn't stay within the lines. This person will keep you on your toes in terms of innovation, and help you to see past any obstacles in your path. If you ever feel stuck, this is the teammate who will help you figure out how to get over that fence in front of you.

**Pick someone who provides emotional balance.** Balance, and support as well--the need for emotional support isn't given nearly enough credence in discussions on leadership development. Your personal team will need a presence to keep you balanced and content emotionally.

When I'm coaching professionals on the topic of building a personal support team, I always tell them that when it comes to picking the players, choose advocates, experts and inspirations. Advocates will champion and encourage you, experts will give you the knowledge you need to move ahead, and inspirations are contemporaries that make you want to better yourself. Every one of the five skills mentioned above falls into one of those roles--now it's up to you to find them!

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