



EXECUTIVE WHITE PAPER

## Building a Dream Team

Complex factors—ranging from the level of interdependence among members, to contextual conditions in which the team operates—can either enhance or erode team dynamics and its effectiveness.

## Some Practical Advice on Building a Dream Team

Think for a moment about the finest team you've ever been a part of:

- One that performed exceptionally well
- One that improved its operations over time
- One whose members came away from the experience professionally fulfilled, wiser, and more skilled  
Now think about the so-called "Dream Team"—the 2004 Men's Olympic Basketball Team. Everyone thought these guys were a shoe-in for gold. The group was packed with NBA stars and coaches, but:
- It failed to achieve its objectives (bringing home a humiliating bronze medal instead)
- Its coaches and members never worked cohesively to improve the team's performance
- The team came away from the experience more frustrated than fulfilled Why did your team thrive, and the Olympic team disappoint? Simple: Critical team dynamics. Your team had them, and the "Dream Team" didn't.

A dynamic team is an effective team. But what makes a group truly dynamic? Whether the team is in the office or on the court, complex factors—ranging from the level of interdependence among members, to contextual conditions in which the team operates—can either enhance or erode team dynamics. Ultimately, all these factors combine to determine the team's success or failure.

So how do you build and manage a real "Dream Team"—one that is both dynamic and effective? Here are some practical suggestions for you or a team leader who reports to you.



**Why Use an Executive Search Consultant?**

**TRADITIONAL RECRUITING METHODS**

- Advertising Campaigns
- Do It Yourself Hiring (HR Note To Hiring Manager: Rec. Recruiting - Can't you do it yourself?)
- Human Resources Recruiting Desk
- Promoting Existing Employees
- Using Contingency Recruiters

**HR Manager**

*"When I need a heart by-pass, my surgeon won't select my surgeon based on what he charges."*  
-Alling Executive

This Do-It-Yourself (DIY) mentality contradicts the corporation's objective of "hire-the-Best". Especially at levels below the senior executive ranks. When corporations are faced with brain drains, talent deficiencies, or the need to replace one employee with another, thoughts all too often turn to extreme cost-cutting approaches. So why are corporate and HR executives so light-headed when dealing with what is so typically considered the "lifeblood" of their companies...top-talent?

So, why are Executive Search Consultants (ESCs) worth what they charge? Because...

**ESC's help build better foundations for your company's growth**

- EXPERTISE**  
No one knows the marketplace (MP), your competitors, your customers, and who the real players are (prospective candidates) in your niche industry better than an ESC. In-house HR, no matter how effective (or internet-savvy), view the MP through an imperfect prism and rarely have relevant industry specific knowledge of the particular position to be filled. A good ESC helps define your needs, gives advice on strategy and tactics, and professionally markets and represents you to the best available candidates.
- CAST A WIDER NET**  
A construction worker has better tools and techniques than a weekend woodworker. ESC's are in the MP 24/7 in & day-out. They know where the hard-to-find competitors are and how to get through to the divisional and branch offices, including those inaccessible to company insiders. ESC's have networks to hidden talent sources that aren't accessed through ads, applicant databases, or the Internet.
- COST**  
There's a misconception among HR & Hiring managers that the cost of a hire equals the cost of the job, not to attract the person hired. Nothing could be further from the truth. Using an ESC can be weighed against the cost of preparing & executing an ad, a recruitment campaign, screening, qualifying & responding to candidates, & being in & interviewing unmeritorily screened or unqualified candidates. And don't forget salary costs & productivity losses of all the executives involved (if they aren't accepted).
- CONFIDENTIALITY**  
Working with an ESC helps keep your search confidential. Advertising often creates anxiety as existing employees wonder why they aren't being considered for the position. Also, advertising can alert competitors to a current weakness or a void in an organization.
- JOB WELL DONE**
- AMBASSADORS**  
As an informed buffer, the ESC is better able to blend the needs & wants of both parties. ESCs are fast to catch misconceptions about salary requirements, position fit, or what role issues need to be addressed. ESCs help out & can't, arrive at a mutually beneficial agreement without the polarizing roadblocks which frequently materialize in face-to-face dealings.
- SPEED**  
For every day that a key opening goes unfilled, a company's other employees must grudgingly do double duty. Opportunities & competitive advantages are lost when a position remains unfilled or is performed part time by others less qualified. It may be easier to find resumes using internet technology, but it's become much more challenging filtering through to the right, let alone the best, people. Getting the best candidates to join your firm over competing offers requires highly polished presentation and negotiation skills. A dedicated fulltime effort on behalf of an ESC simply provides better & faster results.
- REALITY**  
An ESC's stock-in-trade is his integrity & reputation for finding someone better than a company could find on its own. For a mid-level executive, an ESC develops a "long list" of a hundred or more possibilities. Each prospect must be called and evaluated against the position's specs, including screening for cultural "fit", ethics, and compensation. Once the list is cut to a "short list", there's even more intensive interviewing to narrow to a pair of a few finalists for review by the client.

Please visit our website, [www.ropella.com](http://www.ropella.com), for the complete text of Why Use an Executive Search Consultant.

Download this poster at: [www.ropella.com/knowledgecenter](http://www.ropella.com/knowledgecenter)

## Do You Need a Team?

Teamwork isn't right for every project. So before you start forming a crew to tackle your latest project, you must first determine if it meets the following criteria:

- The project is clearly defined, and you know how to get the job done.
- The job requires constant collaboration to solve problems and complete work.
- A proven leader is available to spearhead the effort. If your project does not meet these requirements, another work model (e.g., individuals reporting back to a leader) may prove more efficient for completing it.

### Assemble the Members

Once you're sure the project will best be accomplished with a real team, it's time to choose the right individuals for the job:

- Designate a leader. Every successful team needs a strong leader at the helm—one who communicates well, has experience handling teamwork issues and understands the project and key roles. If you don't have the right leader on your staff already, you will need to hire one before the project begins (keep reading for leadership attributes to look for) or take on the leadership role yourself.
- Select the right team members. When drafting a team, you must look beyond job skills. Choose people with diverse skills and personalities: some members should be strong "soldiers"—internal cooperators with great interpersonal skills who get work done; others should be "boundary spanners"—individuals adept at accessing people, resources, and fresh ideas from outside the group.
- Limit group size to 10 or 12. When it comes to teams, smaller is better. Ten is a good number for maintaining high quality communication, clarity of purpose and role, as well as personal investment in the team's success.
- Focus on critical cooperation—not friendship. Team members don't have to be best friends to work well together. In fact, creative energy and innovation are often fueled by a modicum of conflict. Just make sure the team leader fosters a culture of respect and open communication, and limits conflict to relevant professional issues.

### Ensure Optimum Conditions

No matter how talented individual team members are, you must develop and exploit their synergies to maximize their effectiveness. To help your team succeed, make sure it has the following:

- Authenticity. A bona fide team has clear boundaries, interdependence among members, and at least moderate stability of membership over time.
- A compelling and clear purpose. All your team members should work toward the same higher goal.
- Clearly defined member roles. Each member should understand his responsibilities and respect the rights and roles of his teammates.



- An enabling structure. The team's tasks, composition and conduct norms must enhance, not impede, work; clear channels of communication must be established; and a supportive social context must exist, where the resources and support necessary to complete collective work are available.
- Consistent reviews and feedback mechanisms. For your team to operate efficiently, you must continually monitor progress to build on what's working, and fix what's not.
- Competent coaching. The team leader must be capable and willing to help members get through rough spots, or take advantage of emerging opportunities.

### Meet the Team's Needs

Unless everyone on your team is named Asimo (and just in case you didn't know, Asimo is Honda's advanced motion humanoid robot), you must remember that each team member shows up for work each day as a whole person—bringing with him his thoughts, emotions and insecurities. Help keep your team members working well together:

- Appreciate to motivate. Inspire your team members by showing your sincere appreciation for their hard work. Make sure your comments are specific, timely, and public, if possible. Recognize individual as well as team successes.
- Address interpersonal conflicts early and tactfully. Stick with the process until the conflict is resolved.
- Build trust among members with team building activities and events. Give them opportunities for extra social time together in an atmosphere conducive to open communication.

### Hire Team Players

Hiring team-oriented people is, obviously, essential to creating a dynamic team. But, figuring out how to identify a team player may not be so obvious. If you need to hire people for your next team initiative, here are some personal qualities to look for:

- Team leaders. A team leader should understand the conditions that influence a team's effectiveness; enjoy solving problems; possess excellent communication skills; be emotionally mature; and have enough personal courage to move outside his comfort zone for the sake of achieving the team's objective.
- Team players. A team player should be reliable, a constructive communicator, an active listener, cooperative and flexible. Beyond these attributes, bear in mind the cultural impact of adding a new element to your current team's dynamic; e.g., will this recruit contribute to an unhealthy level of competition in your team, or bring people together to solve problems? While none of us has a hiring crystal ball, you can preserve or enhance your thriving team dynamic by hiring people who fit into your corporate culture.



# ABOUT PATRICK ROPELLA



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Ropella, with 25 years experience, is the leading executive search and consulting firm specializing in the chemical, consumer products, technology and energy industries.

We help many of the world's largest companies find, hire, develop and retain their most important people. We recruit globally in sales, marketing, R&D, and manufacturing, from middle management to the most senior executive levels. At Ropella, not only do we find great leaders, we can also help you build a stronger, more competitive, and more innovative team with our Leadership and Organizational Improvement consulting services.

Nothing is more important to your company's ability to create value than the right blend of talent. Call us today and put our people and our process to work for you.

Having dedicated his career to helping companies across the globe in sourcing, marketing to, assessing, recruiting, on-boarding, retaining, training and transforming top talent, Patrick Ropella has a global perspective on Executive Search and Talent Management.

He has worked across all roles and functions, cascading from the top levels of management to also placing apprentices coming straight out of college. Over the past 20+ years he has seen many individuals he's personally assisted make career transitions, become well trained leaders, join the C-suite at many of the world's largest corporations.

His experience within the global chemical industry as a dominant talent management leader allowed his firm, Ropella Group, to grow to the leading position it now holds with a wide variety of corporate clients with the chemical industry, transition to serving major consumer product companies, energy companies, Nano, Bio and other high technology companies.

Patrick has traveled extensively, meeting with middle level to C-level executives at the top 100 largest chemical and consumer product companies in the world, branding the "Ropella" name globally. He has successfully placed hundreds of senior level executives with top name companies, including but not limited to: DOW, DuPont, Exxon, Georgia Pacific, SONY, Anderson Windows, GE-Silicone, P&G, Clorox, Pfizer, BASF, PPG, Monsanto, Revlon, Baxter Labs, Sealy Mattress, Ciba Geigy, Johnson & Johnson, Shell, Sherwin Williams Paints, New Balance Tennis Shoes, and many more.

Patrick has written for a wide variety of trade publications, newspapers and business journals on subjects related to the topics covered in The Right Hire. His writings have also been published in Germany, Italy, Latin America and Asia.

Patrick and Robbie reside in Milton, FL. with sons Richard and Robert nearby.

## AUTHOR OF

- ▶ The Right Hire
- ▶ The Right Fit
- ▶ The Right Team
- ▶ Over 50 published articles



Patrick Ropella's **SMART Talent Management System** focuses on training Human Resource leaders and Hiring Managers based on the core Talent Management topics of:

**S**ourcing, **M**arketing, **A**ssessing, **R**ecruiting, **R**etention, **T**raining, and **T**ransformation.