Building A High Performance Team

Master Study Guide

1. Building a Team the Right Way

Core Principle

- Building a team can increase production, revenue, and client-service capacity.
- A team should not be built by simply recruiting people and giving them software access.
- Strong teams require structure, training, accountability, and compliance.
- A poorly managed team can create serious risk; a well-managed team can support growth.

Learning Objectives

- Recruit team members.
- Identify where to find PTIN holders and potential preparers.
- Interview potential team members.
- Onboard preparers properly.
- Understand common compensation structures.
- Train team members.
- Protect the EFIN while managing multiple preparers.
- Create accountability and production standards.

2. Knowing When You Are Ready to Recruit

Systems to Have First

- A working client intake process
- A return review process
- Training materials
- Office procedures
- Compliance systems
- A communication process

Signs You May Be Ready

- You are turning clients away.
- You cannot keep up with workload.
- Response times are increasing.
- You have consistent lead flow.
- You have documented procedures.

Key Takeaway

- Build systems first. Build people second.

3. Recruiting the Right People

Places to Recruit

- Social media
- Facebook groups
- Community organizations
- Friends and family referrals
- Colleges
- Workforce development programs
- Business networking events
- Job boards

Qualities to Look For

- Professionalism
- Reliability
- Communication skills
- Coachability
- Integrity
- Willingness to learn

Key Takeaway

- Tax knowledge can be taught, but work ethic and character can be harder to change.
- Character is often more valuable than experience.

4. Screening and Interviewing

Questions to Ask

- Why do you want to join the tax industry?
- Do you have customer service experience?
- Can you maintain confidentiality?
- Are you comfortable learning tax laws and procedures?
- How would you handle a difficult client?
- What are your goals for the upcoming tax season?

Red Flags

- Poor communication
- Unprofessional behavior

- Lack of accountability
- Unwillingness to follow procedures
- Unrealistic expectations

Key Takeaway

- A good interview helps prevent future problems.

5. Onboarding Preparers

New Hire Checklist

- PTIN verification
- Signed agreement
- Software setup
- Communication platform access
- Training access
- Office policies review
- Compliance training
- Return review procedures

Important Topics

- Client confidentiality
- Due diligence
- Documentation requirements
- Return review process
- Office expectations

Key Takeaway

- A strong onboarding process creates stronger team members.

6. Ongoing Training

Training Topics

- Tax fundamentals
- Filing statuses
- Dependents
- Credits
- Schedule C returns
- Due diligence
- Client communication
- Software training

- Bank products
- Office procedures

Training Methods

- Live classes
- Recorded trainings
- Weekly meetings
- Practice returns
- Case studies
- Return reviews

Key Takeaway

- Training should be ongoing.
- Well-trained preparers create fewer problems and better client experiences.

7. Compensation Structures

Common Revenue Splits

- 50/50 split: preparer receives 50% and office retains 50%; often used when the office provides software, EFIN, training, marketing, and compliance support.
- 60/40 split: preparer receives 60% and office receives 40%; often used for experienced preparers generating their own clients.
- 70/30 split: preparer receives 70% and office receives 30%; common for team leads or high producers.

Questions to Consider

- Who generates the lead?
- Who pays software costs?
- Who handles compliance?
- Who provides training?
- Who handles return reviews?

Key Takeaway

- Compensation should reflect the value being provided by both parties.

8. Protecting the EFIN

Important Rule

- Do not allow preparers unrestricted access to the EFIN.

Best Practices

- Review every return
- Use separate user accounts

- Monitor production
- Conduct quality reviews
- Track errors
- Document issues

Key Takeaway

- The IRS recognizes the EFIN holder.
- Growth should never come at the expense of compliance.

9. Quality Control

Review Before Filing

- Income documents
- Filing status
- Dependents
- Credits claimed
- Banking information
- Signatures
- Supporting documentation

Why Reviews Matter

- Reviews help identify errors.
- Reviews help identify missing documents.
- Reviews help identify compliance concerns.
- Reviews help identify due diligence issues.

Key Takeaway

- Every return should be reviewed before transmission.

10. Team Culture

Ways to Build Culture

- Recognition programs
- Team meetings
- Training opportunities
- Incentives
- Open communication
- Leadership development

Examples

- Top Producer Awards

- Referral bonuses
- Team challenges
- Performance recognition

Key Takeaway

- People stay where they feel valued.
- Culture influences performance.

11. Leadership Roles

Potential Leadership Positions

- Team Lead - supports preparers and answers questions.
- Compliance Lead - monitors return quality and documentation.
- Office Manager - helps oversee daily operations.

Benefits

- Reduces workload
- Improves communication
- Creates accountability
- Supports growth

Key Takeaway

- Strong teams require strong leadership.

12. Measuring Team Performance

Metrics to Track

- Returns prepared
- Returns funded
- Average fee
- Client retention
- Referral volume
- Error rates
- Training participation

Weekly Reviews

- Review team performance regularly.
- Celebrate wins.
- Address concerns early.

Key Takeaway

- You cannot improve what you do not measure.

- Data helps you make better leadership decisions.

13. Scaling the Team

Growth Example

- ERO
- Preparers
- Team Leads
- Office Manager
- Compliance Lead

Scaling Principle

- A growing office needs support and accountability at multiple levels.
- Do not grow faster than your systems can support.

Final Takeaway

- A scalable team requires structure, leadership, and systems.