

## Closing the Gap

*By Brad Schow, COO, HTG*

Do you have a leadership plan? In HTG, our focus for Q1 is leadership. Creating a leadership plan is a requirement in HTG, but we are also aware that it can be more of a “check the box” thing rather than an active plan to be worked on. If your leadership plan is simply a list of things you are going to “muscle” through yourself to achieve your business plan, then we need to help you build a team that you can lead to business success. Or if you are someone with a plan already on paper, but it’s focused on hitting certain metrics and it’s not making a difference in your business – let’s break the process down for you to make it more relevant.

Pick an area of your company that you wished you had better performance. Let’s say service, accounting, or sales. Got it? Now imagine what it would look like for that area to be functioning well. Get that picture in your mind. Then think about the gaps between what the reality is and what you want to see. Pick an area or two that you think needs improvement. For example, perhaps in service you want more gross margin or more tightly managed projects.

Now, let’s put a plan in place to close those gaps. Do you have a leader or manager in charge of that area? If you don’t, you probably should. As CEO/Entrepreneur, you need to drive your business to profitable growth, which means you need a team to delegate these things to. The first step in your leadership plan is to identify someone (either internally or, if it makes financial sense, to hire) to put in charge of that area.

If you already have a person in charge, then we are ready to address the gaps between reality and what you expect. Sit down with your leader and talk through what “good” looks like. Quantify it as much as you can so it’s not “feel-based.” Together you need to compile a plan that allows you to mentor your leader through training. Perhaps you simply need to run interference to help them carve out time to implement their plan — whatever it takes to close that gap. Document it with them.

Pick a few more areas and do the same. Schedule regular times to review progress and utilize accountability to close the gap. A leadership plan that is relevant and documented will make a difference and will be something to which your peer group members can hold you accountable. You have ideas and goals in your head. Getting them on paper firms them up and enables you to properly communicate them to your team. Remember, simple and relevant. Reach out to me if you need some help. Make 2017 the year you put emphasis on planning and planning in place!