

BUILDING AN AWESOME TEAM

What does it take to successfully build a startup team?

It pays off to develop the right team and culture for your business.

Business life is full of highs and lows, your team are with you all the way and are often the people you spend the most time with. Hear from experienced people who've built successful teams.

Content

MENTOR INSIGHT

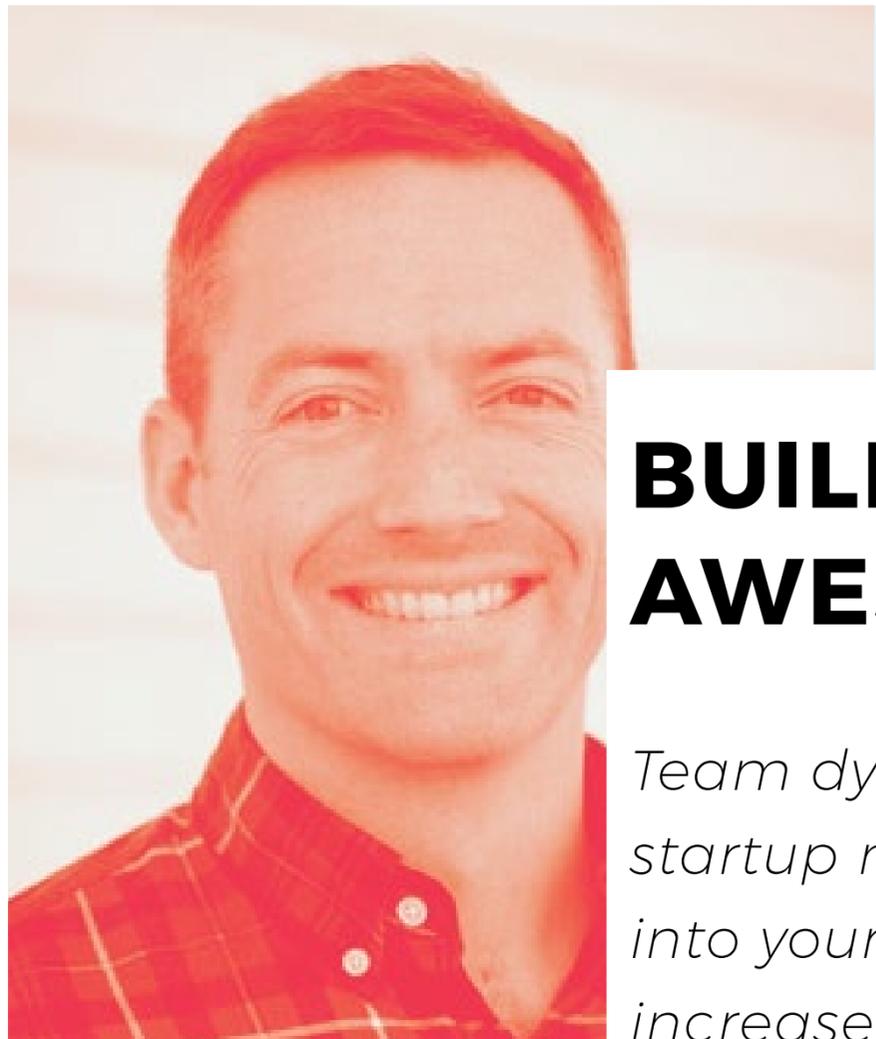
[_DAVID CLEARWATER](#)

STARTUP INSIGHT

[_HOW TO BUILD A STARTUP TEAM, WIPSTER](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

[_TEAM BUILDING](#)



BUILDING AN AWESOME TEAM

Team dynamics are the number one cause of startup meltdown. Investing time and energy into your startup team is a great way to increase your chances of success.

_____ *Forming the right team means finding the right mix of skills, experiences, networks and personalities that will help your startup fly.*

If you're a founder, you have two jobs:

FIRST you need to form the right team.

SECOND you need to help the team to form right.

Forming the right team means finding the right mix of skills, experiences, networks and personalities that will help your startup fly.

Helping the team form right is about what happens once you have a bunch of humans trying to do something together. Drama and excitement is a dead certainty. Too much of either will kill the horse. Your role is to guide the team to build trust that delivers high performance over time.

How to do that?

Fortunately for you, new team formation follows a pretty predictable pattern. Get your head around **Tuckman's Forming > Storming > Norming > Performing model.**

Ask yourself and your team, what stage are we at?

What will it take to move to the next stage?

A high-performing team knows what is pushing it forward, what is holding it back, and is willing and able to improve itself as it goes.

DAVID CLEARWATER

HOW TO BUILD A STARTUP TEAM

ROLLO WENLOCK, WIPSTER

We spoke to CEO & Founder of Wipster, Rollo Wenlock about what it takes to successfully build a startup team.



HOW DID YOU IDENTIFY WHAT SKILL SETS YOU NEEDED IN YOUR TEAM AND HOW DID YOU FIND THEM? _____

_____ In the early days, the skill set was simply a very straightforward job title. I was the person who was founding the company [Wipster], I knew about the video part of it, as a user, but not as a creator of products. When I started looking for my initial co-founder, I needed somebody who knew how to write code and build software, so that's the simplicity, it doesn't have to be an extremely complicated process. The process was going out and finding somebody who could create the software. I started by explaining what the problem was, seeing if they were interested in it, see if they have the skill set to do it, then asking them to build something to prove it.

After that, it was all about finding two other co-founders, specifically in design and marketing, and again because I was pretty inexperienced, I didn't know what part of marketing or what part of the design.

The design side worked out well, James [co-founder] is still smashing it out. With that skill set, it's saying look we need someone who can make a brand and also design how a product should be used and work.

Marketing was a bit harder because I was so vague, I didn't know what the aim was. Whether it was digital marketing, content marketing or whether it was more a brand marketing versus use case marketing. In hindsight, I could've defined it more and not had such a terrible time.

HOW EXTENSIVE WERE YOU WHEN DEFINING THE ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH TEAM MEMBER AS YOUR TEAM CONTINUED TO GROW? _____

___ At the start, it was not very wide, the first three people, including myself (other than the marketing guy who left at the end of Lightning Lab) they were just very early on. The next person we hired was the designers brother. After that, we started to define roles by writing job descriptions, figuring out where the gaps in the company were and hiring people based on those gaps. Now we are just like a big company writing very precise job descriptions and setting goals and milestones for employees.

REGARDING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS, HOW INTEGRAL WAS FINDING / DEVELOPING THE RIGHT TEAM? _____

___ **100% OF THE SUCCESS IS THE TEAM.**

Having ideas is cool, but being able to execute on them is the most important thing. Having a team who can do stuff and do it day in, day out, and get that stuff delivered and in front of people, optimised and iterated, that is what success looks like. Without the team, there is no Wipster. And of course, developing the right team means getting the culture right, and that's what I need to improve on, getting the team focused on the same goal. There's always new ideas, new directions to go in. I would urge any new CEO to focus on that.

WHAT DID YOU FIND CHALLENGING ABOUT GROWING YOUR TEAM? _____

___ We hired people to fulfil a vision, not to expand what we were already doing. That didn't work, and we lost about half the team. Then we hired people to expand on what we were already doing, and that worked. Never hire for what you want to do, only hire to expand what you are already doing.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A SOLE-FOUNDER LOOKING TO BUILD A STARTUP TEAM? _____

___ Well, everything starts with one person, so begin by getting one other person to join you, do the smallest amount possible to feel the momentum. If you're waiting for other people to help you when you haven't achieved anything, there is much less chance of success. Create a sense of movement, do activities and see the outcomes, if you become a very active person that produces results, the people around you will be much more willing to join in.

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WIPSTER CAME OUT OF LIGHTNING LAB 2013 AND LAUNCHED INTO THE NZ MARKETPLACE IN 2014.

WIPSTER IS A BEAUTIFUL, INTUITIVE VIDEO REVIEW AND APPROVAL PLATFORM BRINGING FRAME ACCURATE COMMENTING TO PRODUCERS, CONTENT CREATORS AND MEDIA TEAMS.



OTHER RESOURCES

“When you’re starting out, don’t worry about who you’ll need in six months or a year. Focus on getting the people who can create progress today.”

— **ALEX TURNBULL** *LESSONS LEARNED BUILDING A STARTUP TEAM*

“If people on a team share the same set of beliefs and values, want to work together and love being together, they’ll achieve collaborative success.”

— **JORDAN RITTER** *THE SECRET TO BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS STARTUP TEAM*

“Awesome interview questions, where your next super talented hire might come from, building an advisory board and how to let someone go if it isn’t working out.”

— **RYAN ALLIS** *HOW TO BUILD YOUR FIRST STARTUP TEAM*

“A good idea with poor leadership is bound to fail; a bad idea with good leadership has a chance of morphing into a good idea.”

— **ANDY BLAN** *FORMING A STARTUP TEAM (THE ESALE WAY)*

“Write a job description for that ideal partner. Make sure you are perfectly clear on what skill sets are most needed for the success of your business, and make sure you’ve got a mix of complementary skills.”

— **LIGHTNING LAB** *TIPS ON HOW TO FIND A CO-FOUNDER*

