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# Your startup success depends on having these crucial team members

Studies have found that 90 per cent of startups tend to fail. With this in mind, entrepreneurial expert Alan Manly discusses the team players every startup needs to secure success and long-term viability.



Any dream team in business requires the right mix of technical skills and character traits. It's a delicate balance that can propel a startup to lofty heights – or ignoble depths.

The startup entrepreneur is following a dream and it's only natural that, with unbounded enthusiasm, he or she will believe their great new idea will attract like-minded souls.

But diversity is always key: too similar and all you have built is a group of yes-men and women, all viewing challenges from the same narrow perspective.

Consider these traits to compile a dream team of which you can be proud (and your competitors jealous).

## Sense of self

Often in the beginning, there's a team of one: yourself. You must be across absolutely everything in those early days. Make yourself the best you can be to inspire others to want to join you later on – read, learn, practise, repeat.

Then, when you're able, make your first hire the person who can add the most value. (Don't oversell your dream though, as the people you'd actually want to work for you won't believe it and will walk away!)

## Your weaknesses, their strengths

Forget about being the smartest person on your team. As Warren Buffet once said, "Always associate yourself with people who are better than you".

The aim is to build a team of people with skills and experiences superior to your own and unite them under a common cause: your business. Easily said, but not so easy to do.

## Autonomous team players

In his autobiography, the late Steve Jobs wrote, "It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do. We hire smart people so they can tell us what to do."

Each member of any dream team knows how to get the job done autonomously; without the need for micromanagement.

However, they also need to be capable of integrating with the rest of team behind the united goal. As Michael Jordan once said, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

## Resilience experts

Despite how things may appear from the outside, no startup is a walk in the park. Its success is the result of a resilient team capable of overcoming disappointments and moving on. Look for people who thrive under pressure and can rise to any challenge – including salvaging their own ego from falling a previous challenge.

## Business is business

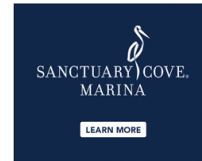
Remember that any startup is a business, not a social club. You're not in it to make friends; you're in it to build a business and make money.

The same applies to your team. They must understand that a degree of impersonality is a necessity for growth; decisions are made because they are good for the business, not because they make everyone feel warm and fuzzy. It's tough, but it's necessary.

## Gamblers



By Alan Manly  
FULL BIO



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Just as you can't win Lotto without buying a ticket, you can't capitalise on an opportunity without taking a chance and gambling that it will pay off in your favour. The best team members know this, and gamble on calculated risks.

## Leadership

Many professions tend to be stereotyped – the bean counter, the spin doctor, the wheeler-dealer, the legal eagle – perhaps with good reason: they are good at what they do. But technical skills aren't all that's required here. Someone who is clever and knowledgeable may or may not fit into your dream team.

To quote Kenny Rogers, "You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run." Recognising the difference demands strong leadership skills of your own.

*Alan Manly is the CEO of Universal Business School Sydney (UBSS) and author of The Unlikely Entrepreneur.*

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