



## Building Your Startup “Dream Team” in the USA

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First and foremost, let us begin with the most important member of your team: You! You are truly what is and what will continue to be the driving force behind your team and your growing company. If you do not have the ambition, motivation and passion for your business, it is already doomed to fail. You must also have a clear idea and vision for your company as to where you see it in the next week, month and year from now. As we know, statistics claim that most startups fail within their first two years. In order to avoid this, you must have a clear and thorough business plan, but remain flexible. If something is not working, be open to change, or drop it completely.

Let us move on to your core group. Begin to surround yourself with like-minded people, especially those that excel in the things you do not do particularly well. You must erase the fear of people not being able to do things as well as you and feel comfortable with delegating tasks. To find these core members, begin attending networking events, innovation conferences, mixers and more with plenty of business cards and a polished elevator pitch. Reach out to your own peers, friends and family as you just never know who may already be within your network. Another option, especially if you are building your business in a new city, is to engage with a recruiting firm such as PeopleConnect to help guide and familiarize you with the area and the most qualified people for the positions you are trying to fill. Max Shapiro, CEO of PeopleConnect recommends his unique and innovative recruiting model “Employees Without Paychecks” or EWP.

Shapiro created this model after the economic downturn of 2001 in order to help startups who desperately needed top talent, but did not have the funding to hire them as of yet. With his trained recruiting staff, he has been able to find remarkable entrepreneurial candidates who are willing to work for Equity Only, or Equity Plus Commission, until the startup receives its next round of funding. Most EWP candidates are seeking full-time employment and are willing to forego salary for at least a few months. Shapiro and his team at PeopleConnect will help you negotiate the candidates’ package, which includes the pre-funding equity period, when the monthly salary is paid in shares, and the post-funding compensation package. The Employees Without Paychecks model is a win-win because it gives entrepreneurial talent a chance to make a real mark from the earliest stages of a company, and it gives startup companies the key employees they need to bring their vision into reality. Best of all, EWP helps to complete the executive team that investors want to see, which can help close the next round of funding much more quickly.

A big part of the hiring process is the interview. This is your time to have a dialogue with a potential candidate and discover whether he/she is a good fit for your company. Be sure that

while interviewing a candidate that you allow them do most of the talking, not you. Although you want to have a conversation, you must allow your candidate to demonstrate his/her thought process, use of language, communication skills and the ability to think on his/her feet. Let us review a few good interview questions as suggested and utilized successfully by Max Shapiro himself:

1. What experience do you have in this field?
2. Do you consider yourself successful?
3. What do co-workers say about you?
4. What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?
5. Why do you want to work for this organization?
6. Are you a team player?
7. How long would you expect to work for us if hired?
8. What is your philosophy towards work?
9. If you had enough money to retire right now, would you?
10. Have you ever been asked to leave a position?

Once you have your team together, your next challenge begins: managing. This should be seen as just as important, if not more so, than the hiring process itself! Recall that you are the guiding force of this business, and now, your team. If you want them to succeed and do well, you must mentor them. Do not throw them to the sharks and see if they sink or swim. Max Shapiro has found that mentoring his employees has led to increased work flow, better relationships with him and among his employees, and overall, a more positive work environment. He has also maintained an open idea forum, welcomes discussion, feedback, criticism and continues to encourage creativity. By empowering his employees, he has in turn gained their respect, their trust and their friendship. You can do the same, and in turn, create and maintain a successful business.

We hope you found these ideas helpful and please feel free to reach out [PeopleConnect](#) for advice, staffing help or just a good chat.

Best of luck,



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