SocialTalent

HIRING EXCELLENCE PODCAST

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE COOP

Leadership Lessons from the Coop

VP of Talent Acquisition, Optimum

1 Rebuild Your Onboarding Story

- **Rewrite your onboarding story** — do not just repeat the traditional pitch. Tell new hires where the company is right now, what pace to expect, and what kind of person thrives there.
- **Introduce new talent gradually** — merging two teams too fast created chaos; a slower, staged approach a few weeks later worked far better.
- **Prep both sides, not just the newcomer** — established team members need as much support adjusting to change as the people joining them.

2 Rotate Leaders Deliberately

- **Do not always hand the big project to your best performer** — it can quietly stall the growth of everyone else on the team.
- **Step high performers back on purpose** — removing someone from the spotlight, even briefly, gives others room to rise and shows you who else is ready to lead.
- **Insist that high performers take their PTO** — stepping away is not just good for them; it is a chance for someone else to show what they can do.

3 Hire for Disruption

- **Hire outside your own profile** — bringing in someone from a different industry or background, even if they are harder to manage, can be exactly what pushes a team to innovate faster.
- **Reframe disruptive as a strength** — the person who does not quite conform can also be the one who spots problems and raises the alarm before anyone else does.
- **Treat difference as investment, not risk** — the goal is not surface-level diversity, but diversity of thinking and doing.

4 Step Back and Trust

- **Resist the urge to intervene in every disagreement** — stepping back and letting the team work through friction builds their own problem-solving skills.
- **Save your energy for when it matters** — only step in if something genuinely goes off the rails, not every small conflict.
- **Trust the process you have built** — if you have given the team the tools to handle difficult moments together, let them use them.

> You have to bring in disruptive players. You need to make that investment in your team.
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> — Judith Rudge, VP of Talent Acquisition, Optimum