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Best Tool to Improve Your Business? Leadership

LEADERSHIP MATTERS – IT’S AN IMPORTANT DRIVER in any business – and that’s true whether it’s a two-person food truck or a health care provider that employs thousands.

“No matter the size of your business, it’s important for leadership to empower their team to achieve their mission,” Erika Lamont, a managing director for leadership consulting company [Connect The Dots](#), told Chamber members at [Gold Program](#) in December.

That push resonated with several small business leaders in the room. “As a small business owner, it makes sense to think about the leadership team aspect and how that can help strengthen your business,” said Helene Kwong, CEO and founder of [Hashtagitude](#) and a Chamber ambassador.

Lamont and Brenda Hampel, a managing director for Connect The Dots, shared three tips to build leadership within your company.

Create a Culture of Innovation

We all know the cautionary tales of Blockbuster and Sports Authority: Once a more innovative product came on to the market, they couldn’t adapt. The ability to accept change starts

at the top, and leaders must be willing to innovate.

“Leadership teams have a different purpose,” Lamont said. “And, it’s the responsibility of that leadership team to respond to the changing market.”

Fear of change makes your business stagnant. Rather than fearing change, accept it and make innovation a part of your business’s culture.

“Keeping an open mind and facilitating an environment where individuals can feel confident by continuously challenging themselves is how businesses and leadership teams make their mark on the community,” Regan Morton, digital marketing specialist for [FiG Advertising + Marketing](#) said. “The culture at FiG supports this concept that there’s always room for improvement and employees are not just supported but encouraged to push the envelope when it comes to development.”

Build Your Team

“Your team has more of an impact on the success of an organization than one individual,” Hampel shared, adding she’s noticed four key attributes of successful teams:

- 1) **Teams need to be connected.** You need to have the right people on your team – hiring the right people for your team matters.
- 2) **Teams need to be stable.** There needs to be a level of consistency within your leadership team. Consistent turnover creates uncertainty. As Hampel

said, “Change has people go into their own corners and wait for the next thing to happen.”

3) **Teams need to be interdependent.** Share goals within your team to better work together. A common goal can be unifying.

4) **Teams need to have a compelling purpose.** Believe in your mission and align it with your team. A misalignment with the mission and leadership leads to miscommunication.

Foster Your Team

A leader needs to spend as much time working on their team versus in their team – it’s a leader’s responsibility to foster their team and help them develop their skills.

“You need to work on your team as much as you work within it,” Morton said. “The responsibilities of a leader can lead to tunnel vision, which can prevent a team or business from achieving their goals.” Spending the time on your team, allows them to take on more responsibility and let you focus on your business’s strategy.

“You want to have a sense of accountability with everyone on your team, but give them the responsibility,” said Will Pfenning, director of sales for [Serendipity Labs](#). “I have a small team here; they’re passionate and focused, and after today’s program, my focus is to give them more of that responsibility.”