

14. Team Composition

What is the right team size?

Two, three, four people?

What is the ideal composition of a team? Is the ideal number of team members two people, three people, or perhaps four? Why not just send one person out on the job instead of composing teams of people? Don't people trip over one another when they're cleaning a home to

The model we recommend is based on a team of three people: one person whose primary responsibility is cleaning the bathroom (the "Bathroom Person"), a second person whose primary responsibility is cleaning the kitchen (the "Kitchen Person"), and a third person whose primary responsibility is to oversee the other two team members and handle the less time-consuming tasks such as dusting and vacuuming (the "Team Leader").

Why Not Have Individual Cleaners?

Thousands of house cleaners work solo, but . . .

- ❖ One person out on the job means no one else is around to supervise the work. It may be apt to give in to temptation.
- ❖ What does one person do when it comes to moving heavy furniture to clean behind it? You've probably tried flipping a mattress by yourself. And you've probably never needed for the job in and out of hours. A ridiculous idea for a solo house cleaner.
- ❖ A solo cleaner has to turn down clients on the day she doesn't want to work or can't work. What happens to those clients who are person-to-person solo cleaners who quit?
- ❖ Some people like to work on their own, but it can be very boring to be out cleaning homes solo by yourself.

Teams That Work Best

There are a half dozen or so large franchise house cleaning companies that have hundreds of franchise owners throughout the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and many foreign countries. Without exception, they ALL work with teams.

Some work with teams of two, some with teams of three and at least one that insists that four is the magic number.

Factors That Influence Team Composition

The Maturity of Your Business or Team

When starting a brand new team (either because you're a new owner or a mature owner expanding your client base), there may not be a cleaning schedule for at least a few weeks, or longer.

This means that there may not be a whole lot of work to do every day. In this case, it makes sense to divide the available work between two people, instead of dividing the pie into three pieces, until the team's client base and cleaning schedule can support a third person.

The Available Labor Pool

Theoretically, two teams of two people should be able to do more work and revenues than one team of three people. In a tight labor market, with high employment, there will be many other employers you're competing with for good employees. And while there are always some people looking for work, you must stick to the parameters set forth in our Step 1 Selection Process for hiring help.

In this instance, you may be able to find three qualified candidates within a tight enough time frame to start a three-person team. You will start with a two-person team and then use your recruiting and selection efforts to find that third person. Once you've found him or her, you can add the new hire to the team you already have started.

The same situation of candidates can apply if you have a three-person team and someone leaves the team and you can't have anyone in the wings you can call on to fill the gap.

Hopefully, you've followed the suggested guidelines and have an ongoing recruitment and selection program in place, there should be candidates available to fill the gap in any order.

The upside of this is that in a tight labor pool, it may be easier to come up with three good candidates in a blitz recruiting campaign (to work on one team) than to find two good candidates (to make two two-person teams).

If it is your intent to work with two-person teams, you might have a good idea to start a three person team with the three good candidates you have recruited and continue looking for that fourth person. When you recruit your fourth person, you can then take one person from the three-person team (who has some training under her belt) and start your next two person team.

Your Marketing Activities

What do your marketing activities have to do with team size? Marketing. If you don't have enough clients to justify a three-person team, it doesn't make sense to start a team of three. Unless your marketing plan is designed to attract enough clients to build out the schedule for the team, you probably shouldn't put together a three-person team.

The size of the client base you will need per employee hired will depend on the work load your team members want (and have the ability to handle). If your potential job candidates and/or existing employees need to work a 20- to 30-hour week, you're probably going to need 15 clients *per employee* on the team. If your employees need more work than that, your ratio of clients-per-employee will need to be greater. Conversely, if you have employees who want to work fewer than 20 hours a week, you'll take a client-base-per-employee ratio of less than 15 clients per employee.

If you're adding an employee to an existing team, you may have a client base, there is little or no marketing expense involved in finding the required workload for the new hire. But if you're starting a new team, you need to be sure to budget enough advertising to support the size of the client base needed.

Your willingness and/or resources to invest in marketing, combined with the daily and weekly work schedule your employees want, will indeed influence whether or not one, two, or three people teams are ideal.

The "2-versus-3" Member Team

There is some controversy over whether the ideal team size is two people or three. The system which the suggested System is based is composed of three people teams.

As discussed, there are advantages to starting a two-person team. But what are the other considerations when determining what the right composition of the team size should be?

Here are good reasons why three people teams are ideal:

Reason Number 1

When a member of a three-person team doesn't show up for work, it may take a longer time for the other team members.

When the same thing happens on a two-person team, it can have more serious consequences for that day's cleaning schedule.

The chances are greater that one person won't show up for work on a two-person team than for two people to not show up for work out of a three-member team (although that can happen, too).

Reason Number 2

It costs almost the same to equip a two-member team as it does to equip a three-member team.

You need two vacuum cleaners, regardless of whether the team is comprised of two or three people. It costs less than \$100 extra to outfit the third person on the team.

Reason Number 3

A good three-member team has the capacity to generate revenue averaging well over \$2,000 per week, or more than \$100,000 a year delegating through *one capable and well qualified* Team Leader. (I have seen teams of three that consistently achieve over \$3,000 per week

To do the same volume with teams of two, you would need to hire and delegate through two qualified Team Leaders. This means you need fewer Team-Leader-Level employees per worker if you create well-run three-person teams.

Reason Number 4

On the theory that "the more often you do the job, the more efficient you become," the dynamics of a three-person team appear to have more potential for overall team efficiency.

With the workload divided three ways, the amount of two-way communication the team spends a higher percentage of time on each hour doing the thing they've learned to specialize in.

There Are Some Drawbacks

There's an old adage that goes, "two's a company, three's a crowd." This can definitely be true for a three-person team. You do have to consider that one person may "odd-man (or woman)-out". It's up to the team leader to make sure this doesn't happen.

It can require a little extra patience and supervision for the team leader to make sure the whole team does to supervise one individual. It can also be messy trying to get a team of three into the office, coordinated, organized, and out the door at the beginning of the day.

When you start the business or starting a new team, it's definitely more difficult to hire and train three new people than it is one or two. In this instance, it can make sense to start a new team with two people. Sometimes, you may want to hire an individual until there are enough clients to support multiple workers on the job. Needless to say, personnel must be trained before you send out into clients' homes to perform any tasks on their own.

Which is Yours

If you choose to operate with teams of two or three people is ultimately up to you. Some owners swear by two-person teams. There are thousands of independent house cleaners that work alone. A case can be made for using individual cleaners rather than teams.

We happen to favor three person teams. It's interesting to note that when cleaners get used to working on a three-person team utilizing the procedures like those taught in our Professional House Cleaning Tutorial program, they really don't want to work any other way.

Document relating to
Team Composition

Staff Roster

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