LTS Leadership that sells

A FREE GUIDE

The Parallel Team Power-Up

A practical toolkit for leaders of high-autonomy sales teams.

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leadershipthatsells.com

Stop trying to build a *basketball* team. Your sales force is a team of *Olympians*.

Does this sound familiar?

You've been told to build a cohesive, collaborative team.

You've pushed for a "one-team" mentality.

Yet, your star performers still act like lone wolves, the gap between your best and the rest widens, and your best practices never seem to scale.

The problem isn't your people. It's the leadership model you were given.

Your sales teams are not *inter*-dependent teams who build one thing together.

They are collections of **high-autonomy individuals** running parallel races on different tracks.

Forcing them to act like a traditional team kills momentum and guarantees you'll lose.

Without the right tools for this reality, you're leaving performance on the table.

This playbook provides the tools for this reality.

A QUICK CHECK

Where is your playbook failing?

Check every box that feels true for your team.

- [ ] **The A-player problem:** My top performers resist “team activities” and their best practices don’t seem to rub off on everyone else.
- [ ] **Forced collaboration:** My reps are forced into “joint work” that feels inefficient and slows down their individual momentum.
- [ ] **The motivation gap:** I’m constantly trying to motivate the middle 60% of my team while the top 10% seem to run on a different fuel.
- [ ] **Pointless team meetings:** Our team meetings are mostly status updates that could have been an email, with little shared learning.
- [ ] **“Culture” as a buzzword:** Our efforts at building “culture” feel superficial (like happy hours) and don’t translate to performance.

THE FRAMEWORK

A simpler way to lead: the Parallel Team leader's framework

Leading a Parallel Team **isn't about managing tasks**. It's about **architecting capability**. This requires three distinct actions:

1 Set the target

Create clarity

What it is: Engineering absolute clarity on individual performance goals.

Why it matters: It directs the team's autonomous energy toward what matters most, creating alignment without killing momentum.

Tool 1: the tight-loose-tight delegation planner (page 5).

2 Build the flag

Anchor identity

What it is: Forging a shared identity around a common practice and standards, not just a common goal.

Why it matters: It creates the "us" feeling that retains and builds A-players and creates pride in your team's standards and reputation.

Tool 2: the "standard of the week" meeting agenda (page 6).

3 Hand over the map

Coach for autonomy

What it is: Granting structured autonomy by equipping reps with a shared playbook and trusting them to navigate.

Why it matters: It empowers your team to solve their own problems, freeing you to work on the system, not just in it.

Tool 3: the five-part 1-to-1 autonomy builder (page 7).

PRINT AND USE NEXT TIME YOU DELEGATE

TOOL 1 · SET THE TARGET

The tight-loose-tight delegation planner

Use this before **delegating** any key task to ensure **clarity** and **autonomy**.

TIGHT

The “what” and “why”

Objective

What is the exact, measurable outcome we need?

Success metric

How will we know, with zero ambiguity, that this is done successfully?

Non-negotiables

What are the 1–2 critical guardrails or constraints? (e.g., “Must use the approved budget template,” “Deadline is firm.”)

LOOSE

The “how”

(This section is intentionally blank.) This is the space where you trust your rep’s expertise. You **do not dictate the process.** You hand over the map.

TIGHT

The “when” and what good looks like

Accountability check-in

When will we briefly **check in on progress** (not to micromanage, but to offer support)?

Final delivery

What is the final **deadline** and **format** for delivery?

TOOL 2 · BUILD THE FLAG

The “standard of the week” meeting agenda

Replace your **boring pipeline review** with this 35-minute agenda to **build your practice** inside a **culture of shared excellence** based on collective intelligence.

PART 1

We learn the “how” 10 mins

Ask: *“Who had a significant win or loss we can learn from this week?”*

Capture 1–2 specific tactics on a shared document titled “Rolling Playbook.”

Follow-up (the crucial part): *“Walk us through the exact steps you took. What was the email subject line? What question did you ask that opened the door? Don’t skip the details. We learn more from pain than from joy!”*

PART 2

The sticking point 15 mins

Ask: *“Who is stuck on a specific problem right now? Be specific. Not ‘a tough client,’ but ‘my contact won’t reply to my proposal email.’”*

*“**Who** do you want to **do** what at your client?”*

Facilitate peer-to-peer advice. Ask the team: *“Who has faced this before? What worked? What didn’t?”*

The leader’s role is to be the facilitator, not the primary problem-solver.

PART 3

The “standard of the week” 10 mins

Based on the discussion, ask: *“What is one standard or tactic we all agree to try this week?”*

Example: *“This week, everyone will try the ‘3-sentence follow-up email’ that Sarah shared.”*

This makes the learning actionable, something you’ll feed back on next week.

Note: Use this to focus the team on a known problem, not just new ideas.

TOOL 3 · HAND OVER THE MAP

The five-part 1-to-1 autonomy builder

Follow this 5-step flow for 30 minutes every week to **build autonomy** and **drive performance**. The **human performance power-up for your weekly 1-to-1.**

CHECK IN · UPDATE · FEEDBACK · COACHING · PLAN (CUFCP)

1 **Check in: connect as humans first.**
Purpose: To build rapport and show you care about the person, not just the number.
Script: *"What's been most exciting / the highlight of your week so far, personal or professional?"*

2 **Update: align on context quickly.**
Purpose: To get a concise, relevant status on the one or two things that matter most. Not a pipe dump.
Script: *"Give me the top-line on your biggest challenge / project / opportunity. What's the latest?"*

3 **Feedback: prioritise one challenge or observation.**
Purpose: To provide targeted feedback or help the rep focus on the single most important obstacle.
Script: *"I observed [specific behaviour]. It had [specific impact]. Help me understand what's going on?"*

4 **Coaching: build capability with questions, not answers.**
Purpose: Develop their judgement and problem-solving skills, making them less dependent on you.
Script: *"Where do you want to be? Where are you? What are our options / obstacles? How can we start?"*

5 **Plan: move forward with clarity and commitment.**
Purpose: To ensure the 1-to-1 ends with clear, owned next steps. **Take notes in a rolling shared document.**
Script: *"So, what will you try before we speak next? Who will do what, by when?"*

Put **2 x recurring meeting invitations** in your calendars. Both you & team member **prepare for 15 mins** for a 30 min 1-to-1. Take **rolling notes in a shared document.** That way you have a record of who is going to do what and can easily **keep making progress**. Also helpful for any periodic reviews.
The deep dive: 5 steps to transform your 1-to-1s and the 1-to-1 tracker, both free.

HAND OVER THE MAP

A quick word on the pipeline review

Why it **must be separate** from your 1-to-1.

You might be **tempted to merge your five-part 1-to-1 with your weekly pipeline review** to 'save time.' **This is a critical mistake**. They are two different tools with two different jobs.

The **five-part 1-to-1** is their **development session**. Its purpose is to coach the person and build their capability. It's where you look at the player. **This is *their* meeting.**

The **pipeline review** is your **business inspection**. Its purpose is to assess risk and commit a forecast. It's where you look at the scoreboard. **This is *your* meeting.**

When you merge them, you get the worst of both worlds. Coaching feels like an interrogation, and forecasting gets clouded by emotion and storytelling.

To run an elite system, you must keep them separate.

Your governing principle for pipeline reviews:

"Inspect the data, not the person."

- In the **five-part 1-to-1**, you **coach the person using a deal** as context.
- In the **pipeline review**, you **interrogate the data in your CRM.** The conversation should be relentlessly objective.

Instead of: *"John, why did this deal slip?"*

Try: *"The data shows this deal has been in Stage 3 for 45 days, which is 15 days past our average. The qualification score is only a C. Based on that data, what is the probability of this deal closing this quarter?"*

This approach **makes your forecast more accurate** and reinforces that **the 1-to-1** is the sacred time for coaching, development, and **building the human** who will ultimately **beat that data**.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

The leadership power-up dashboard: measuring what matters

A world-class operating system is measurable. You must prove that your **leadership inputs** create better **revenue outputs**.

How to connect your new processes to real business results.

FRAMEWORK PILLAR	LEADING INDICATOR (PROCESS METRIC)	LAGGING INDICATOR (REVENUE METRIC)
1 **Set the target** Clarity	Avg. opportunity qualification score	Win rate / conversion rate by stage
2 **Build the flag** Anchor identity	# of playbook additions per month	Sales cycle length (as process improves)
3 **Hand over the map** Coach for autonomy	% of reps with a weekly "deal strategy" 1-to-1	Average deal size / forecast accuracy

Sales people and their managers are part of the most visible, highly measured and accountable function in any business.

No sell, no eat.

You need to show a clear, logical link between any new leadership activities and the metrics every CRO is judged on.

These examples give you a framework for measurement and validation.

PRESIDENT'S CLUB

The truth about President's Club

Why your most prestigious incentive might be holding your team back.

President's Club is the **ultimate reward** for your **top performers**.

But what if it's also **the reason the gap between your best and the rest never closes?**

What if it's a system perfectly designed to **celebrate performance while killing scalability**?

1

THE MYTH

"President's Club motivates everyone to strive for excellence. It sets a high bar and inspires the entire team to reach for the top."

THE TRUTH

It exclusively **motivates the small handful of reps who were likely to get there anyway**.

For the middle 60% who make up the core of your team, it often **feels like an impossible target**, reinforcing the idea that top performance is **a "magical talent" they don't possess.** It can be more demotivating than inspiring.

2

THE MYTH

"It celebrates the 'best of the best,' creating heroes for others to emulate."

THE TRUTH

It celebrates the outcome but **ignores the practice.**

It tells your team you value the "**What**" (the number) but not the "**How**."

It's a system that **rewards knowledge hoarding**, because why would an A-player share their best secrets if their only path to reward is to beat everyone else?

3

THE MYTH

"It's the ultimate retention tool for A-players."

THE TRUTH

It's a retention tool for individual top performers, but a **catastrophic tool for retaining or sharing their knowledge**.

It takes your most skilled practitioners, extracts their results, and then ships them off to a resort, ensuring **their methods are never captured, codified, or passed down** to the rest of the team.

Stop rewarding *just* the result. Start rewarding the *replay*.

PRESIDENT'S CLUB

Stop rewarding just the result. Start rewarding the replay.

Introduce the "Coach's Badge" to your incentive plan.

This isn't about eliminating President's Club. It's about evolving it.

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1 **Define new criteria**

Announce that qualification for the top-tier incentive now has two parts:

- **Performance:** Hitting the required sales target (the "*What*").
- **Practice:** Being voted by peers as a top-3 contributor to the team's shared playbook (the "*How*").

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2 **Run a "Playbook Contribution" poll**

Each quarter, have team members anonymously **nominate the peers whose advice**, shared tactics, or direct help **was most valuable to them.**

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3 **Celebrate both**

When you announce the winners, **celebrate** them not just as top performers, but as the **architects of your team's success**.

"We're recognising Sarah not just because she hit 150% of her number, but because her '3-sentence follow-up' tactic, which she shared in Q2, is now part of our official playbook and has been used by six other people to win deals."

A team that only celebrates individual winners will always have a few stars.
A team that celebrates and rewards the coaches will build a dynasty.

The data behind the myth

Five years of data and research informs this new thinking.

The hidden costs of forced competition

$15M

Stagnant middle (65% of team)

Lack of development and motivation in this core group led to a **$15M missed revenue opportunity** over three years.

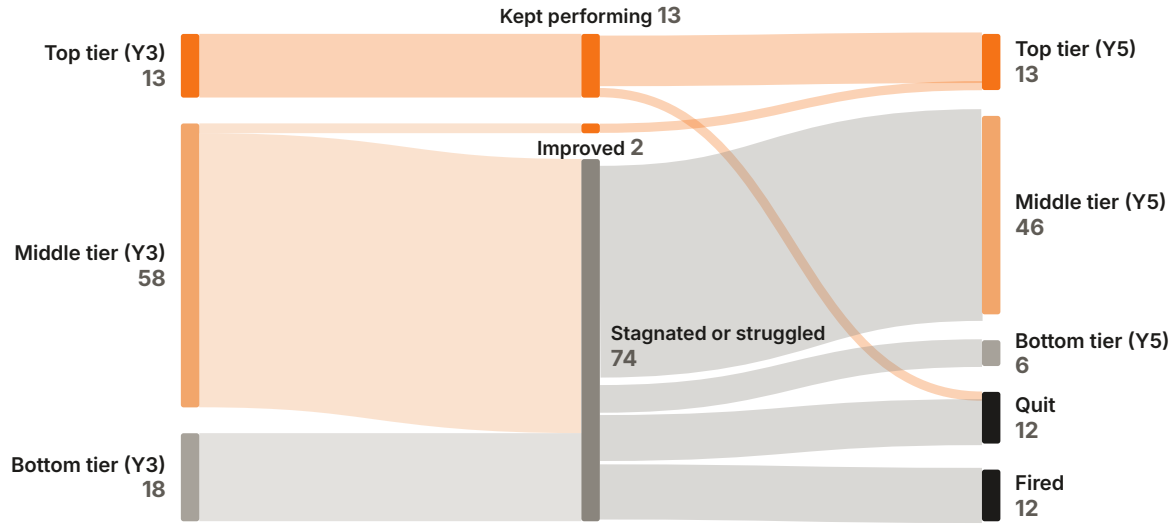
$8M+

High attrition (bottom tiers)

A "churn and burn" culture resulted in **$8M+** in costs from lost revenue and replacing 24 reps.

The illusion of mobility: a three-year analysis

Years 3 to 5 of five years of data from Paul's own teams and clients (with permission). Number of people.



We are profoundly grateful for the foundational research and insights provided by David Kesby in his book, *Extra-Dependent Teams*. The thinking presented in this playbook is directly informed by his work, which challenges conventional team management and provides a new mental model for leading teams that don't fit the traditional, interdependent structure. Kesby's concept of an "Extra-Dependent Team"—a group of individuals with similar skills who depend on people outside their team to perform—provides the core framework for understanding why forcing competition often fails and why fostering collaborative learning is the key to unlocking true potential. The models presented here are an application of his groundbreaking theories. The data is our own, gathered from own teams and with the permission of clients.

Reference:
Kesby, D. (2019). *Extra-Dependent Teams*. Routledge.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Your Parallel Team power-up

Moving from a culture of stars to a system that builds dynasties.

The framework

1 **Set the target** Clarity	**Engineer clarity on individual goals.**
2 **Build the flag** Anchor identity	**Forge identity around shared practices.**
3 **Hand over the map** Coach for autonomy	**Coach for structured autonomy.**

Your first three actions

1. Use the **tight-loose-tight planner** for your next delegation.
2. Run your next team meeting with the **"standard of the week" agenda.**
3. **Separate** your next 1-to-1 from the pipeline review using the **five-part 1-to-1.**

Stop rewarding the *result*. Start scaling the *replay*.

FREE RESOURCES

Thank you for reading

If this playbook was useful, here is where to go next. Everything is free, with no sign-up.

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5 steps to transform your 1-to-1s

The deep dive on the five-part 1-to-1, with a one-page 1-to-1 tracker you can use today.

leadershipthatsells.com/guides/five-steps-better-one-to-ones.pdf

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All the free guides are at **leadershipthatsells.com/resources/**

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