



HIGH FUNCTIONING, COHESIVE TEAMS

"Not finance. Not strategy. Not technology.

It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage,
both because it is so powerful and so rare."

Patrick Lencioni

The single most
untapped competitive
advantage is teamwork.



To gain this advantage, teams must:

▲ **Trust One Another**

When team members are genuinely transparent and honest with one another, they are able to build vulnerability-based trust.

▲ **Engage in Conflict Around Ideas**

When there is trust, team members are able to engage in unfiltered, constructive debate of ideas.

▲ **Commit to Decisions**

When team members are able to offer opinions and debate ideas, they will be more likely to commit to decisions.

▲ **Hold One Another Accountable**

When everyone is committed to a clear plan of action, they will be more willing to hold one another accountable.

▲ **Focus on Achieving Collective Results**

The ultimate goal of building greater trust, conflict, commitment, and accountability is one thing: the achievement of results.

TRUST

Members of teams with an absence of trust ...

- Conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
- Hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- Hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility
- Jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitudes of others without attempting to clarify them
- Fail to recognize and tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Waste time and energy managing their behaviors for effect
- Hold grudges
- Dread meetings and find reasons to avoid spending time together

Source: The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team & The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni

Members of trusting teams ...

- Admit weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Focus time and energy on important issues, not politics
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation
- Look forward to meetings and other opportunities to work as a group

CONFLICT

Teams that fear conflict ...

- Have boring meetings
- Create environments where back-channel politics and personal attacks thrive
- Ignore controversial topics that are critical to team success
- Fail to tap into all the opinions and perspectives of team members
- Waste time and energy with posturing and interpersonal risk management

Team that engage in conflict ...

- Have lively, interesting meetings
- Extract and exploit the ideas of all team members
- Solve real problems quickly
- Minimize politics
- Put critical topics on the table for discussion

COMMITMENT

A team that fails to commit ...

- Creates ambiguity among the team about the direction and priorities
- Watches windows of opportunity close due to excessive analysis and unnecessary delay
- Breeds lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Revisits discussions and decisions again and again
- Encourages second-guessing among team members

A team that commits ...

- Creates clarity around direction and priorities
- Aligns the entire team around common objectives
- Develops an ability to learn from mistakes
- Takes advantage of opportunities before competitors do
- Moves forward without hesitation
- Changes direction without hesitation or guilt

Source: The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team & The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni

ACCOUNTABILITY

A team that avoids accountability ...

- Creates resentment among team members who have different standards of performance
- Encourages mediocrity
- Misses deadlines and key deliverables
- Places an undue burden on the team leader as the sole source of discipline

A team that holds one another accountable ...

- Ensures that poor performers feel pressure to improve
- Identifies potential problems quickly by questioning one another's approaches without hesitation
- Establishes respect among team members who are held to the same high standards
- Avoids excessive bureaucracy around performance management and corrective action

RESULTS

A team that is not focused on results ...

- Stagnates/fails to grow
- Rarely defeats competitors
- Loses achievement-oriented employees
- Encourages team members to focus on their own careers and individual goals
- Is easily distracted

A team that focuses on collective results ...

- Retains achievement-oriented employees
- Minimizes individualistic behavior
- Enjoys success and suffers failure acutely
- Benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals/interests for the good of the team
- Avoids distractions