



## 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

## **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