THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

by Patrick Lencioni

1. ABSENCE OF TRUST
2. FEAR OF CONFLICT
3. LACK OF COMMITMENT
4. AVOIDANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY
5. INATTENTION TO RESULTS
Members of dysfunctional teams...

- 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

Members of trusting teams...

- Admit weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion
- Take risks in offering feedback and assistance
- Appreciate and tap into one another’s skills and experiences
- 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

Dysfunctions and ways to overcome each one...

- Personal Histories Exercise
- Team Effectiveness Exercise
- Personality and Behavioral Preference Profiles
  - 360-Degree Feedback
  - Experiential Team Exercises
- Demonstration of vulnerability first by leader
Members of dysfunctional teams...
• 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

Members of trusting teams...
• 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

Dysfunctions and ways to overcome each one...
• Mining for conflict
• Real-Time Permission
• Personality style and Behavioral Preference tools
• Demonstration of restraint by leader when people engage in conflict
Members of dysfunctional teams...
- Creates ambiguity among the team about 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

Members of trusting teams...
- 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

Dysfunctions and ways to overcome each one...
- Cascading Messaging
- Deadlines
- Contingency and Worst-case scenario analysis
- Low-risk exposure therapy
- Ability of leader to not place too high of a premium on consensus or certainty
Avoidance of Accountability

Members of dysfunctional teams...
- 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

Members of trusting teams...
- 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

Dysfunctions and ways to overcome each one...
- Publication of goals and standards
- Simple and regular progress reviews
  - Team rewards
- Ability of leader to allow the team to serve as the first and primary accountability mechanism
Members of dysfunctional teams...

- 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

Members of trusting teams...

- 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

Dysfunctions and ways to overcome each one...

- Public declaration of results
- Results-Based rewards
- Setting the tone for a focus on results from the leader