

Building a Healthy Company

Lesson 3-4: Healthy Teams

Discussion Guide – Confidentiality Reminder

One Word Check-in

Update – Personal, Business, Leadership

“Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.” Romans 12:3-5 (NLT)

Creating and maintaining healthy teams is a competitive advantage. In his book “The Advantage,” Patrick Lencioni said, “The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health. Yet it is ignored by most leaders even though it is simple, free and available to anyone who wants it.” In this day of hyper-competition and change, healthy teams are a requirement for having a successful organization. If an organization has unhealthy teams, it will spend its time fighting internally instead of serving the customer better than the competition. An organization cannot be healthy long-term if there are unhealthy teams.

Below are ways to build healthy teams:

- **Start with the executive leadership team.** If the company’s leadership is not a healthy group of individuals, then dysfunction fueled by jealousy, politics and ego will pervade the organization. The results are poor decisions and a disengaged staff, which leads to marginal performance and high staff turnover. When companies fail, it is normally blamed on poor strategy, marketing, etc., but likely unhealthy leadership was upstream of these issues.
- **Build trust.** This is the foundation of a healthy team. Building trust within a team is more than building the character of the individual members. Trust in a team begins when each member is vulnerable enough to be open and transparent about their weaknesses and mistakes. When people put up facades, try to make themselves look good or do not accept feedback, trust is destroyed.
- **Confront unhealthy people.** One person on a team can keep the whole team from functioning properly. Trust can’t be built within a team if there is even one ‘non-team’ participant.
- **Hire well.** Assess an applicant’s ability to function well within the team, and not just on the competence of the individual. Questions should be asked that assess whether a person is humble, hungry and smart (emotionally). See the ideal team player reference on page two.

Shared Experiences:

- In your experience, how have you observed the health of company leadership as discussed above? How did they inspire or discourage you?
- If you are a leader in an organization, what aspects of your leadership do you need to improve? What makes you believe this is an aspect of your leadership that needs to improve?
- In your experience, what was the best team you were ever a part of? What was the worst? Why do these stand out in your mind?
- In your experience, how have you seen company leadership tend to dismiss new ideas in the organization? Why do you think this was the case?
- Can someone share how they have seen non-team players dealt with in your organization. Was the person able to change or did they leave the organization?

Bottom line: Healthy teams are built on trust, and trust is built on vulnerability. You must be honest in the evaluation of your leadership. The health of the team or organization you lead depends on you. Find ways to know how you lead, which is likely different than how you perceive your leadership.

One Word Check-out

Dig Deeper

Want to learn more?

- *Books:* Patrick Lencioni has composed some of the best information available about healthy teams and organizational health. Below are books we highly recommend:
 - [The Five Dysfunctions of a Team](#) – This is a fable that is an easy read but clearly makes the point about what creates dysfunction in teams. There are five.
 - [Overcoming The Five Dysfunctions of a Team](#) – This is a field guide sharing what Lencioni and his team use to help organizations identify and correct dysfunction.
 - [The Ideal Team Player](#) – Is a fable that explores how to identify people that are humble, hungry and smart (emotionally), which he believes are the qualities needed to have healthy teams.
 - [The Advantage](#) – This book address why organizational health trumps everything else in business. It shares many examples from Lencioni’s consulting.
- *Book:* [Multipliers – How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter](#) by Liz Wiseman
- *Video:* [Five Dysfunctions of a Team](#) – Patrick Lencioni speaks in 2013 with real examples.
- *Video Podcast:* [The Best Way to Increase Engagement](#) – Patrick Lencioni, EntreLeadership podcast with Ken Coleman
- *Article:* [Ten Characteristics of a Good Company](#) by Miranda Morley, CHRON
- *Article:* [How 'CEO Disease' Can Kill Your Company's Culture](#) by Sophie Downes, Inc.com. Biggby Coffee CEO Mike McFall had to listen to some hard truths to shore up morale.

Favoritism. God does not show favoritism, so therefore there should be no distinction between CEO and the entry-level person in the company. Treat both with equal respect. This is the perfect example of humility – no one should think of themselves better than others.

Fundamental leadership truths:

- The leadership of an organization or team sets the level of leadership for the rest of the organization.
- Healthy leadership promotes higher staff engagement.
- People will work for less money to be in an organization that brings satisfaction and appreciation.
- An organization that creates frustration will have the best people leave the company.
- The negative attitude of one person on a team destroys the team atmosphere of an otherwise healthy team.
- Organizational health is critical for a company to be successful long-term.
- Effective leadership addresses dysfunction in an organization.
- Leadership must be humble enough to seek meaningful input from people throughout the organization. This should not be a debate but only involve listening to help the person lead better.
- A leader should not be self-centered or egotistical.