



4 out of 5 Suns



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Dysfunctional Thoughts

The Second in the Second series of: ***An Executive Summary for Busy Managers.***

Developing a team from a group of people can be the most challenging task a leader will face!

Ciao! I have not seen a Starbucks advertisement associated with the Olympics yet, but I am sure that is only because I have not paid close enough attention. Coca-Cola certainly seems to be getting their money's worth though! It will be interesting to see if their advertising dollars pay off in increased stock price in the short-term.

Executives and Senior Managers are smart people... sometimes too smart to work well with others. Trying to develop a cohesive team from a group of high performers can seem insurmountable at times.

Patrick Lencioni has taken the popular approach of addressing a difficult topic through the classical storybook format. The Five Dysfunctions of a Team is an outstanding look at one potential way to draw a team together in pursuit of a common goal.

The book shows its' age as Five Dysfunctions is set inside a high performance Silicon Valley type company. However, the message that is put forth is relatively timeless. Regardless of whether you are a start-up company with tremendous external capital investment or a well-heeled small company that has been around for awhile, teamwork is the key factor in setting apart the winners from the losers.

The five dysfunctions, described in the book, amount to:

1. Absence of Trust
2. Fear of Conflict
3. Lack of Commitment
4. Avoidance of Accountability
5. Inattention to Results

The first item on the list is the most important as it builds the foundation for everything else that happens. To its' credit, Five Dysfunctions is not one of the extremely touchy feely books. You know the type, let's bond by closing your eyes and letting your teammates catch you as you fall off a table exercise. Rather the author explains how you can probe and get people to open up to one another in a team environment in order to push the fast forward button on the whole experience. The author also talks about the virtues of administering and sharing the results of a personality test. Whether it is Myers-Briggs or some other type, this exercise can be extremely enlightening to individuals as well as the people that they must interface with.

Have you had your leadership team take a personality test? Have you taken one yourself? Sometimes knowing your style helps you to overcome your own shortfalls in communication.

Fear of conflict is not generally a concern for upper level management except when they are dealing with peers or superiors. Lencioni talks about ways for team leaders to provoke constructive conflict. I promise, no sitting around the campfire howling at the moon while beating on drums. This is good, old



fashioned, Socratic Method type stuff that will allow you to make a difference without looking like a fool.

Without giving the entire book away, I must say that the section devoted to 'results' is a wonderful reminder of how important it is to develop quantifiable and measurable objectives. Daily, weekly or monthly metrics certainly go a long way towards letting everyone on the team know how well the approach is working. The old saying is, "you get what you manage." But, we must keep in mind that you can only manage what you can measure.

This book is an excellent tool for anyone that is faced with pulling a team together in an effort to accomplish even the most simple of tasks.

Patrick Lencioni has a few other best seller books that address "five temptations", "four obsessions" as well as other "numbered" things. However, I recommend that you try to find the time to read The Five Dysfunctions of a Team first to see if you enjoy his style. The book has been around for awhile so Amazon or even your local bookstore should have no trouble locating this one.

The book in a nutshell:

- Real teamwork does not come easy
- Effective teams can conquer any challenge with which they are posed.

Just my opinion and we all know what "they" say about opinions...

Thanks

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