



Team Building - How to Build a Bond

As I constantly strive to help my clients improve their organizational systems. I find myself in a constant inquiry, a student of organizations, systems and the people that make up those systems. To support these systems, these people, I seek fresh perspectives on the processes that exist which heighten awareness and make these organizations achieve excellence.

This month I would like to share with you a perspective on Team Building by Patrick Lencioni. In his book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick guides us through a leadership fable heightening the importance of five Critical team building concepts; *Building Trust*, *Engaging in Healthy Conflict*, *Commitment*, *Acceptance of Accountability* and *Inattention to Results*.

Last month with “Beans” *Passion, People, Personal and Product*, by Leslie Yerkes we highlighted the importance of building good companies and teams or people was part of that process. This month, we look at Lencioni approach and how he applies it based on a pyramid structure. The pyramid’s foundation is *Trust* and its Pinnacle is *Inattention to Results*. As in Beans, the five “dysfunctions” work together. Where these philosophies split off is the linkages that Lencioni places on the previous dysfunction. In other words, you can not have healthy conflict without trust established first.

Trust

Building trust requires the members of the team to become vulnerable, to put yourself “out there”. If your team mates know that you are sharing with them characteristics and skills that you would like to improve on, you build awareness for them to understand more clearly what you contribute to the team. Building trust requires us to slow down and simply breathe. This allows us to clear our minds and focus on the tasks at hand.

Healthy Conflict

Healthy teams know that most of the time they will not fully agree on key issues. In fact if every one is always in agreement you might want to ask the question ... Is this team performing to its fullest potential? Conflict is healthy, and when trust is present it can be a very efficient means by which to drive a team to greater success.

Commitment

When the members of a team feel they have been heard and their ideas listen too they are more likely to join in to discussions which will ultimately lead to faster and more productive decisions.

Even when opinions are not agreed upon healthy conflict allows for everyone to get on board.

Accountability

Accountability takes into account an element of interpersonal communication. When members of a team hold each other accountable for specific projects or assignments often times it results in some interpersonal discomfort. Knowing and expressing that it is difficult, is often a sincere way of creating awareness for the team member to check themselves and honor the commitments that were made to the team.

Inattention to Results

Results are what drive teams and what make good teams better and receive the collective recognition needed to succeed further. High functioning teams see themselves as a unit and not as individuals. The ego of the team over rides that of the individual on the team. As Lencioni states, “When everyone is focused on results and using those to define success, it is difficult for ego to get out of hand.”

So consider the next time you are asked to be on a team what is the true potential of the team. By being aware of this approach you can be a coach to your team as it develops and achieves success. Lencioni’s book can be found on line at Amazon or on shelf at Borders and Sam’s club.

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