

Conquering Team Dysfunction

Addressing the 5 dysfunctions of a teamⁱ

To begin improving your team and better understand the level of dysfunction you are facing, ask yourself these simple questions:



- #1 Do team members openly and readily disclose their opinions?
- #2 Are team meetings compelling and productive?
- #3 Does the team come to decisions quickly and avoid getting bogged down by consensus?
- #4 Do team members confront one another about their shortcomings?
- #5 Do team members sacrifice their own interests for the good of the team?

No team is perfect and even the best teams struggle with one or more of these issues. To address the five dysfunctions, consider the following:

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

Teams 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

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 of guilt

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

A team that focuses on collective results....

- Retains achievement orientated employees
- Minimises individualistic behaviour
- Enjoys success and failure acutely
- Benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals / interests for the good of the team
- Avoids distractions

ⁱ *The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team, Patrick Lencioni (Ch 8, pg 195-220)*