

# The FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS of a TEAM: Dysfunction 1

Course adapted from the Best selling Novel by Patrick Lencioni

# The Model

ABSENCE OF  
**TRUST**

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# Absence of Trust

- Trust lies at heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is impossible.
- In the context of building a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. Teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable.
- These vulnerabilities include weaknesses, skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings, mistakes and requests for help.
- As “soft” as this may seem, it is only when team members are truly comfortable being exposed to one another that they begin to act without concern for protecting themselves.
- They can focus their energy and attention completely on the job at hand, rather than on being strategically disingenuous and political with one another.

# Members of teams with an absence of trust....

- Conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
- Hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- Hesitate to offer help outside of 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 behaviours 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

# Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 1

- By taking a focused approach, a team can dramatically accelerate the process and achieve trust in a relatively short time. Here are a few tools which can help:

1. **Personal Histories Exercise:** This exercise requires nothing more than going around the table during a meeting and having team members answer a short list of questions about themselves . Questions might include the following: number of siblings, home village/town, unique challenges of childhood, favourite hobbies, first job and worst job. Describing these things can help team members relate on a more personal level and see each other as humans with life stories. This encourages empathy and understanding and discourages unfair and inaccurate behavioural attributions. Just a small amount of information about your team can begin to break down barriers. (Minimum Time Required: 30 minutes)

# Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 1 (cont.)

2. **Team Effectiveness Exercise:** This exercise requires team members to identify the single most important contribution that each of their peers makes to the team, as well as the one area that they must either improve upon or eliminate for the good of the team. All members then report their responses, focusing on one person at a time, beginning with the team leader. While this exercise may seem risky, useful information can be extracted in about one hour. Though the team effectiveness exercise requires some degree of trust in order to be useful, even a relatively dysfunctional team can often make it work with little tension. (Required time: 60 minutes)



# Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 1 (cont.)

3. **Personal and Behavioural Profiles:** Some of the most effective tools for building team trust are the profiles of team members that breakdown personality styles and behavioural preferences. The purpose of most of these tools is to provide practical and scientifically valid behavioural descriptions of various team members according to the diverse ways that they think, speak and act. Example of these tools include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Everything DiSC. These are non-judgmental in nature, founded in scientific research and participants take an active roles identifying their own types. These personality tools can be found online to administer to team member.

Other Suggestions:

- 360-Degree Feedback- A system or process in which employees receive confidential, anonymous feedback from the people who work around them. This typically includes the employee's manager, peers, and direct reports.
- Experiential Team Exercises (Team Building Activities)



# Role of the Team Leader

- The Team Leader must demonstrate vulnerability first. The leader must risk losing face in front of the team so that subordinates will follow suit and take the risk themselves.
- Team Leaders must create an environment that does not punish vulnerability. Even well-intentioned teams can subtly discourage trust by chastising one another for admissions of weakness or failure.
- Displays of vulnerability from the team leader must be genuine and not staged. One of the best ways to lose the trust of the team is for the leader to feign vulnerability to manipulate the emotions of team members.

# Connection to Dysfunction 2

- How does all the is relate to the next dysfunction?
- By building trust, a team makes conflict possible because team members do not hesitate to engage in passionate and sometimes emotional debates, knowing that they will not be punished for saying something that might otherwise be interpreted as destructive or critical.