

FOUR DISCIPLINES OF A HEALTHY ORGANISATION

According to Patrick Lencioni in *The Advantage* there are Four Disciplines of a Healthy Organisation:

Discipline #1: Build Team: The first and most critical step towards a healthy organization is creating a cohesive leadership team. Without an aligned team at the top of an organization, it will never come near to reaching its full potential.

Discipline #2: Create Clarity: Creating alignment at the executive level is essential to building and maintaining a healthy organization. There is probably no greater frustration for employees than having to navigate the politics and confusion caused by leaders who are misaligned. Even the slightest bit of daylight between executive team members can cause an overwhelming effect on employees below. There are six simple but critical questions that need to be answered, eliminating all discrepancies among team members.

Discipline #3: Communicate Clarity: Once a leadership team has become cohesive and established clarity around the six critical questions, they need to communicate the answers to employees over and over and over and over and over and over and over again. Apparently, employees won't believe a leader's message until they've heard it seven times.

Discipline #4: Reinforce Clarity: For an organization to be healthy, organizational clarity (the six critical questions) must become embedded into the fabric of the organization. All human systems must reinforce the answers to the six critical questions in order to keep them alive and ingrained in the organization.

Here is a formula that reflects what we are aiming for: Our Organisation = Healthy + Effective

DISCIPLINE #1: BUILD TEAM

A Definition of Team: A team is a small group of people with complimentary skills committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. (Bill Bennot, Founder of His People Johannesburg).

There is nothing like watching Brian Habana flying over the try line to score for the Springboks. But invariably it is a team effort that led to the try being scored. In the scrums. In the loose play. In the running and passing. In the line outs. And the kicking. Soon people are congratulating each other on the win. Ultimately it is the team effort that is remembered!

This section is based on a book by Patrick Lencioni: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

The 5 Dysfunctions Pyramid. A journey from the Absence of Trust to Inattention to Results. (1) The first dysfunction is the absence of trust among team members. Essentially this stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation for trust. (2) This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for the second dysfunction: fear of conflict. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead, they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments. (3) A lack of healthy conflict is a problem because it creates the third dysfunction of a team: lack of commitment. Without having aired their opinions in the course of passionate and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions, though they may agree in meetings. (4) Because of this lack of real commitment and buy in, team members develop the fourth dysfunction: avoidance of accountability. Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focussed and driven people are often hesitant to call their peers on actions and behaviours that seem counterproductive to the good of the team. (5) Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction thrives: Inattention to results. It occurs when team members put their personal needs (such as ego, career development, or recognition) or even the needs of their department about the collective goals of the team.

Another way to understand the model is to take the opposite approach – a positive one – and imagine how members of truly cohesive teams behave. Here are the 5 Practises of Great Teams: (1) They trust Each Other. (2) They Embrace Conflict. (3) They Display Commitment. (4) They Practise Accountability. (5) They Get Results.

1. They Trust Each other

Team members believe their peer's intentions are good and they are protective and careful about group interactions.

How To Create Trust: (1) Get people to talk about weaknesses; (2) Talk about skill deficiencies; (3) Talk about interpersonal lacks; and (4) Talk about mistakes and needs.

The Trust Exercise: Share a strength and a weakness, a joy and a pain with each other.

2. They Embrace Conflict

Team members engage in passionate debate and discuss issues and speak freely.

How To Embrace Conflict: (1) Believe conflict is not a sin; (2) Accept conflict is beneficial; (3) Seek first to understand; (4) Look for a win-win solution.

The Conflict Exercise: Pick a hot topic to discuss, listen with an open mind and look for a win-win solution.

3. They Show Commitment

Team members Commit to Plans. Team members are clear about the mission, not afraid of being wrong and they make timely and definitive decisions.

This is a story about four people EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY AND NOBODY. There was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was asked to do it. ANYBODY could have done it, but NOBODY did it. SOMEBODY got angry about that because it was EVERYBODY'S job. EVERYBODY thought ANYBODY could do it but NOBODY realised that EVERYBODY wouldn't do it. It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when actually NOBODY asked ANYBODY.

How To Build Commitment: (1) Review meeting decisions; (2) Create action items for everything; (3) Identify who does what by when; and (4) Commit to finish work on time.

The Commitment Exercise: Think about an undefined issue in your organisation and decide **who** will do **what** by **when**.

4. They Practise Accountability

Team members are held accountable for their behavior and poor performance or harmful behaviour is dealt with.

How to Create Accountability: Clarify responsibilities; Discuss expectations; Review progress regularly.

The Accountability Exercise: Have each person identify 2-3 areas that they are responsible for in the organisation.

5. They Get Results

Team members are more concerned about collective success than personal success or getting credit.

How to Recognise Results: (1) Decide what to celebrate. (2) Share all successes. (3) Reward the team.

The Results Exercise: List some recent results of your ministry and agree on a way to celebrate their achievement.

Summary

We will be a great leadership team if we are a small group of people with complimentary skills, committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which we hold ourselves mutually accountable. We will be a great leadership team if we create trust, embrace conflict, show commitment, practise accountability and get results.

Team Dynamics Questionnaire

Use the scale below to indicate how each statement applies to your team. Evaluate the statements honestly and don't over-think your answers. For each sentence choose a number that scores your team in that area:

- 3 = Usually like us
- 2 = Sometimes like us
- 1 = Rarely like us

No	Statement	Score
1	Team members are passionate and unguarded when discussing issues.	
2	Team members call out one another's deficiencies or unproductive behaviours.	
3	Team members know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the team.	
4	Team members quickly and genuinely apologise to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or damaging to the team.	
5	Team members are willing to make sacrifices (such as resource, time, energy) in their or areas of responsibility for the good of the team.	
6	Team members openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes.	
7	Team meetings are compelling and not boring.	
8	Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed upon, even if there was initial disagreement.	
9	Team morale goes down drastically when the team fails to achieve the goals they have set.	
10	During team meetings, the most important and difficult issues are put on the table to be tackled and resolved.	
11	Team members are deeply concerned about the possibility of letting their peers down.	
12	Team members know about one another's personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.	
13	Team members end discussion with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.	
14	Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.	
15	Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out the contribution of others.	

Scoring

Fill in your scores for each of the 15 statements and add up the totals.

Absence of Trust		Fear of Conflict		Lack of Commitment		Avoidance of Accountability		Inattention to Results	
Q 4		Q 1		Q 3		Q 2		Q 5	
Q 6		Q 7		Q 8		Q 11		Q 9	
Q 12		Q 10		Q 13		Q 14		Q 15	
Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	

DISCIPLINE #2: CREATE CLARITY

We create alignment by answering the following 6 questions.

1. Why do we exist?

The answer to this question will yield a core purpose, or the fundamental reason the organisation is operating.

The Guidelines: (1) Our purpose must be grand and aspirational. (2) It must be true and reflect our motivations. (3) This just the start of the clarity process. (4) We are creating clarity and not a marketing statement. (5) We must keep asking “Why” until we get to the idealistic reason we exist.

The Questions:

(1) Why were we founded?

(2) Why do we exist?

(3) If we closed down, how would we be missed?

(4) How do we contribute to a better world or make lives better?

2. How do we behave?

This question examines behaviors and values required for success. It helps us to identify core values that will guide our behaviour.

The Guidelines: (1) They define our personality and help us know how to behave. (2) They reduce the need for micro-management. (3) It will attract the right people and repel the wrong one. (4) We must be willing to be punished for living them. (5) Use non-traditional names to describe them. (6) It may take more than one sitting to identify them.

The Questions:

(1) Who in our organisation already embodies what is best about us?

(2) Who served with us but no longer were a good fit? Why?

(3) Do we really embody the values we have identified?

3. What do we do?

The answer to this question provides a simple description of what we do.

The Guidelines: (1) A one-sentence definition of what we do. (2) It describes the basic activities of the organisation.

The Questions:

(1) What have we done in the past?

(2) What must we do to achieve our purpose?

4. How will we succeed?

This question requires the team members to develop a strategy.

The Guidelines: (1) Write down everything that could help us succeed. (2) Look for patterns in what has been identified. (3) Decide on three strategic anchors to focus on!

The Questions:

(1) What can we do to achieve our purpose?

(2) How can we group the activities together?

(3) What are three strategic anchors we must focus on!

5. What is most important, right now?

The answer to this question is the establishment of a short-term action plan - also called a thematic goal.

The Guidelines: (1) It is one thing - a rallying cry. (2) It is qualitative. (3) It is temporary (3-12mths). (4) It is a shared responsibility. (5) It is not shared right away nor does it involve everyone.

The Questions:

(1) If we accomplish only one thing during the next x months, what would it be?

(2) What must be true x months from now for us to say it was a good period?

(3) What objectives will make it happen?

6. Who must do what?

This question addresses the roles and responsibilities of the various members in the organisation.

The Guidelines: (1) This is a division of the labour. (2) We identify what each person will do.

The Question:

What will each of us do in the coming months?

Create a Playbook

Capture the answers to the 6 questions in a concise, actionable way.

1. Why do we exist?
2. How do we behave?
3. What will be do?
4. How will we succeed?
5. What is most important, right now?
6. Who must do what?

OUR PLAYBOOK

1. Why do we exist?

2. How do we behave?

3. What will be do?

4. How will we succeed?

5. What is most important, right now?

6. Who must do what?

DISCIPLINE #3: COMMUNICATE CLARITY

Once a leadership team has become cohesive and established clarity around the six critical questions, they need to communicate the answers to employees over and over and over and over and over and over and over again.

The Guidelines: (1) Repeat the message at least 7 times for it to stick. (2) Repeat it in difference situations. (3) Repeat it through different people. (4) Repeat it through different mediums. (5) Word of mouth is the most effective means.

The Methods:

(1) Cascading Communication - roll the message down though the organisation. End meetings by asking: What are we going to go back and tell our people. Share the message face-to-face to groups if possible.

(2) Top-Down Communication - use various means to share the message through the organisation.

(3) Upward Communication - give people a chance to communicate up the organisation as well.

(4) Lateral Communication - encourage people to communicate across departments in the organisation.

DISCIPLINE #4: REINFORCE CLARITY

For an organization to be healthy, organizational clarity (the six critical questions) must become embedded into the fabric of the organization. All human systems must reinforce the answers to the six critical questions in order to keep them alive and ingrained in the organization.

The Guidelines: The answers to the 6 questions must be reinforced through the structure of the organisation.

The Methods:

(1) Recruiting and Hiring (bring the right people into the organisation and keep the wrong people out by focusing on the behavioural values and develop a quality orientation process).

(2) Managing Performance.

(3) Compensation and Rewards.

(4) Real-time Recognition.

(5) Firing (add by subtracting)

Remember our goal is to become Healthy and Effective!