

Executive Summary:

❖ Book: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (A Leadership Fable) – Patrick Lencioni

❖ Overall Summary:

- This book is primarily split into two sections. The first is a fable that describes a “real world” simulation of implementing the model presented within this book. The second is a more detailed analysis of what the model entails and how to overcome each of the five dysfunctions. Overall the book’s message is that the most powerful advantage that a company can have is teamwork. The author asserts that by having strong teams you can create competitive advantage.

❖ Highlights from the book

- (Page vii) A quote about teamwork: “If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time”
- (Page viii) While teamwork is incredibly powerful and simple to understand, the biggest challenge is that it is painfully difficult to implement (especially in groups that are already dysfunctional)
- (Page 187) The author asserts that in their experience there are two core truths for organizations. First, that genuine teamwork is incredibly elusive for most companies. Second, teamwork typically fails due to the five dysfunctions asserted by the author that while easy to isolate are directly linked to each other
- (Page 188-189) The five dysfunctions are:
 - Absence of trust – meaning that team members are afraid to be vulnerable with each other in regards to mistakes/weaknesses (discussed in pages 195-202)
 - Fear of conflict – meaning that the team is unwilling to engage in meaningful ideological conflict of ideas/decisions due to the fear of interpersonal conflict (discussed in pages 202-207)
 - Lack of commitment – meaning that the team is unwilling to ensure a decision’s success due to not believing in the decision or through a lack of meaningful clarity around the decision (discussed in pages 207-212)
 - Avoidance of accountability – meaning that the team is unwilling to hold each peer accountable to their quality of work or to point out behaviors that are unproductive to the team (discussed in pages 212-216)
 - Inattention to results – meaning that each team member holds their own personal needs or their department needs above the goals outlined by the group resulting in those goals not being effectively met (discussed in pages 216-220)
- (Page 192-194) This offers an assessment tool for teams to see which dysfunctions are most effecting your team
- (Page 220) The author emphasizes that the best way to maintain your team is by diligently working on the team and practicing the five strengths to counter the dysfunctions that teams fall prey to.

❖ Analysis & Recommendations

- After reading this book I believe that the most effective way to utilize it is by first reading the second section of the book from pages 185-220 which details what the five dysfunctions are as well as how to overcome them. Once you have read this if you need more clarity in what the dysfunctions look like in practice then read the provided fable (pages 1-184) that details how to implement the model into a hypothetical company. Once you have a clear understanding of the dysfunctions then you can move onto implementing healthy behaviors within your workplace. In addition, it is highly suggested that you review the model and implement the exercises to overcome them over a large length of time so that each member has time to digest the material. I recommend reviewing one concept every 2-3 weeks.
- Implementing the Five Dysfunctions Model:
 - First before beginning, be sure that at a minimum the leader of the group has taken time to read the second section of the book and if needed the fable. It is also highly recommended that each team member be provided a copy of the book to review on their own time
 - Once the leader is knowledgeable about the model, give every team member the book's provided assessment on pages 192-194. It is suggested that you copy this assessment onto a word document to keep as a record and to periodically (about once a quarter) re-assess the team
 - Once the assessment is complete take time to review what the critical dysfunctions are in the team. Make a note to spend extra time within these sections as you go through the model
 - Start the implementation by reviewing the first dysfunction of lack of trust and its corresponding behaviors.
 - Note that since each dysfunction builds upon the next it is recommended this first dysfunction receives extra time since its correct behavior is the foundation of creating an effective team
 - After reviewing the dysfunction, go over the section describing how to overcome the dysfunction and lead into practicing one or more of the provided exercises with the team.
 - Afterwards during the next session follow the cycle of reviewing the next dysfunction, how to overcome it, and then practicing a provided exercise
 - Note that between sessions it is advised that you reinforce the concepts you learn by initiating the exercises independently or discussing the content with your team members to gain better insight
 - Once you have eventually gone through the entire model re-evaluate your team using the assessment tool on pages 192-194 to see what progress has been made and to make note of where the team is still struggling
 - At this point you should continue to practice the exercises and lessons taught within the book for overcoming the dysfunctions and once a quarter evaluate your team with the assessment tool to find which areas need further development
 - Note that it is recommended that after your quarterly evaluation whichever dysfunction is most affecting your team should be reviewed within the book. The key to avoiding the dysfunctions is consistent work in overcoming them