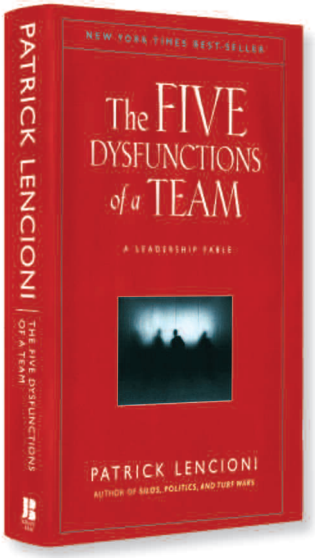
SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®
www.summary.com

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

A Leadership Fable



by Patrick Lencioni

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, renowned author Patrick Lencioni turns his keen intellect and storytelling power to the fascinating, complex world of teams.

Using his familiar writing style of incorporating fables, Lencioni tells the story of Kathryn Petersen, DecisionTech's CEO, who faces the ultimate leadership crisis: How to unite a team that is in such disarray that it threatens to bring down the entire company. Will she succeed? Will she be fired? Lencioni's tale serves as a timeless reminder that leadership requires courage and insight.

As difficult as it is to build a cohesive team, it is not complicated. In fact, keeping it simple is critical, whether you run the executive staff of a multinational company, a small department within a larger organization, or even if you are merely a member of a team that needs improvement.

Lencioni reveals the five dysfunctions that are at the very heart of why teams — even the best ones — often struggle. He outlines a powerful model and actionable steps that can be used to overcome these common hurdles and build a cohesive, effective team.

Lencioni's compelling fable offers a deceptively simple yet powerful message for all those who strive to be exceptional team leaders.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to overcome a lack of trust among team members.
- Ways to help a team engage in constructive conflict.
- How to follow a clear, concise and practical guide to using the five dysfunctions model to improve your team.
- What to do to achieve the real power of teamwork.

CONTENTS

The Fable
Page 2

Absence of Trust
Page 3

Avoidance of Accountability
Page 4

Understanding and Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions
Page 5

The Role of the Leader in Building Trust
Page 6

The Role of the Leader in Instilling Accountability
Page 7

The Role of the Leader in Focusing a Team on Results
Page 8

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA
© 2009 Soundview Executive Book Summaries • All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part is prohibited. Concentrated Knowledge™ for the Busy Executive • www.summary.com
March 2009 • Order #31I-TFS

books24x7 a SkillSoft Company

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM**

by Patrick Lencioni

The author: Patrick Lencioni is founder and president of The Table Group, a management consulting firm specializing in executive team development and organizational health. As a consultant and keynote speaker, he has worked with thousands of senior executives in organizations ranging from Fortune 500s and high-tech startups to universities and nonprofits. His books include *The Five Temptations of a CEO, Death by Meeting* and *The Three Signs of a Miserable Job.*

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni. Copyright © 2002 by Patrick Lencioni. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Jossey-Bass, a Wiley imprint. 229 pages, $24.95, ISBN 978-0-7879-6075-9.

Summary copyright © 2009 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY, 1-610-558-9495.

For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com.

The Fable

Luck

Only one person thought Kathryn was the right choice to become CEO of DecisionTech, Inc. Luckily for her, that person was the chairman of the board.

And so, less than a month after the previous chief executive had been removed, Kathryn Petersen took the reins of a company that just two years earlier had been one of the most talked-about, well-funded and promising startup companies in the recent history of Silicon Valley. She could not have known just how far from grace the company had fallen in such a short period of time, and what the next few months had in store for her. ●

Part One: Underachievement

Aside from a brief reception on her first day and subsequent interviews with each of her direct reports, Kathryn spent almost all of her time walking the halls, chatting with staff members and silently observing as many meetings as she could find time to attend. And perhaps most controversial of all, she actually asked DecisionTech's former CEO and current head of business development, Jeff Shanley, to continue leading the weekly executive staff meetings, where she just listened and took notes.

The only real action that Kathryn took during those first weeks was to announce a series of two-day executive retreats in Napa Valley to be held over the course of the next few months. As though she needed to give them any more ammunition, none of her reports could believe she had the gall to take them out of the office for so many days when there was so much real work to be done.

And to make matters worse, when someone suggested a specific topic for discussion during the first retreat, Kathryn refused. She had her own agenda already set.

The Staff

Employees referred to the DecisionTech executives as "the Staff." No one referred to them as a team, which Kathryn decided was no accident.

In spite of their undeniable intelligence and impressive educational backgrounds, the Staff's behavior during meetings was worse than anything she had seen in the automotive world, where she had previously worked. Though open hostility was never really apparent and no one ever seemed to argue, an underlying tension was undeniable. As a result, decisions never seemed to get made; discussions were slow and uninteresting, with few real exchanges; and everyone seemed to be desperately waiting for each meeting to end. ●

Part Two: Lighting the Fire

Kathryn chose Napa Valley for the off-site because it was close enough to the office to avoid expensive and time-consuming travel, but just far enough to feel out of town.

Kathryn smiled at her staff and addressed them calmly and gracefully.

"Good morning, everyone. I'd like to start the day by saying a few words. And this won't be the last time I say them.

"We have a more experienced and talented executive team than any of our competitors. We have more cash than they do. We have better core technology. And we have a more powerful board of directors. Yet, in spite of

1-800-SUMMARY
service@summary.com

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: $209 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and $295 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2009 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.
Available formats: Summaries are available in print, audio and electronic formats. To subscribe, call us at 1-800-SUMMARY (610-558-9495 outside the United States and Canada), or order on the Internet at www.summary.com. Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

all that, we are behind two of our competitors in terms of both revenue and customer growth. Can anyone here tell me why that is?" There was silence.

Kathryn continued as warmly as when she started. "After interviewing with every member of our board and spending time with each of you, and then talking to most of our employees, it is very clear to me what our problem is." She paused before completing the thought. "We are not functioning as a team. In fact, we are quite dysfunctional."

The Speech

She continued. "I want to assure you that there is only one reason that we are here at this off-site, and at the company: to achieve results. This, in my opinion, is the only true measure of a team, and it will be the focus of everything we do today and as long as I'm here. It is my expectation that in the next year and the year after that, we will be able to look back on revenue growth, profitability, customer retention and satisfaction, and, if the market is right for it, maybe even an IPO. But I can promise you that none of that will happen if we do not address the issues that are preventing us from acting like a team."

Kathryn paused to let everyone digest the simplicity of her message, and then continued. "So, how do we go about this? Over the years I've come to the conclusion that there are five reasons why teams are dysfunctional."

She then drew an upward-pointing triangle on the whiteboard and divided it with four horizontal lines, creating five separate sections.

Absence of Trust

"Right now I'd like to start with the first dysfunction: *absence of trust*." She turned and wrote the phrase at the bottom of the triangle.

She continued. "Trust is the foundation of real teamwork. And so the first dysfunction is a failure on the part of team members to understand and open up to one another. It is an absolutely critical part of building a team. In fact, it's probably the most critical.

"Members of great teams do not hold back with one another," she said. "They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry. They admit their mistakes, their weaknesses and their concerns without fear of reprisal."

Kathryn pushed on. "The fact is, if we don't trust one another — and it seems to me that we don't — then we cannot be the kind of team that ultimately achieves results."

Kathryn explained, "The only way to build trust is to overcome our need for invulnerability." She wrote the word *invulnerability* next to *trust* on the whiteboard.

How Members of Cohesive Teams Behave

Another way to understand the five dysfunctions model is to take the opposite approach — a positive one — and imagine how members of truly cohesive teams behave:

1. *They trust one another.*
2. *They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.*
3. *They commit to decisions and plans of action.*
4. *They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.*
5. *They focus on achieving collective results.*

Inattention to Results

Kathryn described the next dysfunction by writing the phrase *inattention to results* at the top of the triangle.

"We are going to the top of the chart now to talk about the ultimate dysfunction: the tendency of team members to seek out individual recognition and attention at the expense of results. And I'm referring to collective results — the goals of the entire team."

Nick, DecisionTech's chief operating officer, asked, "Is this about ego?"

"Well, I suppose that's part of it," agreed Kathryn. "But I'm not saying that there's no place for ego on a team. The key is to make the collective ego greater than the individual ones.

"When everyone is focused on results and using those to define success, it is difficult for ego to get out of hand," she added. "No matter how good an individual on the team might be feeling about his or her situation, if the team loses, everyone loses."

She wrote *status and ego* next to *inattention to results* on the whiteboard.

Fear of Conflict

Just above *absence of trust* Kathryn wrote *fear of conflict*.

"If we don't trust one another, then we aren't going to engage in open, constructive, ideological conflict. And we'll just continue to preserve a sense of artificial harmony." She wrote *artificial harmony* on the whiteboard next to *fear of conflict*.

Carlos, DecisionTech's head of customer support, weighed in. "But why is harmony a problem?"

"It's the lack of conflict that's a problem," Kathryn answered. "Harmony itself is good, I suppose, if it

comes as a result of working through issues constantly and cycling through conflict. But if it comes only as a result of people holding back their opinions and honest concerns, then it's a bad thing. I'd trade that false kind of harmony any day for a team's willingness to argue effectively about an issue and then walk away with no collateral damage."

Lack of Commitment

Kathryn went back to the whiteboard. "The next dysfunction of a team is a *lack of commitment* and a failure to buy into decisions." She wrote this dysfunction above the previous one. "And the evidence of this one is ambiguity," which she wrote next to it.

"I'm talking about committing to a plan or a decision, and getting everyone to clearly buy into it. That's why conflict is so important," Kathryn explained. "When people don't unload their opinions and feel like they've been listened to, they won't really get on board. The point here is that most reasonable people don't have to get their way in a discussion. They just need to be heard, and to know that their input was considered and responded to."

Avoidance of Accountability

Kathryn went to the board for the last time and wrote *avoidance of accountability*.

She explained, "Once we achieve clarity and buy-in, we have to hold each other accountable for what we sign up to do, for high standards of performance and behavior. And as simple as that sounds, most executives hate to do it, especially when it comes to a peer's behavior, because they want to avoid interpersonal discomfort."

"What exactly do you mean by that?" Jeff asked.

"I'm talking about that moment when you know you have to call one of your peers on something that matters, and you decide to let it go because you just don't want to experience that feeling of … interpersonal discomfort," Kathryn explained.

She wrote *low standards* next to *avoidance of accountability* on the whiteboard. ●

Part Three: Heavy Lifting

Over the next two weeks, Kathryn began to push her team harder than ever before regarding their behavior. She chided Martin, DecisionTech's chief technologist, for eroding trust by appearing smug during meetings. She forced Carlos to confront the team about its lack of responsiveness to customer issues. And she spent more than one night with DecisionTech's CFO, Jan, and its head of sales, Nick, working through budget battles that had to be fought.

More important than what Kathryn did, however, was the reaction she received. As resistant as they might have seemed in the moment, no one questioned whether they should be doing the things that Kathryn was making them do. There seemed to be a genuine sense of collective purpose.

The only question that remained in Kathryn's mind was whether she could keep it going long enough for everyone to see the benefits. ●

Part Four: Traction

Over the course of the next year, DecisionTech grew its sales dramatically and met its revenue goals during three of the four quarters. The company moved into a virtual tie for the number one position in the industry, but had yet to separate itself from its chief rival.

With the substantial improvement in performance, the company saw turnover among employees subside and morale rise steadily, with the exception of a slight and temporary dip when the company missed its numbers.

Interestingly, when that happened, even the chairman called to encourage Kathryn not to get too disappointed in light of the undeniable progress she had made.

The March

With more than 250 employees, Kathryn decided it was time to trim down the number of executives who reported directly to her. She believed that the larger the company, the smaller the team should be at the top. And with the addition of a new head of sales and a human resources director, her staff had grown to a barely manageable eight. It wasn't that Kathryn couldn't handle the weekly one-on-ones, but it was increasingly difficult to have fluid and substantive discussions during staff meetings with nine people sitting around the table. Even with the new collective attitude of the members of the team, it would only be a matter of time before problems began to surface.

So more than a year after the final Napa off-site had ended, Kathryn decided to make a few organizational changes, which she delicately but confidently explained to each of her staff members.

The Team

A week later, another of Kathryn's quarterly two-day staff meetings took place. Kathryn told her staff, "Jeff won't be coming to these meetings any more." Jeff was DecisionTech's VP of development.

Everyone in the room was stunned by what Kathryn

had said, and that she had said it with so little emotion.

She explained: "This was Jeff's idea."

That thought had not occurred to any of her executives. Kathryn went on. "He said that as much as he wanted to stay on the team, it made more sense for him to be part of Nick's sales group. I actually gave him a chance to change his mind, and he insisted it was the right thing to do for the company, and for the team."

Kathryn let the team members enjoy a silent moment of admiration for Jeff, their former CEO.

And then she continued. "I think we owe it to Jeff and everyone else at this company to make this work. Let's get started." ●

The Model

An Overview of the Model

Two critical truths are clear. First, genuine teamwork in most organizations remains as elusive as it has ever been. Second, organizations fail to achieve teamwork because they unknowingly fall prey to five natural but dangerous pitfalls, which can be called the five dysfunctions of a team.

These dysfunctions can be mistakenly interpreted as five distinct issues that can be addressed in isolation from the others. But in reality they form an interrelated model, making susceptibility to even one of them potentially lethal for the success of a team. A cursory overview of each dysfunction and the model they make up should make this clearer.

The Five Dysfunctions

1. The first dysfunction is an **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 ensures 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 feign agreement during meetings.

4. Because of this lack of real commitment and buy-in, team members develop an **avoidance of accountability**, the fourth dysfunction. Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven people often hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that seem counterproductive to the good of the team.

5. Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction can thrive. **Inattention to results** occurs when team members put their individual needs (such as ego, career development or recognition), or even the needs of their divisions, above the collective goals of the team.

And so, like a chain with just one link broken, teamwork deteriorates if even a single dysfunction is allowed to flourish. ●

Dysfunction No. 1: Absence of Trust

Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible.

The kind of trust that is characteristic of a great team requires team members to make themselves vulnerable to one another and be confident that their respective vulnerabilities will not be used against them. These vulnerabilities include weaknesses, skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings, mistakes and requests for help.

Overcoming Dysfunction No. 1

How does a team go about building trust? Unfortunately, vulnerability-based trust cannot be achieved overnight. It requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members. However, by taking a focused approach, a team can dramatically accelerate the process and achieve trust in relatively short order. Here are a few tools that can bring this about:

- **Personal Histories Exercise.** This low-risk exercise requires nothing more than going around the table during a meeting and having team members answer a short list of questions about themselves.
- **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.
- **Personality and Behavioral Preferences Profiles.** Some of the most effective and lasting tools for building trust on a team are profiles of team members' behavioral preferences and personality styles. The best profiling tool is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

• **360-Degree Feedback.** These tools call for peers to make specific judgments and provide one another with constructive criticism.

The Role of the Leader in Building Trust

The most important action that a leader must take to encourage the building of trust on a team is to demonstrate vulnerability first. This requires that the leader risk losing face in front of the team, so that subordinates will take the same risk themselves. Team leaders must create an environment that does not punish vulnerability. Displays of vulnerability on the part of a team leader must be genuine; they cannot be staged.

Dysfunction No. 2: Fear of Conflict

Teams that engage in productive conflict know that its only purpose is to produce the best possible solution in the shortest period of time. They discuss and resolve issues more quickly and completely than other teams do, and they emerge from heated debates with no residual feelings or collateral damage, but with an eagerness and readiness to take on the next important issue.

Overcoming Dysfunction No. 2

How does a team go about developing the ability and willingness to engage in healthy conflict? The first step is to acknowledge that conflict is productive and that many teams have a tendency to avoid it. As long as some team members believe that conflict is unnecessary, there is little chance that it will occur. But beyond mere recognition, there are a few simple methods for making conflict more common and productive:

• **Mining.** Members of teams that tend to avoid conflict must occasionally assume the role of a "miner of conflict" — someone who extracts buried disagreements within the team and sheds light on them. Some teams may want to assign a member of the team to take on this responsibility during a given meeting or discussion.

• **Real-Time Permission.** In the process of mining for conflict, team members need to coach one another not to retreat from healthy debate. One simple but effective way to do this is to recognize when the people engaged in conflict are becoming uncomfortable with the level of discord, and then interrupt to remind them that what they are doing is necessary.

• **The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.** This tool, commonly referred to as the TKI, allows team members to understand natural inclinations around conflict so they can make more strategic choices about which approaches are most appropriate in different situations.

The Role of the Leader in Overcoming the Fear of Conflict

It is key that leaders demonstrate restraint when their people engage in conflict, and allow resolution to occur naturally, as messy as it can sometimes be.

A leader's ability to personally model appropriate conflict behavior is essential. By avoiding conflict when it is necessary and productive — something many executives do — a team leader will encourage this dysfunction to thrive.

Dysfunction No. 3: Lack of Commitment

In the context of a team, commitment is a function of two things: clarity and buy-in. Great teams make clear and timely decisions and move forward with complete buy-in from every member of the team, even those who voted against the decision. They leave meetings confident that no one on the team is quietly harboring doubts about whether to support the actions agreed on.

The two greatest causes of a lack of commitment are the desire for consensus and the need for certainty:

• **Consensus.** Great teams understand the danger of seeking consensus, and find ways to achieve buy-in even when complete agreement is impossible. They understand that reasonable human beings do not need to get their way in order to support a decision, but only need to know that their opinions have been heard and considered.

• **Certainty.** Great teams also pride themselves on being able to unite behind decisions and commit to clear courses of action even when there is little assurance about whether the decision is correct. They realize that it is better to make a decision boldly and be wrong — and then change direction with equal boldness — than it is to waffle.

Overcoming Dysfunction No. 3

How does a team go about ensuring commitment? By taking specific steps to maximize clarity and achieve buy-in, and by resisting the lure of consensus or certainty. Here are a few simple but effective tools and principles:

• **Cascading Messaging.** At the end of a staff meet-

ing or off-site, a team should explicitly review the key decisions made during the meeting and agree on what needs to be communicated to employees or other constituencies about those decisions.

• **Deadlines.** One of the best tools for ensuring commitment is to use clear deadlines for when decisions will be made and honor those dates with discipline and rigidity.

• **Contingency and Worst-Case Scenario Analysis.** A team that struggles with commitment can begin overcoming this tendency by briefly discussing contingency plans up front or, better yet, clarifying the worst-case scenario for a decision they are struggling to make.

• **Low-Risk Exposure Therapy.** Another relevant exercise for a commitment-phobic team is to demonstrate decisiveness in relatively low-risk situations. When teams force themselves to make decisions after substantial discussion but little analysis or research, they usually come to realize that the quality of the decision was better than they expected.

The Role of the Leader in Building Commitment

More than any other member of the team, the leader must be comfortable with the prospect of making a decision that may ultimately turn out to be wrong. And the leader must be constantly pushing the group for closure around issues, as well as adherence to schedules that the team has set. What the leader cannot do is place too high a premium on certainty or consensus.

Dysfunction No. 4: Avoidance of Accountability

In the context of teamwork, *accountability* refers specifically to the willingness of team members to call their peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team.

The essence of this dysfunction is an unwillingness by team members to tolerate the interpersonal discomfort that accompanies calling a peer on his or her behavior and the more general tendency to avoid difficult conversations. Members of great teams overcome these natural inclinations, opting instead to "enter the danger" with one another.

Members of great teams improve their relationships by holding one another accountable, thus demonstrating that they respect each other and have high expectations for one another's performance.

The most effective and efficient means of maintaining high standards of performance on a team is peer pressure. More than any policy or system, there is nothing like the fear of letting down respected teammates to motivate people to improve their performance.

Overcoming Dysfunction No. 4

How does a team go about ensuring accountability? The key to overcoming this dysfunction is adherence to a few classic management tools that are as effective as they are simple:

• **Publication of Goals and Standards.** A good way to make it easier for team members to hold one another accountable is to clarify publicly exactly what the team needs to achieve, who needs to deliver what and how everyone must behave in order to succeed.

• **Simple and Regular Progress Reviews.** Team members should regularly communicate with one another, either verbally or in writing, about how they feel their teammates are doing against stated objectives and standards.

• **Team Rewards.** By shifting rewards away from individual performance and toward team achievement, the team can create a culture of accountability. This occurs because a team is unlikely to stand by quietly and fail because a peer is not pulling his or her weight.

The Role of the Leader in Instilling Accountability

One of the most difficult challenges for a leader who wants to instill accountability on a team is to encourage and allow the team to serve as the first and primary accountability mechanism.

Once a leader has created a culture of accountability on a team, however, he or she must be willing to serve as the ultimate arbiter of discipline when the team itself fails. This should be a rare occurrence. Nevertheless, it must be clear to all team members that accountability has not been relegated to a consensus approach, but merely to a shared team responsibility, and that the leader of the team will not hesitate to step in when necessary.

Dysfunction No. 5: Inattention to Results

The ultimate dysfunction of a team is the tendency of members to care about something other than the collective goals of the group. An unrelenting focus on specific objectives and clearly defined outcomes is a requirement for any team that judges itself on performance.

Results are not limited to financial measures, like

profit, revenue or shareholder returns. This dysfunction refers to a far broader definition of results, one that is related to outcome-based performance.

Every good organization specifies what it plans to achieve in a given period, and these goals, more than the financial metrics that they drive, make up the majority of near-term, controllable results. So, while profit may be the ultimate measure of results for a corporation, the goals and objectives that executives set for themselves along the way constitute a more representative example of the results it strives for as a team. Ultimately, these goals drive profit.

But what would a team be focused on other than results? Team status and individual status are the prime candidates.

- **Team Status.** For members of some teams, merely being part of the group is enough to keep them satisfied. For them, achieving specific results might be desirable, but not necessarily worthy of great sacrifice or inconvenience.
- **Individual Status.** A functional team must make the collective results of the group more important to each individual than individual members' goals.

Overcoming Dysfunction No. 5

How does a team go about ensuring that its attention is focused on results? By making results clear, and rewarding only those behaviors and actions that contribute to those results.

- **Public Declaration of Results.** Teams that are willing to commit publicly to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate, even desperate desire to achieve those results.
- **Results-Based Rewards.** An effective way to ensure that team members focus their attention on results is to tie their rewards, especially compensation, to achieving specific outcomes.

The Role of the Leader in Focusing a Team on Results

Perhaps more than with any of the other dysfunctions, the leader must set the tone for a focus on results. If team members sense that the leader values anything other than results, they will take that as permission to do the same for themselves. Team leaders must be selfless and objective, and reserve rewards and recognition for those who make real contributions to achieving group goals. ●

Kathryn's Methods

Following are descriptions of Kathryn's team-building off-sites and the follow-up needed:

- *Annual planning meeting and leadership development retreats (three days, off-site).* Topics might include budget discussions, major strategic planning overview, leadership training, succession planning and cascading messages.
- *Quarterly staff meetings (two days, off-site).* Topics might include major goal reviews, financial review, strategic discussions, employee performance discussions, key issue resolution, team development and cascading messages.
- *Weekly staff meetings (two hours, on-site).* Topics might include key activity review, goal progress review, sales review, customer review, tactical issue resolution and cascading messages.
- *Ad hoc topical meetings (two hours, on-site).* Topics might include strategic issues that cannot be adequately discussed during weekly staff meetings.

Conclusion

The reality remains that teamwork ultimately comes down to practicing a small set of principles over a long period of time. Success is not a matter of mastering subtle, sophisticated theory, but rather of embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence.

Ironically, teams succeed because they are exceedingly human. By acknowledging the imperfections of their humanity, members of functional teams overcome the natural tendencies that make trust, conflict, commitment, accountability and a focus on results so elusive. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, you'll also like:

1. ***Know-How* by Ram Charan.** Legendary executive advisor Charan has developed an integrated approach to what executives must do and be to become successful leaders, including eight essential skills.
2. ***The Hands-Off Manager* by Steve Chandler and Duane Black.** The main reason for quitting that employees cite in exit interviews is "my manager." Chandler and Black offer a new vision for all managers — how to coach and mentor employees rather than hover over their shoulders.
3. ***The Set-Up-to-Fail Syndrome* by Jean-Francois Manzoni and Jean-Louis Barsoux.** If you suspect your managers are not getting the most from their employees, this summary can help. It offers concrete solutions to the downward spiral of negative expectations.