

# How To Know If You Are Part Of A Dysfunctional Team

By Jonathon Yumol, April 2018

(Excerpted from Patrick Lencioni's "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team")

## Part 5: Inattention to Results

Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach, defined teamwork as "Individual commitment to a group effort; that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." Good teamwork is essential for high performance in any business, organization, sports or any group working towards a common goal. It is teamwork that remains the ultimate advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare.

That is where the rarity of teamwork comes into play. For all the attention that it has received over the years from scholars, coaches, teachers, and the media, teamwork is as elusive as it has ever been within most organizations. The fact remains that teams, because they are made up of imperfect human beings, are inherently dysfunctional.

Patrick Lencioni believes that First, genuine teamwork in most organizations remain as elusive as it has ever been. Secondly, organizations fail to achieve teamwork because they unknowingly fall prey to five natural pitfalls, outlined in the pyramid below.



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.

## 5. Inattention to Results

### A team that is not focused on results:

- Stagnates/fails to grow
- Rarely defeats competitors
- Loses achievement-orientated employees
- Encourages team members to focus on their own careers and individual goals
- Is easily distracted

### A team that focuses in collective results:

- Retains achievement-oriented employees
- Minimalizes individualistic behavior
- Enjoys success and failures acutely
- Benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals/interests for the good of the team
- Avoids distractions

A major dysfunction of a team is the tendency of members to care about something else above the collective goals of the group. Successful and effective teams that judges itself on performance must have an unrelenting focus on specific objectives and clearly defined outcomes.

Teams should be aware that results are not limited to financial measures such as revenue, profit, or shareholder returns. In a capitalistic economic environment, many organizations ultimately measure their success in these terms. The fifth dysfunction refers to a broader definition of results, one that is related to outcome-based results.

Every effective and productive organization sets forth specific plans to achieve within a certain time period and theses goals, make up the majority of near-term, controllable results; more so than the financial metrics that are driven by them. Profit may be the ultimate measure of results for an organization, however the objectives and goals that the executives set for themselves constitute a more representative example of the results it aims for a team which ultimately drive profit.

Team status and individual status are two prime areas where a team may be focused upon rather than focusing on results.

*Individual Status* refers to the familiar tendency of individuals in a group to enhance their own positions or career prospects at the expense of the team. Although we all have an innate tendency towards self-preservation, a great team must make the collective results of the group more important than the individual members' personal goals.

This dysfunction may appear quite obvious, however, it is important to note that many teams and businesses are not results focused. These types of groups merely exist or survive, rather than living and breathing to achieve meaningful objectives. No amount of trust, conflict, commitment or accountability can compensate.

*Team Status* for some individuals, just being part of the team is usually enough to keep them satisfied. The achievement of specific results may be desirable but not worthy of great inconvenience or sacrifice. Plenty of teams fall prey to the lure of the status. For example, altruistic non-profit organizations that believe that the nobility of their mission is enough to justify their satisfaction. Other organizations such as political groups, prestigious companies and academic departments are

just as susceptible to this dysfunction, as individuals see success in merely being associated with their special organizations.

### **Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 5**

By making results clear and by rewarding those actions and behaviors that positively contribute to the results of the group, a team can ensure that its attention is focused on results.

#### ***Public Declaration of Results***

Often in sports, usually during the playoffs, you will see an individual publicly guarantee a win. In the mind of a coach this is probably one of the worst things a team member can do because this may unnecessarily provoke the opponent. For businesses or other type of organization, it can help to make public proclamations about intended success.

Teams are more likely to work with increased passion and robust desire to achieve results if they are willing to commit publicly to specific goals. Teams that say “We’ll do our best” are subtly preparing themselves for failure.

#### ***Results-Based Rewards***

By tying rewards, especially compensation, to the achievement of specific outcomes is an effective way to ensure that team members focus on results. This may be problematic if relied upon alone as it assumes that financial motivation is the sole driver of behavior. Letting someone take home a bonus for simply trying hard, regardless of results, sends a message that achieving the outcome may not be terribly important at all.

#### ***Personality and Behavioral Preference 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. **unify consulting group** believes that the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of the best personality tests out on the market. Some of the best characteristics of the MBTI is that it is nonjudgmental in nature, it is established through decades of research and development, and the extent which participants take an active role identifying their own type.

The MBTI helps team members gain knowledge with the different type dynamics within the team. Individuals gain understanding of preferred work environments, values, satisfactions, self-efficacy, development and how they focus and attain on specific goals and outcomes. Through understanding what certain types can bring to the table, organizations can continue to ensure its wise use and help group members develop a strong, productive and effective team.

\*\*\* **unify consulting group** can provide MBTI administration and interpretation for your organization, leadership teams, and employees. Please contact **unify consulting group** if you are interested in taking the MBTI questionnaire.

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