

MODULE 26

BEHAVIOURS OF HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

Segment	Content
Introduction	<p>Patrick Lencioni wrote a book entitled, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. It is a fable which tells the story of a successful, but retired businesswoman, who returns to the workplace to lead a dysfunctional team to great success. In the fable, five team dysfunctions are discussed and the role of the protagonist in leading her team to become highly successful, fully engaged, and empowered is dissected. From this fable, you can take away valuable tools and principles for developing your own successful, engaged, and empowered team.</p>
Learning and development objective	<p>At the end of Module 26, you will be able to name 5 concepts which can be indicators of a highly dysfunctional team, or a highly successful one.</p>
Main text	<p>Depending on how your team embodies these five words in the workplace: ‘trust,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘commitment,’ ‘accountability,’ and ‘results,’ reveals if your team is highly dysfunctional. Healthy policies for embodying these concepts can serve as the foundation for developing a highly successful team.</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>The first dysfunctional behaviour of the fable team was related to trust. The team did not function well together, because of their basic fear of being vulnerable with other team members. They were afraid to share their personal weaknesses, mistakes, and fears.</p> <p>Without this trust, teams are reluctant to contribute new ideas, innovative insights, and honest evaluations. The end result is to maintain the status quo, because no one is willing to step out to be vulnerable, or to share ideas which can move the team forward. The most effective way a leader addresses this dysfunctional behaviour, is by making themselves vulnerable. When the leader openly shares their concerns, their weaknesses related to the projects, their past mistakes, their dreams for the future and vision, they model and encourage these attributes in their team. They lead the way by trusting the team to be receptive of their ideas, strategies, and judgments. They lead by example. The leader trusts the team, and then the team can safely follow them.</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>When a team begins to trust each other, another dysfunction can occur, a fear of conflict. The team begins enjoying the team relationships of trusting and being vulnerable with each other. Sometimes a byproduct of trust, is that conflict can arise</p>

when differing views are expressed. When conflict occurs among team members, some of them can begin to fear that the trust which has developed will be disrupted.

The truth is that the team members must learn to trust even when conflict arises between members. If harmony is always required, team members will be hesitant to raise views contrary to their own and to challenge the thinking of their teammates. There will be harmony all right, but it will be gained at the expense of quality. It is essential for team members to have comfort in tactfully giving and receiving information which exposes all areas of weakness in team strategizing. This is positive team interaction.

Conflict, when handled with mutual respect for the individuals, ideas, feelings and perceptions, allows teams to explore all subjects freely. The leader promotes the avoidance of this team dysfunctional behaviour by looking for potential conflicts and bringing them out into the open. By openly discussing and exploring conflict, the leader acknowledges that conflicts will occur, but that they can bring invaluable forward progress to the team.

As you have already noticed, each of these dysfunctional concepts builds on each other like a pyramid. Your team develops trust for each other. As their trust grows, they lose their fear of conflict or sharing opposing opinions. As they learn to accept and value their differences or conflicts, their trust increases, and the team becomes more effective.

Commitment

So, your team is skilled at working together to set goals, creating action steps to complete projects, and moving forward toward success. Unfortunately, setting the goals and action steps does not ensure success. Commitment does. Teams need a clear understanding of what is needed to accomplish the goals, and how the plan which makes this a reality is to be implemented. While team members may know this within their mind, they must also believe it in their heart. If they are committed, if they have bought in to the team and the vision, if they desire to be successful, then they have a significant chance of success. When they believe in their task and the strategies which are outlined, then they will be steadfast in their work to make their steps and strategies a reality. The first role of the leader in creating commitment is to develop clarity. The effective leader seeks to share their understanding of the vision and strategies to every team member. As they seek to develop clarity of purpose in their team, they move the team toward successful completion of their goals.

Accountability

A team which understands their vision and goals, and the strategies devised to achieve them, but assumes that someone else on the team should be accountable for achieving these strategies, cannot be successful. At times, an individual team member may be reluctant to assume a task because of their own personal discomfort, whether it is reluctance to do the task, lack of skill, over extended work schedule, etc. When this occurs, other members may be reluctant to hold them accountable for their performance or behaviours on some tasks. For the team to be successful, they must all

be committed to the work, and the equal distribution of the work among team members. They must also be willing to hold each other accountable in achieving their goals and carrying out their responsibilities. As a team leader, you develop accountability within your team by confronting team members, who are not doing their share of the work, who are missing deadlines, and who are not putting forth the effort needed. You also hold the team accountable for reaching their goals and striving to successfully move forward toward the completion of their group vision.

Just as trust and conflict are built on each other, so is commitment and accountability. Once the team has bought in and are committed to their vision, they must develop a sense of accountability. When a team avoids personal accountability, the team is in a highly dysfunctional state.

Results

The final dysfunctional behaviour in teams is when too much attention is placed on the individual achievement of goals, rather than on the team’s goals. When team members focus on their own status and recognition, rather than the team as a whole, the team is harmed by the eroding of collective success. As a leader, you can affirm your individual team members for their successes, but your emphasis must be on the collective success of your team.

The 5 essential behaviours of high performing teams

▶ **Essential behaviour #1 - Trust**

- Members of great teams trust one another on a fundamental, emotional level
- They are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears, and behaviours
- They get to a point where they can be completely open with one another, without filters
- This is essential because...

▶ **Essential behaviour #2 – Constructive use of conflict**

- Teams which trust one another are not afraid to engage in passionate dialogue around the issues and decisions which are key to the organisation’s success
- They do not hesitate to disagree with, challenge, and question one another, all in the spirit of finding the best answers, discovering the truth, and making great decisions
- This is important because...

▶ **Essential behaviour #3 - Commitment**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teams which engage in unfiltered conflict are able to achieve genuine buy-in around important decisions, even when various members of the team initially disagree ▪ That’s because the team ensures that all opinions and ideas are put on the table and considered, giving value and confidence to all team members, so that no stone remains unturned. ▪ This is critical because... ▶ Essential behaviour #4 - Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teams which commit to decisions and standards of performance do not hesitate to hold one another accountable for adhering to those decisions and standards. ▪ What is more, they don’t rely on the team leader as the primary source of accountability, they go directly to their peers ▪ This matters because... ▶ Essential behaviour #5 – Attention to results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teams which trust one another, engage in conflict, commit to decisions, and hold one another accountable are very likely to set aside their individual needs and agendas and focus almost exclusively on what is best for the team ▪ They do not give in to the temptation to place their departments, their career aspirations, or ego-driven status, ahead of the collective results which define team success <p>So, there are the five key concepts: ‘trust,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘commitment,’ ‘accountability,’ and ‘results.’ If these five behaviours are present, then you have a high-performing team. But let's not underestimate it, these are not easy to achieve.</p>
<p>Key point</p>	<p>The 5 essential behaviours of high performing teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Essential behaviour #1 - Trust ▶ Essential behaviour #2 – Constructive use of conflict ▶ Essential behaviour #3 - Commitment ▶ Essential behaviour #4 - Accountability ▶ Essential behaviour #5 – Attention to results
<p>Task for the day</p>	<p>Your task for today is to reflect on the teams in which you are currently a member. Evaluate the team, leader, and your own personal behaviours and attitudes as they relate to the five words in today’s lesson.</p>
<p>Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Does your trust level of your team indicate that you a functioning at a dysfunctional level?

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What in your attitudes and behaviours indicate that you have a constructive view of conflict on your team?▶ How committed are you to your team? As you reflect on all of the teams you are a member of, are there any teams which do not have your full commitment?▶ Which is easier for you, being personally accountable for your work, or holding others accountable for their contributions to the team?▶ Are you content with the team's achievements being recognised, rather than being personally singled out? |
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