The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

5. Attention to Results – The team are focused on collective results and achievements.

4. Accountability – Team members hold themselves and each other accountable, even when this is uncomfortable.

3. Commitment – The team are dedicated to decision-making and progressing together.

2. Conflict – Conflict or challenge is welcomed and dealt with open-mindedly to gain constructive outcomes.

1. Trust - Team members trust one another and can be vulnerable with each other.

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Read: Patrick Lencioni – The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Dysfunction 1 – Absence of trust

From this	Considerations	To this
Teams that lack trust... • Conceal weaknesses and mistakes from each other • Don't ask for help or a piece of advice • Hesitate to offer assistance when it's outside their own area of responsibility • Hesitate to offer feedback or compliment one's skills • Hate meetings and avoid spending time together	• Create opportunities for team members to understand each other beyond their job role and responsibilities • Help individuals recognise and appreciate different working styles, preferences, and strengths • Establish a shared understanding of the team's purpose and how each person contributes to success • Encourage appropriate vulnerability by creating safe conversations about personal experiences, challenges, and achievements • Build psychological safety through greater empathy, understanding, and connection between team members	**Overcoming this dysfunction, you will get a team that...** • Feels comfortable working together towards a common goal • Can quickly react to issues that are no longer silenced • Can prevent mistakes by giving timely feedback and assistance to each other • Motivate each other, appreciating other's skills and strengths

Hacks for creating trust

- **Shared sense of purpose** – being clear on what is trying to be achieved and how everyone plays a part
- **Personality & behavioural profiling** – E.g. ProfilesUnboxed, Insights, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).
- **Personal histories exercise** – where did you grow up, how many kids were in your family, what was your most important challenge of being a kid
- **Triple H Exercise** – A Hero (someone you admire and why), A Hardship (something that shaped you), A Highlight (a moment you're proud of)

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Dysfunction 2 – Fear of conflict

From this	Considerations	To this
Teams that fear conflict... • Hesitate to voice opinions and concerns • Ignore controversial topics even if they have potential to determine team's success • Have more interpersonal conflicts and personal attacks • Have backchannel communication and politics	• Help team members understand their individual conflict styles and the impact these styles can have on team discussions • Normalise healthy debate by making it clear that disagreement is a valuable part of effective decision-making • Encourage curiosity by actively exploring alternative viewpoints and challenging assumptions • Create opportunities for differing perspectives to be shared, especially when agreement comes too quickly • Reinforce that conflict should focus on ideas, decisions and outcomes, rather than individuals	**Overcoming this dysfunction, you will get a team that...** • Leverages diversity and exploits the ideas of everyone on the team • Quickly solves the problems • Openly discusses critical topics and concerns • Minimises politics

Hacks for mastering conflict

- **Conflict profiling** – e.g. Thomas Kilmann Conflict Handling Modes.
- **Real-time permission** – "This is exactly the discussion we should be having"
- **Swap debate roles** – argue the opposite position
- **Mining for conflict** – When everyone agrees too quickly: "Who sees this differently?"
- **Make it about the idea, not the person** – it's about the greater good for the team, not personal attacks

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Dysfunction 3 – Lack of commitment

From this	Considerations	To this
Teams that lack commitment... • Lack confidence and are in fear of failure • Discuss the same topics or decisions over and over again • Make ambiguity and second-guessing thrive • Fail to seize opportunity spending too much time on making a decision	• Create clarity around the team's purpose, priorities and desired outcomes so people know what they are committing to • Help team members recognise that waiting for perfect information can delay progress and opportunities • Encourage open discussion of risks, concerns and worst-case scenarios to build confidence in decisions • Take time to clearly confirm decisions, responsibilities and next steps before leaving the conversation • Reinforce commitment by ensuring decisions are communicated consistently across the wider organisation	**Overcoming this dysfunction, you will get a team that...** • Clearly understand work directions and priorities • Share common goals and objectives • Be ready to change • Not let the fear of mistake prevent it from moving forward

Hacks for achieving commitment

- **Thematic goals** – Commitment to purpose, values, mission and goals
- **Worst-case scenario discussion** – "What's the worst thing that happens if we make the wrong decision?"
- **Commitment clarification** – "What exactly have we decided today?"
- **Cascading communication** – The team are responsible for cascading the decision

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Dysfunction 4 – Avoidance of accountability

From this	Considerations	To this
Teams that avoid accountability… • Make high performers discouraged • Miss deadlines • Make team leaders overwhelmed as the sole source of discipline • Remain mediocre	• Create shared ownership of team goals so accountability becomes everyone's responsibility, not just the leaders • Make commitments visible and explicit so progress and follow-through can be openly discussed • Encourage team members to give and receive constructive feedback with honesty and respect • Regularly review progress against commitments and outcomes, not just activity • Reinforce the link between individual contributions and overall team success	**Overcoming this dysfunction, you will get a team that…** • Quickly identify potential problems questioning each other's actions and approaches • Respect their team and the organisation for applying the same standards to everyone • Avoid excessive management of performance and corrective actions • Pressure poor performers to improve

Hacks for embracing accountability

- **Open forum 360's** – How does each person contribute positively or negatively
- **Public commitments** – Make commitments visible
- **Team reviews** – Updates, how individual work contributes to the whole

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Dysfunction 5 – Inattention to results

From this	Considerations	To this
Teams that are not focused on collective results... • Lose achievement-oriented team members • Get distracted from collective goals easily • Fail to develop • Lose market competition	• Establish clear, shared goals that help everyone focus on collective success rather than individual priorities • Make progress visible through meaningful measures that enable the team to track results together • Recognise and celebrate team achievements to reinforce the value of collaboration and shared outcomes • Regularly review progress against agreed goals and discuss what is helping or hindering success • Align recognition, rewards and attention with team results rather than individual accomplishments.	**Overcoming this dysfunction, you will get a team that...** • Minimise individualistic behaviour • Avoid arising distractions • Enjoy development and success

Hacks for focussing on results

- **Shared goals** – Make progress visible to all
- **Celebrate team wins** – Recognition and focus on shared achievements
- **Results-focused meetings** – "How are we progressing?"

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