5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM
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Speaker's Outline

1.   ABSENCE OF TRUST

Stems from 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.

Definition: trust is the confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. Teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable with one another.

Different from standard definition of trust that centers around ability to predict a person's behavior based on past experience.

How to build trust:

- Personal Histories Exercise – Number of siblings, hometown, unique challenges of childhood, favorite hobbies, first job and worst job
- Team Effectiveness Exercise – 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. All members then report their responses, focusing on one person at a time, usually beginning with the team leader.

Role of the leader:

- Demonstrate vulnerability first
- Risk losing face in front of the team so that subordinates will take the same risk themselves
- Create an environment that doesn't crush vulnerability – no jokes or teasing "(I'm only kidding!")
- Don't feign vulnerability to manipulate emotions of others

2.   FEAR OF CONFLICT

This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for fear of conflict. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. They resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments.

Teams that avoid ideological conflict often do so to avoid hurting team members' feelings and then end up encouraging dangerous tension.

When team members do not openly debate and disagree about important ideas, they often turn to back channel personal attacks.

Role of the leader:

- Difficult challenge is desire to protect members from harm. Leads to premature interruption of disagreements, and prevents team members from developing coping skills for dealing with conflict themselves.
- Demonstrate restraint and allow resolution to occur naturally.
- Personally model appropriate conflict behavior.

3.   LACK OF COMMITMENT

A lack of healthy conflict is a problem because it ensures 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.

2 Causes of lack of commitment:

- Desire for consensus -- people won't commit if their ideas haven't been heard
    - Great teams ensure that everyone's ideas are genuinely considered, and rally around a decision ultimately made by the group
- Certainty
    - Can commit to clear action even if not sure whether decision is correct
    - A decision is better than no decision
    - Better to make a decision boldly and be wrong and change direction with boldness than to waffle
    - Don't hedge bets and delay important decisions; creates paralysis and lack of confidence

Role of the Leader:

- Must be comfortable with making a wrong decision
- Push for closure around issues
- Adhere to set schedules
- Don't place too high a premium on certainty or consensus

4.   AVOIDANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Because of lack of real commitment and buy in, team members develop an avoidance of accountability. 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.

Don't want to jeopardize a valuable personal relationship but actually causes relationship to deteriorate as resentment builds over not living up to expectations and for allowing group standards to erode.

Holding people accountable shows respect and positive expectations for team performance.

Most effective means is peer pressure, fear of letting down respected teammates motivates to improve performance.

Communicate, communicate, communicate! Clarify publicly what the team needs to achieve, who needs to deliver what, and how everyone must behave in order to succeed. Don't be ambiguous.

Role of the leader:
- Don't create accountability vacuum with leader as only source of discipline. Team members assume that leader is holding people accountable and hold back even when they see something isn't right

5.   INATTENTION TO RESULTS

Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where inattention to results 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.

Ultimate dysfunction of a team is tendency of members to care about something other than collective goals of group such as team status – merely being part of the group is enough to stay satisfied; achievement of goal desirable but not necessarily worth great sacrifice or convenience

Role of the leader:
- Set the tone for focus on results, both spiritual as well as event-oriented.

6.   POOR COMMUNICATION

Where does it come from?
- Fear of assertion, not knowing what your role is

- Fear of hurting people's feelings

How to communicate clearly
- Preferably in person; get and hold their attention; no cell phones!
- Don't assume; ask questions, restate answers
- Put major decisions in writing and circulate to team
- Answer emails quickly
- Rule of thumb:
  - Information only – text
  - Dissemination of details – email
  - Major discussions – face to face