

BASED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLER *THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM*

Overcoming
The **FIVE**
DYSFUNCTIONS
of a **TEAM**

A FIELD GUIDE

FOR LEADERS, MANAGERS,
AND FACILITATORS

PATRICK LENCIONI
AUTHOR OF *THE IDEAL TEAM PLAYER*

Also by Patrick Lencioni

The Five Temptations of a CEO

The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

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The Three Big Questions for a Frantic Family

Getting Naked

The Advantage

The Ideal Team Player

Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team

A FIELD GUIDE
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PATRICK LENCIONI

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*This book is dedicated to our
Table Group clients—who make all of this possible
and whom we appreciate more than we can say*



WHY A FIELD GUIDE?

A year after *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* was published, I received the welcome news that sales figures had exceeded initial expectations. That was good. But I had been warned that those numbers might begin to tail off in year two, and so, like most authors, I just hoped they wouldn't drop too drastically.

Well, you can imagine how pleasantly surprised I was to learn that instead of decreasing, sales of the book actually increased during the next twelve months. That was great.

But something else happened that I hadn't exactly expected; inquiries to my consulting firm, The Table Group, grew faster than we could have imagined, with readers calling to find out how they could better understand and implement the concepts in the book.

As wonderful as that may sound, it quickly became apparent to us that we could not help even a fraction of the readers who called us, and as a result, some of them might not feel comfortable diving into the process of improving their teams without a little more guidance. That was not so good, and therein lies the inspiration for this field guide.

The purpose of this little book is simple: to provide managers, team leaders, consultants, and other practitioners with a practical tool for helping implement the concepts in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

As with my other books, I decided to keep this one relatively short because time is the most precious commodity for most leaders, and learning to build a team, as important as it is, need not be exceedingly time-consuming or complicated. I've also tried to write and organize it in a way that will make it both readable on its own and easily accessible as a reference tool.

I sincerely hope that it is helpful to you and your team. Good luck!

PATRICK LENCIONI, *Lafayette, California, January 2005*

Overcoming
the Five
Dysfunctions
of a Team

SECTION ONE

Getting Clear on the Concept

Because teamwork is a word that is
used so loosely and frequently, it
seems like a good idea to clarify exactly
what I'm referring to when I
talk about becoming a more cohesive team.

That's what this section is about.





THE CASE FOR TEAMWORK

Building an effective, cohesive team is extremely hard. But it's also simple.

What I mean is that teamwork doesn't require great intellectual insights or masterful tactics. More than anything else, it comes down to courage and persistence.

And so, if you're committed to making your team a healthy one, and you can get the rest of the team to share your commitment, you're probably going to make it. And just in case you're not sure this will be worth the time and effort—and risk—let me make a case for going forward.

I honestly believe that in this day and age of informational ubiquity and nanosecond change, teamwork remains the one sustainable competitive advantage that has been largely untapped. In the course of my career as a consultant to executives and their teams, I can say confidently that teamwork is almost always lacking within organizations that fail, and often present within those that succeed.

So why don't we hear more about the competitive importance of teamwork from business scholars and journalists? And why do so many leaders focus most of their time on other topics like finance, strategy, technology, and marketing?

Teamwork remains the one sustainable competitive advantage that has been largely untapped.

First, because teamwork is hard to measure. Why? Because it impacts the outcome of an organization in such comprehensive and invasive ways that it's virtually impossible to isolate it as a single variable. Many executives prefer solutions that are more easily measurable and verifiable, and so they look elsewhere for their competitive advantages.

But even if the impact of teamwork were more easily measurable, executives probably would still look elsewhere. Why? Because teamwork is extremely hard to achieve. It can't be bought, and it can't be attained by hiring an intellectual giant from the world's best business school. It requires levels of courage and discipline—and emotional energy—that even the most driven executives don't always possess.

As difficult as teamwork is to measure and achieve, its power cannot be denied. When people come together and set aside their individual needs for the good of the whole, they can accomplish what might have looked impossible on paper. They do this by eliminating the politics and confusion that plague most organizations. As a result, they get more done in less time and with less cost. I think that's worth a lot of effort.

One more thing is worth mentioning. When it comes to helping people find fulfillment in their work, there is nothing more important than teamwork. It gives people a sense of connection and belonging, which ultimately makes them better parents, siblings, friends, and neighbors. And so building better teams at work can—