

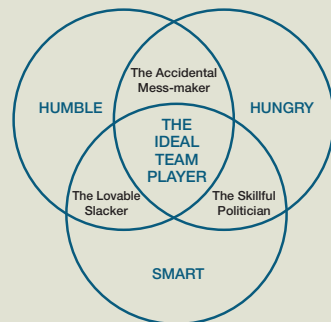
BOOK REVIEW

The Ideal Team Player:
How to Recognize and Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues
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Anyone who has read the classic business book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* is already familiar with the author of *The Ideal Team Player*. In his newest publication, Patrick Lencioni describes in very simple terms the three primary qualities that make up an ideal team player and explains how to hire and develop current and future employees using these three values – hungry, humble and smart.

Mr. Lencioni is a skilled business management consultant, speaker and author who has penned more than fifty books. When speaking of the ideal team player, he notes that it is made up of a healthy combination of all three values. Employees – current or prospective – with

those three qualities in balance are not always easily identified. He also notes that a person who is not as strong in one of the qualities can be coached to recognize and transform the behavior. This can result in meaningful change to his/her work and personal life. The graphic below is taken from the book and there is no better way to understand this concept than by studying the diagram.



This quick but worthwhile read begins with a story that sets the stage for the lesson ahead. At first, you come to understand the definition of what a team player is not. As the story unfolds, you see how the lead character and his executive team identify the qualities of what a team player should be and how to put this model to practical use, ultimately learning how to hire and develop team players in your own organization. It is important to note that building a culture around teamwork is not a one-time endeavor – it requires ongoing work to manage and sustain optimal team performance in all aspects of a business.

Strategies:SHOP TALK

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TEAMS AT WORK

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK BUILDING BETTER LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Suzanne M. Miklos, Ph.D.

Building team relationships is a form of culture and staff development that can move leadership teams from a collection of talented individuals to a leadership body that implements organizational strategy, builds a healthy culture and pools their thinking to overcome organizational challenges. Without team development, executive teams will most likely move through the phases of team development from forming, through storming and into high performing. However, some teams may get stuck in the storming phase for a period of time creating havoc amongst their direct reports as their differences get played out in the levels below them. Team development can accelerate teams getting to strong effectiveness.

Most leadership teams that we encounter are able to effectively lead their functions. The team members may admire each others' expertise and still not achieve synergy. In some teams, it is because of a lack of clarity about the shared work. We recently interviewed the leadership team in a manufacturing organization who did not see the value of their management team meetings. They each contribute by maximizing their functional metrics but leave true cross-functional integration to the CEO. Because they are blind to the work that they could be doing as a team, they do not push themselves to change how they interact.

The challenge may be in the definition and aligned expectations of the executive team role. The decision making process is often a sticking point. What does the boss decide, what does the team decide, and what do individual leaders decide? While it

seems to be simple, only high performing teams can articulate what they stand for, what tradeoffs they will need to make and what their shared work agenda should entail. When teams do not have this clarity, progress reports and negotiating for resources becomes the default agenda. In other instances, the team does not have the cohesion and communication for real dialogue. Relationships are not strong enough for team members to risk being vulnerable in order to share information, feedback and resources.

There are several outputs of team building that can be highly beneficial:

- Shared vision and goals – What commitments are owned by the group as a whole and how will they measure those deliverables to the organization?
- Build trust and accountability – How will the team operate so that power is transparent and agreements are maintained? What happens when an agreement in the room needs to be modified or changed later?
- Process – What is the cadence of meetings, deliverables and goal monitoring? Some teams have an annual agenda for their strategic and operational work.
- Communication – Are there clear norms and communication channels that take each person's preferences into account?

Team building activities and social time can be beneficial to create the sense of fun and the bonds that create resilience and engagement. After all, a healthy leadership team is a pre-requisite for an effective culture. In addition to the value of connecting and letting the team evolve organically, ask members to identify what one conversation would make you a more effective leadership team. This simple diagnostic raises the needed discussions to allow the team to lead both in unison and in harmony.



THE SENIOR HR LEADER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

On August 26th, O.E. Strategies conducted a Senior HR Leader Development Workshop. It was attended by NEO HR leaders and led to a lively conversation about how essential it has become for HR to adapt to the mega trends affecting the field. A need for more development for our next generation of HR Leaders was also a common topic. Each leader took time to deepen their understanding of the behavioral traits that contribute to their success. While engaging with colleagues across a range of industries, they worked to build a custom development plan. Feedback was so positive for this event that we have scheduled our next workshop for April 7, 2017. We hope many of you can set aside this date and plan to join us.



Sample HR Mega Trends

- People will routinely live to be 100 and work into their 70s.
- More people will opt out of corporate life in favor of freelancing/elancing, exasperating shortages for companies.
- A shortage of people with the right skill sets will be increasingly acute.
- Unions will enjoy a resurgence as economic forces and uncertainty renew their appeal.
- Between artificial intelligence, robotics and other forms of automation, 50% of the job classifications that exist today will no longer exist by 2025.

SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

Diane Govern, Ph.D.

Our featured book this issue is *The Ideal Team Player* by Patrick Lencioni, the same author who wrote *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

The characteristics can become hiring criteria:

- **HUMBLE** team members are able to be vulnerable, engage in honest conflict and hold others accountable. They define success collectively, commit to team goals and do not value status or ego.
 - *Tell me about the most important accomplishments of your career.* Look for more mentions of “we” than “I.” Probe for whether he or she was working alone or with others.
- **HUNGRY** team members are willing to engage in uncomfortable conflict and hold others accountable. They will go above and beyond to achieve results and are always contemplating the next step.
 - *What is the hardest you’ve ever worked on something in your life?* Look for specific examples of real but joyful sacrifice.
- **SMART** team members understand group dynamics and can tactfully engage in productive conflict. They have good interpersonal skills and tend to understand how to deal with others in the most effective way.
 - *What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with?* Look for both self-awareness and self-control.

Overlaying *The Ideal Team Player* virtues on those of *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* offers practical insights for how supervisors can create strong teams. Be explicit and bold: Come right out and say that you believe teamwork is important.

1. **Build trust** – Trust is easy to build when team members are competent and have strong character. You can build trust by setting clear expectations and ensuring goals are aligned. Make an effort to provide the whole team the same information in a timely fashion so that the team is operating with the same understanding of reality and that there is not an “in group”.
2. **Fear of conflict** – Build on the “smart” by giving the team time to understand each other’s concerns, challenges and style. When communication is driven by an understanding and respect for the team, conflict transforms into dialogue about what is best for the organization.
3. **Both commitment and accountability** can be supported by leveraging the hunger for excellence in the team to challenge the status quo, to push for improvement and to encourage excellence in others.
4. **Teams that have good relationships and a drive to win** benefit from clear ways to measure progress. Seeing results posted and regularly updated is motivating to hungry teams. Dashboards that let team members know where performance stands and how it is trending are powerful motivators.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE NOT-SO-SECRET SAUCE OF INNOVATIVE TEAMS

Casey Onder, Ph.D.

When you hear the term “innovative work teams,” what comes to mind? R&D departments, biomedical engineers, tech start-ups? In today’s globalized, knowledge-based economy, innovation is more important than ever. Innovative organizations benefit from direct market rewards, first-to-market advantages and increased adaptability (Bowen, et al., 2010). Research supports the notion that innovation impacts the bottom line (Bowen, et al., 2010; Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle, 2011).

In spite of the evidently fleeting and mysterious nature of that much-prized “aha” moment, organizational research suggests there are universal factors supporting innovative work teams. In this article, we offer some highlights that you can bring back to your own organization.

“How” trumps “what” in team-based innovation

Team-level predictors of innovation fall into two broad categories: Team processes (the how) and team composition and structure (the what). “How” factors involve how team members approach the work and one another. “What” factors involve characteristics of individual team members and how the team itself is arranged – for example, its size and reward structure. According to a review of more than 100 independent research studies, **team processes have the strongest overall relationship with innovation outcomes, over composition and structural factors** (Hulsheger, et al., 2009). The table below shows statistically significant predictors of team innovation from Hulsheger and colleagues’ study in order of importance.*

How Factors: Team Processes
Vision
External communication
Support for innovation
Task orientation
Internal communication
Cohesion/Commitment
Participative safety
What Factors: Team composition and structure
Goal interdependence
Team size
Job-relevant diversity

Team processes that support innovation

A clear **vision** had the strongest relationship with innovation, followed closely by **external communication** and **support for innovation** from the organization. Vision may come as a surprise as some **might** think that more flexible goals **might**

better support experimentation. Yet, innovation is defined by being “new and improved,” thus vision is key to helping teams to understand the types of changes that will be advantageous.

Context is also key. Teams do not function in isolation – nor should they. It is a well known fact that cities are innovation hubs in part due to the increased velocity of knowledge transfer across individuals and entities. Teams are no different, and teams that become inward looking (decreased external communication) risk losing their innovative edge. Organizational support also helps create an environment where innovative teams can flourish. Those interested in supporting team innovation should ensure that there are a culture and resources to support innovation within the organization as a whole.

Additional process factors relevant to team innovation include standards of excellence (**task orientation**), commitment to the team and its goals (**cohesion**), and an open, accepting environment where information is freely exchanged (**internal communication, participative safety**).

*Blue shading indicates a relatively robust effect on innovation, green shading indicates moderate effects, and yellow shading indicates a small effect.

Team composition and structural factors still matter

While structural features associated with teams as a whole matter less than team processes, several factors had significant relationships with team innovation. **Goal interdependence** was the most strongly associated with innovation of the team composition/structural factors, suggesting that team members should be incentivized to cooperate with one another. **Larger teams** with members who have **diverse job-related characteristics** like tenure, job function and technical skills are also more likely to be innovative. When it comes to innovation, many perspectives are better than one.

In summary, those seeking to promote innovative teams should first ensure the context of those teams supports innovation and that teams have a clear overarching goal or means of creating one. While team structure and member characteristics matter, the data supports the idea that “how” matters more than “what” for team-based innovation.

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