Why do some teams succeed when others fail?

Irfan Dhalla
Edmonton Oilers 1983-84

Had never won the Stanley Cup

Had made it to the Stanley Cup finals the previous season, and were swept 4-0 by the New York Islanders

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8GIsX26Stw
Edmonton Oilers 1983-84

Had never won the Stanley Cup

Had made it to the Stanley Cup finals the previous season, and were swept 4-0 by the New York Islanders

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8GIsX26Stw

Oilers go on to win 5 out of the next 6 Stanley Cups, many believe they were the best hockey team of all time
What made the Edmonton Oilers of the 1980s a great team?
Objectives

• Think about what characteristics high-performing teams possess

• Understand and reflect on the stages that teams go through

• Consider why so many teams are not optimally functional (or actually dysfunctional)

• Learn strategies to overcome team dysfunction
What stages do teams go through?

Tuckman Model
Tuckman, Bruce (1965)
“Developmental sequence in small groups”
Psychological Bulletin, 63, 384-399
What stages do teams go through?

**Forming**
Team acquaints and establishes ground rules. Formalities are preserved and members are treated as strangers.

**Storming**
Members start to communicate their feelings but still view themselves as individuals rather than part of the team. They resist control by group leaders and show hostility.

**Norming**
People feel part of the team and realize that they can achieve work if they accept other viewpoints.

**Performing**
The team works in an open and trusting atmosphere where flexibility is the key and hierarchy is of little importance.

**Adjourning**
The team conducts an assessment of the year and implements a plan for transitioning roles and recognizing members’ contributions.
What do you like or dislike about this model?
Objectives

• Think about what characteristics high-performing teams possess

• Understand and reflect on the stages that teams go through

• Consider why so many teams are not optimally functional (or actually dysfunctional)

• Learn strategies to overcome team dysfunction
Why are some teams dysfunctional?
What does trust mean?
Markers of an absence of trust

- Hiding weaknesses and mistakes
- Not providing constructive feedback
- Not offering help, especially outside area of expertise
- Failing to tap into the skills of others on the team
- Wasting time and energy managing behaviours
- Holding grudges
How to generate trust

• Show vulnerability more
How to generate trust

• Show vulnerability more

• Some phrases to use more
  – Can you show me how to …
  – I need your help with …
  – I’m sorry I …
How to generate trust

• Show vulnerability more

• Some phrases to use more
  – Can you show me how to …
  – I need your help with …
  – I’m sorry I …

• Designed exercises at team building sessions
Exercise #1 – Personal histories

• Where did you grow up?

• How many siblings did you have?

• Tell me about an important challenge from your childhood?
Exercise #2 – Personality profiling

• Any “objective” test will do (e.g. Myers-Briggs)

• Facilitates admission of strengths and weaknesses, which allows for an admission of vulnerability

• Allows for feedback
Why are some teams dysfunctional?

THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

1. Absence of Trust
2. Fear of Conflict
3. Lack of Commitment
4. Avoidance of Accountability
5. Inattention to Results
Fear of conflict

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl3e-OUnavQ
Fear of conflict

- What conflict do we want to avoid?
- What conflict do we want to foster?
Fear of conflict

Lencioni's Conflict Continuum

Constructive

Ideal Conflict Point

Destructive

Artificial Harmony

Personal Attacks

© Rich Godel
How do we generate productive conflict on a team?
How to generate conflict

- Understand how the people on your team react to conflict
- Set conflict norms
- Look for conflicts
- Real-time permission
- Make meetings about conflicts
- Don’t go too quickly from conflicts to solutions
Why are some teams dysfunctional?

THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

- Absence of Trust
- Fear of Conflict
- Lack of Commitment
- Avoidance of Accountability
- Inattention to Results
Commitment

- Commitment is to making a decision in the face of conflict
Commitment

• Commitment is to
  – making a decision in the face of conflict
  – having clear decisions
Commitment

• Commitment is to
  – making a decision in the face of conflict
  – having clear decisions
  – communicating the decisions
Commitment

• Commitment is to
  – making a decision in the face of conflict
  – having clear decisions
  – communicating the decisions

• Members of great teams learn to disagree with one another and still commit to a decision
Why are some teams dysfunctional?
What does it mean to have accountability in a team?
How to improve accountability

• Team members must hold each other accountable

• Leader must lead by example – including calling people on behavioural issues

• Exercises
  – Require positive feedback AND constructive criticism
Why are some teams dysfunctional?
What does it mean to focus on results?
Visible

Measurable

Collective
Why do teams not focus on collective, objectively measurable results?
Why are some teams dysfunctional?
What makes teamwork especially difficult for physician leaders?
The provincial advisor on the quality of health care in Ontario

www.HQOntario.ca