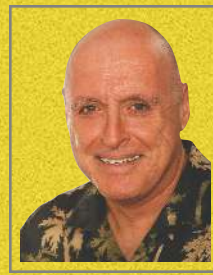


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



694 Dysfunctions of a Team — Part 1

Is your workplace team dysfunctional? Are you game to find out? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll get after that, today, on The Extra Point.

In 2002, consultant Patrick Lencioni published *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, and it has been a key resource for managers ever since. Lencioni pointed out why teams fail to live up to hopes and expectations. We'll spend some time with his ideas this week.

One of the first points Lencioni makes is one that startles most leaders. Let's see how you react to it. He says this: "You can't have a winning team if you merely build it around exceptional individuals."

It's football season now, so let's use that as an example. Can a team of good players, using a solid game plan and executing that plan with precision, and motivated to defeat another team said to be superior, beat a squad of elite players, but whose game plan and execution is not as good, nor is their motivation? Yes or no?

If you said "yes," you're right. Every week in the National Football League, there are upsets where a team of lesser talents wins out over another that was expected to easily defeat them. Live2Lead speaker John Maxwell wrote a book several years ago, *Talent is Never Enough*. Hard work, dedication, having a plan, being consistent — all factor into success.

Lencioni's first dysfunction is the absence of trust. He says that, without trust, teamwork is almost impossible. Without trust, how can employees be open to each other about their weaknesses and mistakes? Without trust, how can failure be a stepping stone to success, instead of a platform for blame?

Without trust, morale is going to be low, and employee turnover high. It's not an opinion... it's a guarantee.

People who trust each other want to work together, are more productive, more supportive, and stay employed longer.

Lencioni says that this trust is glue for the organization. It gives confidence to workers that those around them have good intentions, and there is no reason for them to worry that someone is going to blindside them.

How easy is it for us to achieve this confidence, this glue? Frankly, it's not. Especially now. It's harder for us to trust others than it used to be. It takes time to do it. We need to see how others deal with situations. Do they take responsibility when something goes wrong, or quickly look around for someone to blame? Are we so competitive that we hide our shortcomings, while focusing on those of others?

So how do you start to plant seeds of trust? It has to start with senior leaders. If that's where you are, then download Extra Point #694 at guamtraining.com, and get your organization pointed in a better direction. If you're not a senior leader, then download Extra Point #694 at guamtraining.com, print it out and leave it on the desks of your senior leaders.

If trust is really an issue in your workplace, better wear gloves so they can't lift the fingerprints off the paper. Just sayin'.

When leaders are the first to step up and demonstrate their willingness to be open and admit to mistakes, others will follow. Workers will see you in a more positive light, and they'll have a renewed interest in following you.

How long will it take? I don't know. Every organization will be different. I do know this — you never want to stop. It's why I used the example of "planting seeds."

(Con't.)

You can't get a harvest until you put seeds in the ground. Not one seed, but many. Then, you nurture it daily.

Here's an exercise from Lencioni that might work for you. Have all team members identify the single most important contribution that each of their peers makes to the team, then the one area that they, themselves, would like to improve for the good of the team. Risky? Scary?

If the second part of that exercise makes you nervous, then start out with talking about the contributions of others, and make it a praise fest. It's an intermediate step, but a small step is better than none at all. Just be sure that everybody gets some of the love. If you need, call me.

More tomorrow from Patrick Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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