



Using a values-based approach to Team Performance

By John Frost and Jeff Balin

The use of a values-based approach to engage the hearts and minds of your team is more relevant today than ever. The ability of the leader to articulate the values, live the values and engage others in the team's values has a profound impact on team performance.

We thought that we would test out this statement by considering it against one of the most current widely acclaimed models of team performance.

Patrick Lencioni's popular team performance model, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, is brilliant in its simplicity and scope, allowing team-members to get onto the same page easily and begin using common language around team development. As a result, team-members can quickly begin developing the functional elements of Lencioni's model, namely Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability and Results, respectively. Lencioni suggests that each element serves as a prerequisite for the next, and the absence or avoidance of any element invites dysfunction into the team. Of course, like any other model or remedy, its success

very much depends on the attitudes and qualities of the patient.

Case Study

Janice Boyle, Director of Development & Communication at Covenant House Vancouver, ensures that follow-through will happen beyond the offsite. Janice is focused and disciplined around her core-values and those of the team, and regularly sets aside adequate time in her schedule and team-meetings throughout the year to nurture the values that emerge from working with Lencioni's model. Further, Janice measures progress annually, using Lencioni's assessment, bringing focus and accountability to the pursuit of a more functional team. In short, she walks-the-talk.

"... bounce back to core-values..." And the results follow. Janice's numbers are impressive, with fundraising increasing at an average annual rate of 86% over the first five years of the organisation's existence and doubling over the last five, while turnover remains extremely low. Moreover, her team is always held-up as the example of model-teamwork within the organisation, both at local and national levels. Not that it's all smooth sailing. There are times of crisis, as there are with any team or organisation. However, Janice's commitment to values and follow-through pay perhaps their biggest dividends during such tests. I have observed that in times of hardship, due to either internal hardships like resource restrictions and inter-departmental tensions, or external hardships, such as economic downturns, Janice's team has the ability to bounce back to core-values and team-agreements in real-time. As a result, the team remains highly functional during stress and emerges even stronger than before.

Inside this edition

Values in Teams - John Frost and Jeff Balin take a closer look at Lencioni's 5 Dysfunctions of a Team and supply two case studies that show Values Based Leadership in action.

Running an Effective Teleconferencing Meeting – In this article, Karen Frost provides tips and tools on how to get the most out of distance meetings.

Teamwork in Action – In this article Simon Hollington interviews Alan Stewart, GM of Weir Alloa, about the results that they have achieved since the introduction of High Performance Team Development in the company.

Book Reviews – Karen Frost provides insight into Gay Hendricks's book on 'The Big Leap' and 'Strengths Based Leadership – A Landmark Study of Great Leaders, Teams and The Reasons Why we Follow' written by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie.

On the Couch – Liz Moyles answers the question posed by the MD of a multinational consumer electronics organisation. The MD wants to find out how to get a recently promoted star performer back on track as she seems to be alienating her team members which has resulted in 2 resignations and a formal grievance being brought against her.

Final Thoughts – Featuring team work quotes by Kjell Nordstrom and others.

All too often however, Janice's example is the exception rather than the rule. We notice more commonly, that leaders come back from team off-sites with only a short-term view of integration. They may discuss it at the first or second meeting back at the office, but it quickly disappears behind the wall of more "urgent" matters that come to the forefront. In such cases, the leader is generally not grounded in values and is led by the lure of urgency and "fires." Subsequently, dysfunction can linger year after year.

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One of our key learnings from working with individuals and teams over the years is that leadership initiatives either do not achieve what they set out to achieve or outright fail when the leader does not walk-the-talk around their team's core-values. When an offsite programme is part of the team's development, many teams do great work, going beyond comfort-zones, building alignment and committing to forward progress.

Then something happens. Or more accurately, when these programmes do not deliver the change that they promise, it doesn't. There can be a considerable variance in post-offsite results and effectiveness among teams. Why is this? There may be a host of variables at-play, however, none more important than the leader's ability to follow-through and walk-the-talk.

If the leader's commitment to team-values is weak or non-existent, the benefits of Lencioni's model (or any other model for that matter) will evaporate rapidly. Lencioni, himself, says: "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."

A values-based leadership approach can go a long way in strengthening a leader's commitment and accelerating the benefits of Lencioni's model around *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. What follows is our brief overview of Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions with a few words added on why values matter to the removal of each dysfunction.

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Dysfunction of a Team	Why Values Matter
<p>Dysfunction #1: Absence of Trust: Members of great teams trust one another on a fundamental, emotional level, and they are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears, and behaviours. They get to a point where they can be completely open with one another, without filters.</p>	<p>Leaders who have high-levels of adherence to their core values are rarely threatened by vulnerability; indeed they may welcome such exposure as being vulnerable is a pre-requisite for trust, according to Lencioni. For a team to feel safe enough to accept vulnerability, it must be modelled by the team leader; otherwise, the perceived risk of exposure is too high and defensiveness (or filters) becomes the <i>modus operandi</i>, while trust is diminished.</p>
<p>Dysfunction #2: Fear of Conflict: Teams that trust one another are not afraid to engage in passionate dialogue around issues and decisions that are key to the organisation's success. They do not hesitate to disagree with, challenge, and question one another, all in the spirit of finding the best answers, discovering the truth, and making great decisions.</p>	<p>When team values are clear, and the team is confident that the leader stands behind them, there is a greater willingness to enter into conflict, because team-members know they will eventually return to their core-values in moving forward. The exploration that emerges through conflict is anchored in meaningful, relevant principles that support the team's mission and transcend the turbulence of emotional discussions. Without core-values in place, conflict is feared or misused; the outcome is often determined by the loudest or most persuasive voice, rather than by alignment to core values.</p>
<p>Dysfunction #3: Lack of Commitment: Teams that engage in unfiltered conflict are able to achieve genuine buy-in around important decisions, even when various members of the team initially disagree. That's because they ensure that all opinions and ideas are put on the table and considered, giving confidence to team members that no stone has been left unturned.</p>	<p>Again, values anchor heated discussions and varying opinions, allowing the dust to settle around previously agreed-upon values. The team's core-values provide a litmus test for new commitments, generating alignment, consistency and leverage. Moreover, team members are more likely to test-drive initiatives they may have initially disagreed with if they know the core-values will not be compromised.</p>
<p>Dysfunction #4: Avoidance of Accountability: Teams that commit to decisions and standards of performance do not hesitate to hold one another accountable for adhering to those decisions and standards. What is more, they don't rely on the team leader as the primary source of accountability, they go directly to their peers.</p>	<p>When a team has a clear, solid set of values in-place, backed by the actions and behaviours of the team-leader, it instils a sense of objective standards and guidelines for individual accountability. In particular, when certain values have standards of performance built into them, accountability becomes part of the team's DNA, reinforced over time, project after project, challenge after challenge.</p>
<p>Dysfunction #5: Inattention to Results: Teams that trust one another, engage in conflict, commit to decisions, and hold one another accountable, are very likely to set aside their individual needs and agendas and focus almost exclusively on what is best for the team. They do not give-in to temptation to place their departments, career aspirations, or ego-driven status ahead of the collective results that define team success.</p>	<p>Values clearly and consistently define "what is best for the team," leaving little or no room for ego. If the team and its leader build a proven track-record for making values more important than any one project, complaint, career or department, then values-based results are likely to be the dominant force at-work. When core-values are clear and consistent, the group can refer to the same playbook, keeping selfish individual motives in-check, allowing collective results to emerge.</p>

Case Study

Kevin Valentine is the Managing Director of SCA Cool Logistics, an operating division of SCA Packaging, a global consumer goods and paper company. Kevin is a leader committed to a values-based approach to leading his business and his team. Kevin's style is inclusive and based on a firm belief that the best team results come from creating mutual trust, respect and support in a team. The key to his success however is not what he says but what he does. Kevin leads from the front. For example, when there are issues of trust he will be the first to open up the communications, being honest about himself as well as giving feedback to others. In this way he encourages others to be open with their thoughts and feelings. What SCA Cool Logistics achieves in terms of results is very important to Kevin, but how they achieve those results in terms of the values that underpin the team's performance is equally important. So, team off-sites can be challenging as the team constantly reviews its performance against the values and team members hold each other accountable for how they work with each other as well as the results they are achieving. The aim is to develop the team based on the belief that if the teamwork is right then the results will follow – and they do. Cool has more than doubled in size in the last five years with revenue increasing by 152% in that period and, impressively given the current economic climate, the company is still growing with 2009 shaping up to be another outstanding year.

Values do not merely exist on their own, offering some magical manifestation of team functionality. Values integration is challenging, and it is mostly in the hands of the team leader. So, both Janice and Kevin have three other core qualities that underpin their values-based approach to team performance – they have the awareness, discipline and courage to be the responsible caretaker of team values:

Awareness: When a leader keeps vigilant about core-values and how they relate to themselves, their team and the situation, little is left to chance. Instead of being distracted by an endless series of one-off conversations and confrontations predicated on opinion and persuasion, the leader can rely on the efficacy of consistent values being integrated over time.

Discipline: When a leader consciously and consistently aligns resources, including people's time and attention, with core-values, decisions are no longer made on a case-by-case basis. Again, the team realises increased energy, motivation and efficiencies that come from reliably integrating core-values over time.

Courage: When a leader brings courage to defend team values during opposition from team members, other constituents or challenging circumstances, the integrity of those values strengthens, augmenting their

power and credibility with each passing incident. Before long, the core-values transcend mere words on a paper, and substantially guide the team forward, avoiding the trappings of Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions.

Lencioni's team performance model has become extremely popular worldwide, because it is intuitive and easy to comprehend. However, comprehension alone will not suffice. Without a solid grounding in core-values and consistent, courageous leadership that ensures their relevance at all times, teams can continue to scratch their heads, going from one leadership model to the next, offsite after offsite, wondering what it will take to finally create a highly performing team.

What both Janice and Kevin know and demonstrate is that outstanding team performance, based on the magic that is created by values integration, is not hocus-pocus, it's actually hocus-*focus*!



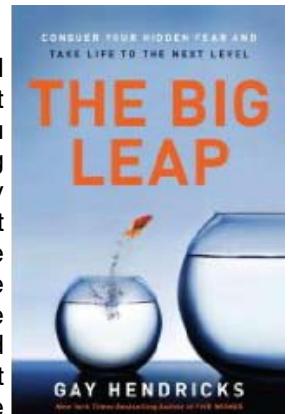
Jeff Balin

Thought Leaders

'The Big Leap' by Gay Hendricks

Reviewed By Karen Frost

Published earlier this year and one for the coaches amongst us, or indeed if you feel that you need to make the next 'Big Leap' in your life. Gay Hendricks offers a well thought through way to consider why we don't always take the leaps we need to, and therefore why we can stay trapped, frustrated and held back from doing what would ultimately be a more rewarding path.



Published by HarperOne (May 2009)

I was recommended this book by one of my coaching supervision clients. They had read it with interest, and had then had an opportunity to work with a client on the approaches recommended in this book to for example 'un-stick' someone. So if you are coaching a client who sounds 'stuck', or you feel 'stuck' yourself, then this is a good read as it offers some logical and sensible steps to move on to take the 'Big Leap'.



Running an effective Teleconference Meeting: Getting Started

By Karen Frost

For many of us there is a real need to hold meetings in the form of teleconferences, rather than the traditional face to face approach. Time, costs and geography are the main drivers, but increasingly the environmental benefits of teleconferencing are an important consideration. The key disadvantages of teleconferencing are-

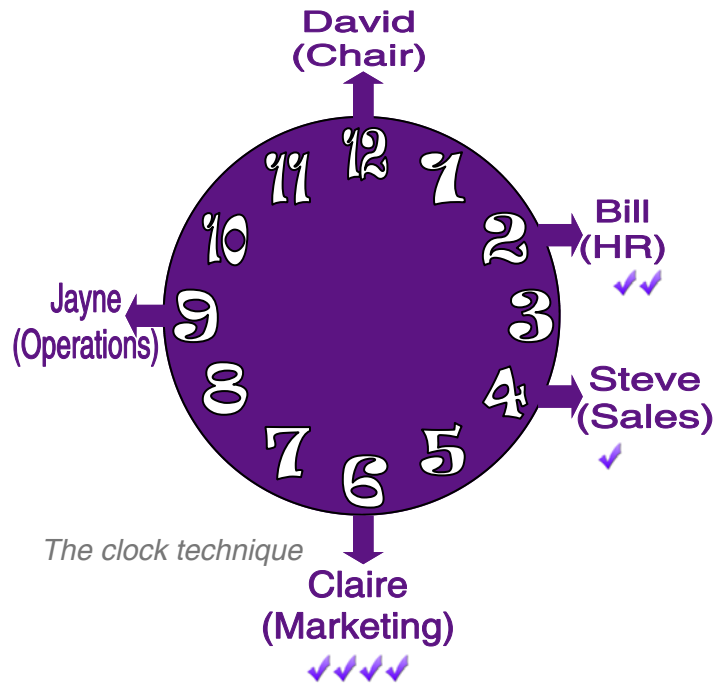
- More than 70% of the communication channels are lost when visuals are lost.
- The decision making process seems to slow down when people are not physically meeting
- It can be a challenge to engage all participants of a meeting in a teleconference because they cannot be seen, they have the ability to multi-task!!

Some **golden rules** for running an effective teleconference to reduce these disadvantages and make for an effective meeting are –

- Treat a teleconference the same way as you would treat a face to face meeting.
- Ensure that it is chaired properly.
- Have an agenda with achievable time frames.
- Communicate the agenda and any supporting documentation to all participating members in advance of the teleconference.
- If acting as the chair of the teleconference increase the visual element by applying the 'clock' technique – as people join the conference record their names and allocate them a position on a clock face that you have drawn.

Having more than 12 people attending a teleconference can present a logistical challenge and may mean that a number of people will not get the opportunity to participate

- Share the clock technique with all the participants and ask them to draw it also, give them simple instructions of where to place each person. Each member of the teleconference will now have a visual illustration of the meeting.
- To play an effective Chair role, place a tick by each person every time they contribute to the discussion. This will highlight very quickly who is and who is not contributing. Include those that have not contributed by asking a question such as – “Jayne what are your thoughts on this issue?”
- Record agreed actions and outcomes and follow-up with minuted notes to all participants. During a teleconference you can't see if people write down actions, or indeed if they are paying attention rather than responding to emails etc... at the same time they are participating in the teleconference meeting, quite often this will result in actions not being followed through.
- Stay on the line until all the participants have exited.



Weir Alloa – Teamwork in Action

By Simon Hollington

We all know the theory of teamwork – after all it was Aristotle who first said that ‘the sum is greater than the parts’ - but doing it, knowing it and making it happen are often poles apart. That was the challenge that faced Alan Stewart at Weir Power and Industrial, Alloa when he took over as General Manager, in June 2007. However he was determined to create a High Performing Team and turned to VBL to help him.

His first step was to ensure that he had adapted to his new role but after six months in which he used a VBL coach to bounce ideas off and to challenge his thinking, he decided that the time was right to get his team working. That's when he hit the first barrier. As I pointed out to him – he couldn't create a High Performing Team! Although as leader he could be entirely responsible for preventing the team from performing, on the positive side he could only create the conditions and culture and challenge and encourage the team. The team members had to make the decision that they wanted to be a High Performing Team and accept the pressures and pain associated with one in order to get the pleasure and the glory!

After meeting with all the team, we designed a 72 hour off site team building programme designed to give all of the team members an opportunity to look at how they operated, what mattered to them individually and collectively, and decide on the individual and team actions that they needed to take.

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Incorporating a **TeamPulse** Survey which was completed prior to the Programme, it looked at the way the team communicated, the constituent part of high team performance, the different styles of the individuals, coaching, the team relationships, and the challenges that Weir Alloo faced at that time. As such the Programme was an ideal **“kick-start”** to the creation of a High Performance Team. Using a **TeamPulse** Survey allowed the individual members to be honest about those aspects of the team that needed to be improved which gave significant focus to the Programme. In feedback after the Programme, one of the participants said **“It is the first ever training I’ve attended whose benefits will be with me regardless of jobs / role and has seriously enabled my self-development.”**

Commenting on that first step, Alan says:

“Bringing the team together for the initial 72 hour session was instrumental in the success of the programme. The team had worked together for a number of years and by delivering good results assumed they knew each others strengths, weaknesses, behaviours and drivers well. This was some what flawed! Over the three days, we reviewed the Team Pulse survey results, completed work related projects and learned techniques such as coaching and mentoring. With each day the team became more comfortable in each others company and started to talk more about what was important to them, why they behaved in a certain way, as well as what they need for their fellow team members to allow each person to develop and deliver the challenges ahead. I am convinced that the progress made during those initial three days would not have been possible if we had not agreed to immerse ourselves in the programme.”

The actions from that Programme were followed up some ten weeks later with the focus of that meeting turning to driving the business forward. Since then regular meetings combining additional teambuilding tools and ensuring that the actions from the meetings are followed through have occurred. The team has had to cope with a change in the composition of the leadership team but the foundations put in place by that first teambuilding session have enabled the Alloo Leadership team to keep the business firmly on track despite the difficult times in the engineering sector. The Alloo business has continued to grow in line with business expectations, but more importantly the management team are better placed to deliver the challenges ahead.

Creating a High Performance Team is not something that occurs overnight, and it is easy for the team to go off the boil if continual attention is not paid to it. But as Alan and Weir Alloo will testify, it is worth the effort.



Thought Leaders

‘Strengths Based Leadership – Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow’ by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie

Reviewed By Karen Frost



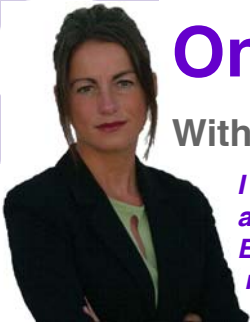
I selected this book to review because I was already familiar with the StrengthsFinder Self Assessment Program that enables leaders and followers to identify their key strengths. The book was written last year by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie – both from Gallup – and is an extension of their previous Gallup work on raising peoples awareness around their strengths. I was particularly interested in this book because it has a large section on how leaders of teams can work with and sustain the strengths of their team. The book also gives the purchaser a unique access code which allows you to take the new leadership version of Gallup’s StrengthsFinder program – thus a valuable purchase.

A good proportion of the book is dedicated to additional material around the thirty-four StrengthsFinder themes. It is important to understand these before considering, as I was, how to sustain the strengths of a team, once you know what strengths you have. The remainder of the book then focuses on three key findings. Part One – *How do you as a leader invest in your own strengths?* The book spends a small amount of time emphasising that you need to develop your awareness as a leader on your strengths and then use them consistently.

Part Two is the largest section and the one I was most interested in because it talks about how you as a leader can *identify the combination of strengths of your whole team*. For sustainable high performance of teams how do you continue to invest in each persons’ strengths and at the same time build better relationships amongst the group members. This book also provides insight from Gallup’s extensive research to the commonalities of strong teams.

Part Three makes the next step by again using extensive research to explain how the most effective leaders *understand their followers’ needs*. The book elaborates on the four top needs of trust, compassion, stability and hope.

Published by GALLUP Press (2008)



On the Couch

With Liz Moyles

I am the MD for the UK Division of a large Multinational Consumer Electronics Organisation. Three months ago, I was instrumental in the appointment to the role of New Product Launch Manager, Lisa, a high potential leader on a fast track to more senior leadership roles. She has been assigned the task of managing the team responsible for launching one of our Company's hottest new products. However, I now have some serious reservations about her suitability to this role. Two of her team members have asked for a transfer and I have a grievance on my desk from her most senior direct report, citing micro-management and the removal of key decision making responsibilities. Similar comments have been made by the two individuals who are looking to transfer. The timescales for the new product launch are still on target but I am worried they may begin to suffer. I know that in the past she has been very successful but she seems to have come unstuck in this role. What could I do to help manage the situation? I am on the point of transferring her although I know this will affect her confidence and may affect how she is perceived by other key personnel. (Lisa* is not the individual's real name).*

In the longer extract of your document to me, you confirmed that much of Lisa's historic success has been down to her great attention to detail. You confirmed that she is used to managing with authority and being the key decision maker and that she has a slight tendency to over-manage. I strongly suspect that what has happened here is that as part of her strategy to approaching her promotion, Lisa has not taken 'stock' of the skills she will need to use and those skills she may need to relegate or use less, in order to be a success in this particular role. You say historically she has been successful in managing smaller teams but this is a step up in terms of accountability.

I think Lisa would have benefited from working with an external coach in the lead up to and during the

transition period into her new role. This is sometimes called 'on-boarding' and it is often centred on the first 100 days in a new role. This is still an option to you now and with the support of a good coach, I feel that Lisa will be able to quickly address and remedy the issues you mention and will also be in a position where she has some very clear goals for how she wants to be seen as a leader, what she wants to achieve as a leader and how she wants to work with her team.

Often when people micro-manage and need to feel in control it can be because of a fear of delegation leading to error. It may be that in the past Lisa has had a bad experience which she is not 'letting go of'. If this behaviour is not changed, it will certainly hamper her ability to move on to more senior roles and it would appear critical that this issue be addressed sooner rather than later. It may also be the case that Lisa is anxious because of the high profile of this role and the new product she is in charge of launching. If she is feeling like this, she may value the opportunity to confidentially share any such concerns with an impartial and neutral person such as a coach.

I recommend the use of psychometric inventories at the commencement of a coaching relationship and there are several tools I could suggest you use to gain more information about both Lisa's preferred leadership styles and her Emotional Intelligence. In this instance I feel the situation would also benefit from the use of a team feedback psychometric to enable Lisa to capture some immediate feedback, which she and her coach can begin to act on to help the team work better together. If you could try and help to resolve the grievance and potentially delay the transfer of the individuals until Lisa has had several coaching sessions, it is highly likely that such a transfer may not need to occur.

In the first instance I suggest you need to be very clear with Lisa about the changes you need to see her make including the issues of micro-management, and delegation and also how you will measure the success of the change and any coaching intervention. This may include a further team feedback exercise towards the final coaching session so that you can compare progress. Goals and measures of success will be a key part of any contracting you undertake with Lisa and her external coach as part of the initial coaching session. Good luck – I wish you and Lisa well.

Final Thoughts

"Teamwork represents a set of values that encourage listening and responding constructively to views expressed by others, giving others the benefit of the doubt, providing support, and recognizing the interests and achievements of others. Such values help teams perform, and they also promote individual performance as well as the performance of an entire organization." **Katzenbach and Smith**

"Wearing the same shirts doesn't make you a team" **Buchholz and Roth**

"Everything or anything that is close to average is a bad idea" **Kjell Nordstrom**