

QUARTER FOUR 2003

LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY

by JEFF ANTOS

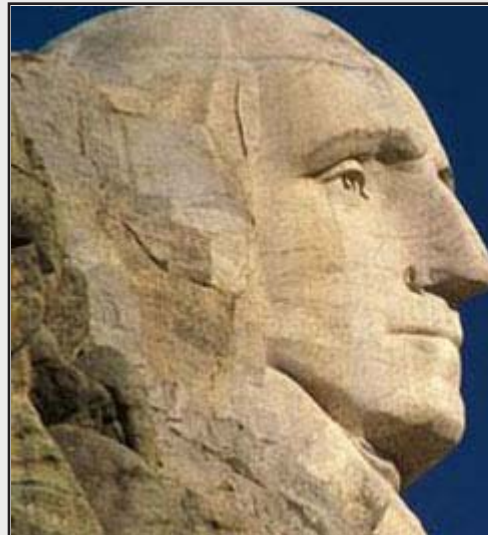
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GEORGE WASHINGTON'S TEAM MEETING

On the evening of June 24, 1778, General George Washington called a Council of War with his senior officers. There had been rumors that the British General Clinton was leading his troops out of Philadelphia in a rapid march to New York, leaving his army vulnerable to a flank attack from Washington's troops now based in Valley Forge.

Washington's troops were rested, well trained, and ready for a fight. Furthermore, Washington knew that the best strategic move would be to attack with the full force of his army. Second in command, General Charles Lee, lectured the senior officers on the folly of attacking the superior British force. Feeling democratic, Washington asked for a show of hands of those who wanted to attack. Only five hands were raised and Washington abandoned his bold plan to defeat the British.

After the meeting, Washington's closest advisors implored him to send at least a smaller force to attack Clinton's troops. Washington acquiesced and asked Lee to lead the attack. Lee, who had spoken against the attack plan, refused the command and it

was given to twenty-year-old Frenchman Lafayette, an avid supporter of Washington and the plan.

On the afternoon of June 27, Lafayette's troops had marched to within a few miles of Clinton's entire army. At the last minute, Charles Lee, jealously fearing Lafayette's success, appeared and took command away from the young Frenchman. On the morning of June 28, Lee's forces attacked the British and quickly gained the upper hand. To the disbelief of his troops, Lee, fearing the British, ordered an immediate retreat even as the Americans were advancing.

Washington, arriving by another route was met by his troops retreating from the British in an orderly fashion. He turned his troops around and soundly defeated Clinton as the day came to a close. On the following day, prepared for their final route of the British, they awoke to find that Clinton's army had fled in the middle of the night. Washington's democratic vote and its resulting confusion had robbed the new nation of a decisive victory.

Washington's leadership team had never discussed how they should make decisions; they had never considered their operating principles. Vacillating between democratic and military decision-making had an enormous price.



WE
HELP YOU
GET IT
DONE.

SUPERCHARGE YOUR TEAM



Often, the performance of a business team does not adequately reflect the talents of its individual members. If your team needs to boost its productivity, output, milestone performance, or morale, our three step process typically yields dramatic results.

1. Assessment: We individually interview each team member to understand key business and interpersonal issues.

2. Work Session: We plan and conduct a two day off-site meeting customized to the specific needs of your team, using a variety of proprietary tools and techniques. Meeting topics may include: review of key issues, team-building activities, operating

principles, charter, communication plan, roles and responsibilities, leadership assessment, personality analysis, 360-degree feedback, milestone management, and short-term action planning.

3. Strategic Plan and Recommendations:

Within a week of the meeting, we deliver an organized synopsis of the meeting which provides answers to the following questions:

- What are the major milestones for the next two years?
- What are the plans to achieve these milestones?
- What are the risks in the plan moving forward?
- How will the team work together (what are the ground rules)?
- What are the specific roles of each team member?
- How should the team communicate?
- How often will the team meet?

Most of our clients see a dramatic increase in team performance after using this process. Often, we continue our work with the team, assisting in implementation and conducting quarterly work sessions.

If you are interested in Supercharging your team, we would love to help. Give us a call at 781-544-0161.

Use A Scorecard to Simplify Complex Decisions

When a team is making a decision based on the evaluation of numerous options, a scorecard can be an invaluable tool. For example, on more than one occasion, we have used a scorecard to facilitate a software vendor selection decision. Scorecards:

- Force the team to think about and agree upon its selection criteria.
- Increase objectivity in decision-making.
- Invite others to review why decision was made.
- Speed up the process.
- Give the group confidence after the decision is made.
- Provide a great presentation tool when explaining the decision.

To create a scorecard matrix, we need two lists: selection criteria, and possible options. As shown below, criteria for each option is graded A, B, C, D or F; letter grades are universally easy to understand and compare.

For example, Joe, the procurement manager, has to lease a fleet of new cars for a sales force of 100 representatives. When he leased cars four years, ago it seemed that no one

was happy with his choice. This time he has decided to use a scorecard to make a better decision. His scorecard is shown in the diagram:

on one page. This is especially valuable when making team decisions.

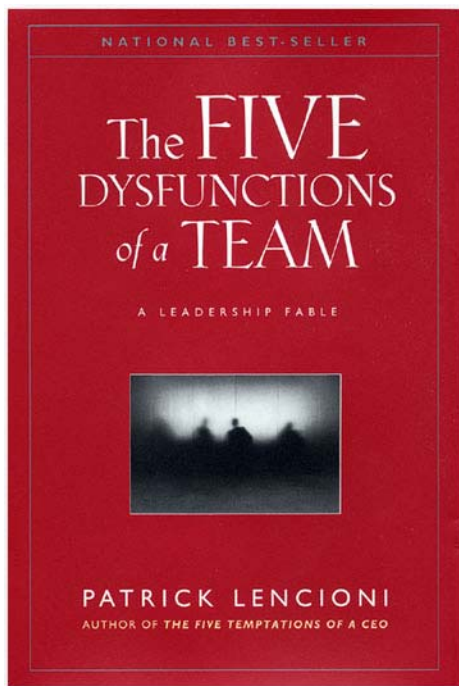
Sales Force Automobile Selection Scorecard			
	OLDSMOBUK OMEGA 35	NISHANTOY SOLARA	LUXURIA A47
RELIABILITY (CONSUMER REPORTS)	C	A	B
TRUNK ROOM	A	B	B
PRESTIGE	C	D	A
GAS MILEAGE	D	A	B
SOUND SYSTEM	C	B	A
USER EVALUATION	C	B	A
OVERALL RATING	C	B	A-
MONTHLY LEASE COST	\$354	\$299	\$383

In the example, the criteria are not weighted in any way. Although we have worked with teams that have used a weighting system, we find that complex mathematics generally does not facilitate the decision making process. The real value of the scorecard is the ability to compare all options and criteria

Finally, the scorecard is a great communication tool which can be used to share your decision-making logic. With just this one page, any audience will understand how you arrived at your decision.

“When all is said and done, more will be said than done.”

- Jeff Antos



The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

A = Must Read

B = Put it on Your List

C = Underwhelming

D = Not Even Summer Reading

F = I'm Sorry I Read it

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team is the narrative of the trials and tribulations of a group of executives at DecisionTech, an imaginary Silicon Valley company.

As presented in the book, each dysfunction builds on the one before it. Lencioni presents these behaviors as a pyramid, with absence of trust at the bottom:

1. Because we need to appear invulnerable, we create an **absence of trust**.
2. Because we **fear conflict**, we have artificial harmony on our team.
3. Because we **lack commitment**, we encourage ambiguity.
4. Because we **avoid accountability**, we ensure low standards.
5. Because we seek personal status and ego we are **inattentive to results** of the team.

The author makes a credible argument for his model of bad team behavior that infects many teams. His five step pyramid is interesting and explained thoroughly. Unfortunately, I've never been a fan of neat models to explain team behavior, such as forming, storming, warming, norming, swarming, etc., so the value and accuracy of this model is not immediately apparent to me. On the other hand, throughout the book, Lencioni illustrates and advocates important team concepts:

- **Get the group off-site** for a two-day session each quarter to discuss issues and strategize.
- Early on, **develop ground rules** (we call them operating principles) to govern group behavior.
- **Build trust by encouraging disclosure**, using techniques such as introductory exercises and personality assessments.
- **Encourage lively discussion and debate** within the team.
- **Create a simple means of evaluating team progress** toward its objective.
- **Encourage cross-functional responsibility** for all team objectives.
- Immediately **address poor individual behavior** and remove disruptive team members.
- **Demonstrate loyalty to the executive team**; it must supercede loyalty to the department.

Admirably, at the core of this book, the author encourages team members to develop close working relationships, so they can engage and challenge each other in debating real issues. Lencioni is a strong advocate of fostering conflict within the boundaries of the team, encouraging members to "fight" and "get in each other's faces."

Although at times you'll feel like you're reading a compilation of the minutes from your last twenty meetings, the book is peppered with valuable points for business teams.

PASS IT ALONG!

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Can't Make It to Our Course?

We'll Come to You!

Beacon Hill Tech is now running its two-day Leading Project TeamsSM course at our clients' sites. With just one month of lead-time, we will organize our course, at a venue of your choice, for your department or company. Although the course is essentially the same as our open enrollment seminar, we are able to customize certain aspects to address your specific needs. If you are interested in learning more about our on-site course, or any of our products and services, I encourage you to visit our website: beaconhilltech.com or give me a call at 781-544-0161.

-- Jeff Antos