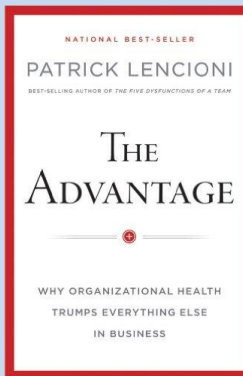




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The Advantage Patrick Lencioni



Why read this book?

“There is a competitive advantage out there, arguably more powerful than any other. Is it superior strategy? Faster innovation? Smarter employees? No, New York Times best-selling author, Patrick Lencioni, argues that the seminal difference between successful companies and mediocre ones has little to do with what they know and how smart they are and more to do with how healthy they are. In this book, Lencioni brings together his vast experience and many of the themes cultivated in his other best-selling books and delivers a first: a cohesive and comprehensive exploration of the unique advantage organizational health provides.” (Amazon.com)

Key Quotes

“The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health. Yet it is ignored by most leaders even though it is simple, free, and available to anyone who wants it.” (P. 1)

“Few organizations invest nearly enough time and energy in making their leadership teams cohesive, and certainly not with the level of rigor that it requires and deserves.” (P. 20)

“When leadership team members avoid discomfort among themselves, they only transfer it in far greater quantities to larger groups of people throughout the organization they’re supposed to be serving.” (P. 40)

“If an organization is tolerant of everything, it will stand for nothing.” (P. 91)

“There is just no escaping the fact that the single biggest factor determining whether an organization is going to get healthier – or not – is the genuine commitment and active involvement of the person in charge.” (P. 191)

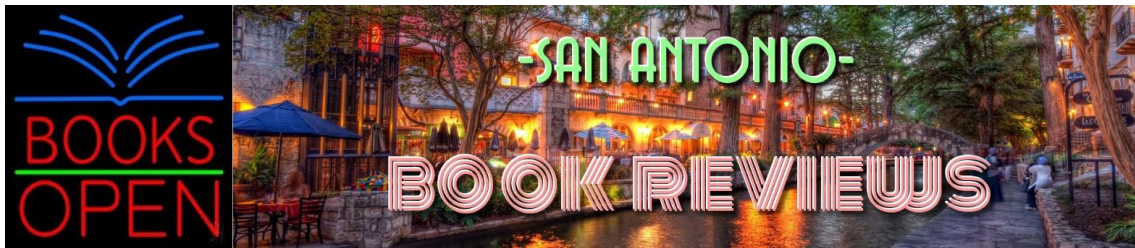
BLUE SKY LEADERSHIP CONSULTING | 210-219-9934 | PETER@BLUESKYLEADERSHIP.COM

Blue Sky Leadership Consulting works with organizations to leverage Strategic Thinking and Execution Planning and we encompass many of the principles in these books into our Four Decisions™ methodology and development of company's One Page Strategic Plans. Whatever system you decide to use, understand them fully, implement them slowly and completely and maintain the discipline and rhythm necessary to see concrete results. Employees tire of “Flavor of the Month” and thrive on organizational alignment, execution of plans and achievements that garner a sense of accomplishment.



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Volume 3
Issue 2



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So *WHY* Organizational Health

Lencioni has found that leaders just don't feel the need or desire to focus on organizational health. While it is a critical component to all areas of success in an organization "more than talent. More than knowledge. More than innovation." (P. 3) leaders have a bias against embracing it. We all can identify the signs of organizations that HAVE IT...accountability, good communication, high morale, low turnover, etc. And the huge advantage it gives you is that "the healthier an organization is, the more of its intelligence it is able to tap into and use." (P. 11).

Lencioni presents us with a Four Disciplines model:



Discipline 1: Build a cohesive leadership team

A detailed perspective can be found in Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

You start by understanding that a team is "a small group of people who are collectively responsible for achieving a common objective for their organization." (P. 21) So your first consideration must be to ensure you have the right (small) number on the team and that they provide critical talents and insights for your organization. Then you work as a team to embrace the five behaviors to a cohesive team.





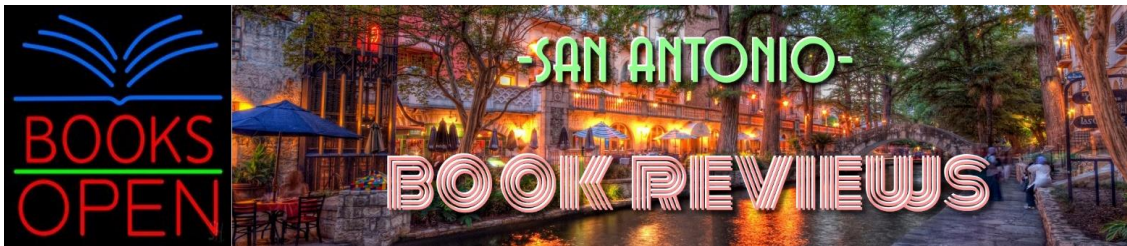
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1. TRUST – You truly must TRUST one another, be vulnerable, have each other’s back.
 - a. Personal Histories
 - b. Behavioral profiling tools
 - c. The leader goes first
2. Mastering CONFLICT – productive disagreement, pursuit of truth, healthy discomfort
 - a. Behavioral assessment
 - b. Artificial Harmony _____ | _____ Mean-spirited personal attacks.
[Constructive _____ Destructive]
 - c. Mining for conflict: gently demand that people come clean and debate. Give permission.
 - d. Provide clear guidelines and expectations.
3. Achieving COMMITMENT – weigh in – buy in; disagree and commit.
 - a. Leave every meeting with clarity on what has been agreed upon
 - b. Hold every member of the team ACCOUNTABLE for their part in implementation
4. Embracing ACCOUNTABILITY – Peer to Peer Accountability; willing to confront each other
 - a. The leader must commit to holding people accountable – the final arbiter.
 - b. “To hold someone accountable is to care about them enough to risk having them blame you for pointing out their deficiencies.” (P. 57)
 - c. **This is the most prevalent area plaguing teams today.**
 - d. It is NOT kind to withhold information that will help employees improve.
 - e. Behaviors vs. Measurables
 - f. Use the Team Effectiveness Exercise- how do we help the team and hurt the team
 - g. Public vs. private – for cohesive teams, accountability is handled during a meeting BUT – USE JUDGEMENT.
5. Focusing on RESULTS – “the only measure of a great team – or great organization – is whether it accomplishes what it sets out to accomplish.” (P. 65)
 - a. Goals are shared across the entire team
 - b. Where should loyalty and priority be focused – Your corporate team or your departmental team?
 - c. Collective priorities must come first

Discipline 2 - Create Clarity

Clarity is created by achieving alignment and alignment means that the top of the organization is totally in sync with one another on big and small issues. When they are not aligned the disagreements and conflict flows downhill to be dealt with by others and that creates a mess. It means being very clear about six key questions:

1. Why do we exist?
2. How do we behave?
3. What do we do?
4. How will we succeed?
5. what is most important , right now?
6. Who must do what?



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Lencioni states the importance of spending the time necessary to truly answer these questions AS A TEAM. Further he states, “more than getting the right answer, it’s often more important to simply have an answer – one that is directionally correct and around which all team members can commit.” (P. 78)

1. Core purpose has to be grand and aspirational yet it must be TRUE. It also has NOTHING to do with marketing! Answer the question: How do we contribute to a better world? It generally falls into one of these categories: your customer, your industry or a greater cause, your community, your employees, or wealth.
2. Behavior is embodied in your organizations CORE VALUES and successful organizations use these values to guide them and help to curb the need for micromanaging your employees. They also help you to say NO. Guard against too many values and be sure they are WHO YOU ARE.

Lencioni warns that there are different kinds of values:

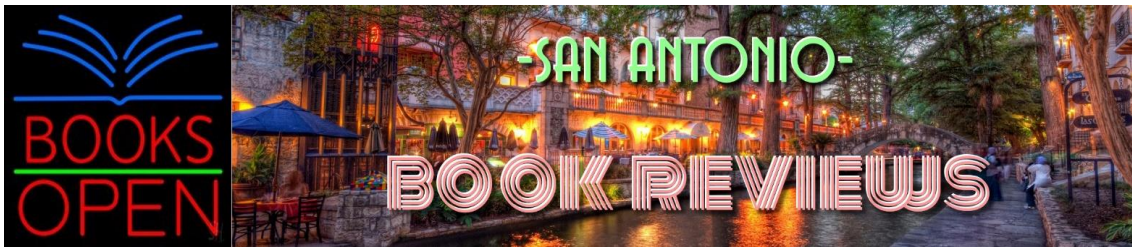
- a. Core values
 - b. Aspirational values
 - c. Accidental values
 - d. Permission-to-play values
3. What do we do – should be a concise, one sentence business definition.
 4. Your strategy comes out when you answer the question of ‘How will we succeed?’
“An organization’s strategy is nothing more than the collection of intentional decisions a company makes to give itself the best chance to thrive and differentiate from competitors.” (P. 107)
Lencioni recommends building this strategy around 3 strategic anchors. Porter calls the process Activity System Maps. Some call these your Brand Promise.
 5. Execution strategy is defined by determining what is most important RIGHT NOW. To truly gain alignment and focus you must narrow things down to one top priority. Lencioni talks about it as a THEMATIC GOAL – singular, qualitative, temporary and shared across the leadership team. (P. 121-2)
Then define objectives to achieve that goal and then standard operating objectives (day job)
And it all should fit on ONE PAGE.
 6. Role clarity is the final question. Be sure you determine exactly who does what and where accountability lies.

Once you have answered these questions it is important to document them, as Lencioni says, in a playbook. It should be short and accessible at all times.

Discipline 3 - Over communicate Clarity

This discipline is ALL about COMMUNICATION. Lots of it! Once you have the answers to your clarity questions, you must communicate to the organization – many times and in many ways. They will not “hear” it the first or second or third time. This also ensures that they understand the importance and reality of those messages.

The second critical component is to establish clear communication on what is happening now and that the communication from the leadership team is consistent. This requires effective cascading communication so everyone is telling the same story, at the same time to ALL the people. Also create effective ways for the employees to communicate back up and through the chain.



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Discipline 4 – Reinforce Clarity

The final discipline is to build these elements into the foundation of the company. “An organization has to institutionalize its culture without bureaucratizing it.” (P. 153) Be sure your hiring practices, training systems, performance systems, and all your processes embody the answers to your six questions. And this is up to the leaders to do – not to delegate it to others.

1. Right people in the right seats requires you to define those terms and to establish a structure and methodology to ensure that cultural fit.
2. Onboarding needs to reinforce why you exist, your values, and how you do business.
3. Coaching and mentoring your employees needs systems that again tie back to these expectations – another opportunity to “over communicate”.
4. How you compensate and reward your employees needs to reinforce the need to do what is best for the organization.
5. Recognition again should motivate the right behaviors and align with the organization and be done often and timely.
6. Firing employees and your process for knowing when to let people go is also a critical human system

These human systems also should be as simple as possible – don’t overcomplicate what you build.

The Four Meetings

Meetings – effective meetings – are critical to a healthy organization. Lencioni recommends four types:

Administrative –	DAILY CHECK-IN lasting 5-10 minutes
Tactical meetings –	WEEKLY STAFF Meetings lasting 45-90 minutes
Strategic sessions –	ADHOC TOPICAL meetings lasting 2-4 hours
Developmental –	QUARTERLY OFF-SITE REVIEWS lasting 1-2 days

Clarity is created by achieving alignment and alignment means that the top of the organization is totally in sync with one another on big and small issues.

YOUR Advantage!

Capture your advantage today:

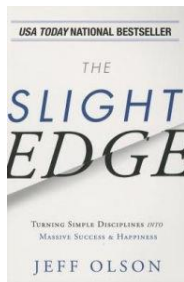
- Build and maintain a COHESIVE leadership team
- Create clarity – six questions – and update regularly
- Overcommunicate clarity – Tell them, remind them, tell them again, NO MUSHROOM dwellers
- Reinforce clarity – create the systems and processes to support and reinforce your Healthy Organization



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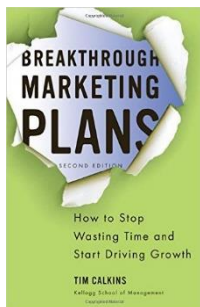
<i>Calendar of Events</i>		
March 18 th	8:00 AM – Wittigs	The Slight Edge
April 22 nd	8:00 AM – Wittigs	Breakthrough Marketing Plans
May 27 th	8:00 AM – Wittigs	The Storytellers Secret
June 17 th	8:00 AM – Wittigs	
July 22 nd	8:00 AM – Wittigs	
August 26 th	8:00 AM – Wittigs	
September 23 rd	8:00 AM – Wittigs	
October 21 st	8:00 AM – Wittigs	
November 18 th	8:00 AM – Wittigs	
December 16 th	8:00 AM – Wittigs	

Friday March 18th



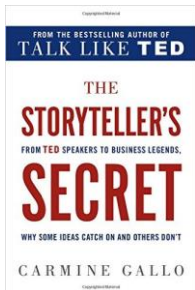
The Slight Edge is a way of thinking, a way of processing information that enables you to make the daily choices that will lead you to the success and happiness you desire. Learn why some people make dream after dream come true, while others just continue dreaming and spend their lives building dreams for someone else. The Slight Edge is not just another self-help tool for traveling the path to success. It is the doorway to creating powerful results in any area of your life, by using tools you already hold within you.

Friday April 22nd



By STEPHANIE NELSON on February 3, 2014
Highly recommended read for those seeking assurance that their strategic marketing plans connect the dots and deliver the desired results. So many times, marketing plans devolve into a morass of media relations, tactical trade shows and budgetary considerations without much thought or review. This book really takes you through the steps and gives you concrete advice on how to plan, adjust and tweak your marketing plans to achieve the growth results you desire for your business.

Friday May 27th



In The Storyteller's Secret: From TED Speakers to Business Legends, Why Some Ideas Catch on and Others Don't, communication expert Carmine Gallo reveals the keys to telling powerful stories that inspire, motivate, educate, build brands, launch movements, and change lives. The New York Times has called a well-told story "a strategic tool with irresistible power" - the proof lies in the success stories of 50 icons, leaders, and legends featured in The Storyteller's Secret: Whether your goal is to educate, fundraise, inspire teams, build an award-winning culture, or to deliver memorable presentations, a story is your most valuable asset and your competitive advantage. (Amazon.com)