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sums

PATRICK LENCIONI

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM*

THE ADVANTAGE



WHY ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH
TRUMPS EVERYTHING ELSE
IN BUSINESS

*Free Book Summaries.
Created for Church Leaders.*



The Advantage | *Patrick Lencioni*



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.

- Patrick Lencioni, The Advantage

The Case for Organizational Health

With that bold statement, Patrick Lencioni delivers perhaps his finest work to date – no mean feat considering that his eight business fables remain required reading for leaders in any organization – especially ChurchWorld.

Instead of trying to become smarter, Lencioni asserts that leaders and organizations need to shift their focus to becoming healthier, allowing them to tap into the more-than-sufficient intelligence and expertise they already have.

What’s the secret to discovering organizational health? **Or to put it more bluntly, why do leaders struggle to embrace it?**

According to Lencioni, it’s because too many leaders quietly believe they are too sophisticated, too busy, or too analytical to bother with it. In other words, they think it’s beneath them. Before

leaders can tap into the power of organizational health, they must humble themselves enough to overcome the three biases that prevent them from embracing it:

Three Biases

- **The Sophistication Bias:** organizational health is so simple and accessible that many leaders have a hard time seeing it as a real opportunity for meaningful advantage. It doesn’t require great intelligence or sophistication – just uncommon levels of discipline, courage, persistence, and common sense.
- **The Adrenaline Bias:** becoming a healthy organization takes a little time; unfortunately, too many leaders suffer from adrenaline addiction as they are hooked on the daily rush of activity and firefighting within their own organizations.
- **The Quantification Bias:** the benefits of becoming a healthy organization are difficult to accurately quantify. It requires a level of conviction and intuition that many overly analytical leaders have a hard time accepting.

Once organizational health is properly understood and placed into the right context, it will surpass all other disciplines in business as the greatest opportunity for improvement and competitive advantage. Really.

*Get healthier,
not smarter*

The Advantage | *Patrick Lencioni (cont'd)*



Being smart is only half the equation in a successful organization. Yet it somehow occupies almost all the time, energy, and attention of most leaders. The other half of the equation, the one that is largely neglected, is about being healthy.

Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage*

Smart vs. Healthy

In Patrick Lencioni's latest book *The Advantage*, you will find the following chart:

Two Requirements for Success:	
Smart	Healthy
Strategy	Minimal Politics
Marketing	Minimal Confusion
Finance	High Morale
Technology	High Productivity
Low Turnover	

Lencioni comments: "Whenever I list the qualities for leaders, I usually get one of the following reactions, and sometimes both. Often they laugh quietly, in a nervous, almost guilty kind of way. Or they barely sigh, like parents do when they hear about a family where the kids do what they're told the first time they're

asked. In either case, it's as though they're thinking, 'Wouldn't that be nice?' or, 'Can you imagine?'

None of the leaders – even the most cynical ones – deny that their organizations would be transformed if they could achieve the characteristics of a healthy organization. Yet they almost always gravitate to the left side of the chart above, retreating to the safe, measurable "smart" side of the equation.

Why?

Because it's relatively safe and predictable, which most leaders prefer. That's how they've been trained, and that's where they're comfortable.

It takes discipline to move beyond the safe and predictable, into the sometimes awkward and messy area of organizational health.

The Four Disciplines

Discipline 1: Build a Cohesive Leadership Team

An organization simply cannot be healthy if the people who

are chartered with running it are not behaviorally cohesive in five fundamental ways. In any kind of organization, from a corporation to a small entrepreneurial company to a church or school, dysfunction and lack of cohesion at the top inevitably lead to a lack of health throughout.

An organization doesn't become healthy in a linear, tidy fashion.



Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage*

The Advantage | *Patrick Lencioni (cont'd)*

Discipline 2: Create Clarity

In addition to being behaviorally cohesive, the leadership team of a healthy organization must be intellectually aligned and committed to the same answers to six simple but critical questions. There can be no daylight between leaders around these fundamental issues.

Discipline 3: Overcommunicate Clarity

Once a leadership team has established behavioral cohesion and created clarity around the answers to those questions, it must then communicate those answers to employees clearly, repeatedly, enthusiastically, and repeatedly (that's no typo). When it comes to reinforcing clarity, there is no such thing as too much communication.

Discipline 4: Reinforce Clarity

Finally, in order for an organization to remain healthy over time, its leaders must establish a few critical, non-bureaucratic systems to reinforce clarity in every process that involves people. Every policy, every program, every activity should be designed to remind your team what is really most important.

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.

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Other Recommended Resources:

1. Download the Vision Frame overview [here](#). The Vision Frame represents five irreducible questions of clarity. Therefore the ability to answer these five questions in a clear, concise, and compelling way is the litmus test of clarity for the ministries we serve.
2. Read Will Mancini's review of The Advantage - three blog posts [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) that illustrate how the Vision Clarity principles of Church Unique are closely related to the principles outlined by Patrick Lencioni in The Advantage.
3. Read a comparison of Lencioni's 6 Questions to the Vision Frame's 5 Questions [here](#). This comparison followed Lencioni's presentation at Willow Creek's Global Leadership Summit in August 2012.



Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Will Mancini

Vision Clarity Connection

The Advantage is Patrick Lencioni's magnum opus and is one of those go-to books I will reference for a long time. I am blown away by how Lencioni makes a compelling case for organizational clarity through the big idea of organizational health. Church leaders should not misidentify *The Advantage* as yet another entry into the overused technical category of "church health" because, for church leaders, this book is about leading teams and organizations with clarity.

Don't let the difference approaches and frameworks of vision/clarity authors (e.g. Jim Collin's and Patrick Lencioni) confuse your own thinking, instead let their differences enlighten your approach as you focus on what God's calling you to do. And always remember, clarity isn't everything, but it changes everything.

How to Go Ahead

One:

Use the Advantage to illuminate your church's use of clarity models. Has your team made a conscious decision to use a model? Discuss whether or not the use (or non-use) of a model (or models) has brought confusion or clarity. Be honest with points of confusion and then dream big about how stunning clarity in your ministry could impact the kingdom.

Two:

As a team, discuss the three leadership biases that Lencioni articulates. Have each member of your leadership team force rank each bias from one to three as it applies to your context. Determine which action step needs to be taken to deal with the most prevalent bias.

Three:

Determine where as a ministry you are exhibiting your greatest progress with clarity. What words, phrases, or slogans are repeated in your church and are referenced to support decisions?

Write the top phrases and match them up to Lencioni's six questions from *The Advantage*. What questions have you answered well? Which questions are not? What clarity needs to be created? What existing clarity needs to be reinforced?



Will Mancini

Founder & Clarity Evangelist

Will Mancini wants you and your ministry to experience the benefits of stunning, God-given clarity. As a pastor-turned-vision-coach, Will has worked with an unprecedented variety of churches from growing megachurches and missional communities to mainline revitalization and church plants. He is the founder of Auxano, creator of VisionRoom.com and the author of *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision and Create Movement*.

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