

The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive

Title: The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive

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Book Description:

In this stunning follow-up to his best-selling book, *The Five Temptations of a CEO*, Patrick Lencioni offers up another leadership fable that's every bit as compelling and illuminating as its predecessor. This time, Lencioni's focus is on a leader's crucial role in building a healthy organization—an often overlooked but essential element of business life that is the linchpin of sustained success. Readers are treated to a story of corporate intrigue as the frustrated head of one consulting firm faces a leadership challenge so great that it threatens to topple his company, his career, and everything he holds true about leadership itself. In the story's telling, Lencioni helps his readers understand the disarming simplicity and power of creating organizational health, and reveals four key disciplines that they can follow to achieve it.

Book Quotes:

If everything is important, then nothing is. (xiii)

No one understands the power of saying this more than a person who leads an organization. Whether it is a multinational corporation, a department within a larger company, or a small entrepreneurial venture, every organization provides its leader with more distractions and concerns than one person can handle. (xiii)

The key to managing this challenge, of course, is to identify a reasonable number of issues that will have the greatest possible impact on the success of your organization, and then spend most of your time thinking about, talking about, and working on those issues. (xiii)

I believe that all successful organizations share two qualities: they are smart, and they are healthy. (xiv)

Finally—and this point is critical—no one but the head of an organization can make it healthy. (xv)

And so, as odd as it may seem, it is actually more important for leaders to focus on making their organizations healthy than on making them smart. (xv)

The purpose of this book is to help executives understand the disarming simplicity and power of organizational health and the four actionable steps that allow them to achieve. (xvi)

Discipline One: Build & Maintain a cohesive leadership team.

Building a cohesive leadership team is the most critical of the four disciplines because it enables the other

three. (140)

The essence of a cohesive leadership team is trust, which is marked by an absence of politics, unnecessary anxiety, and wasted energy. (143)

Politics is the result of unresolved issues at the highest level of an organization, and attempting to curb politics without addressing issues at the executive level is pointless. (143)

More than anything else, cohesive leadership teams are efficient. (144)

One of the best ways to recognize a cohesive team is the nature of its meetings. Passionate. Intense. Exhausting. Never boring. (144)

Finally, cohesive teams fight. But they fight about issues, not personalities. (145)

How do you assess your team for cohesiveness? (149-150)

- Are meetings compelling? Are the important issues being discussed during meetings?
- Do team members engage in unguarded debate? Do they honestly confront one another?
- Do team members apologize if they get out of line? Do they ever get out of line?
- Do team members understand one another?
- Do team members avoid gossiping about one another?

Discipline Two: Create Organizational Clarity

It aligns its resources, especially the human ones, around common concepts, values, definitions, goals, and strategies, thereby realizing the synergies that all great companies must achieve. (153)

I believe that a company cannot be called great if virtually every employee, and certainly every executive, cannot articulate the basic definition of what the company does. (159)

Here, in summary, are the levels of goals that healthy organizations must embrace: (163)

- Thematic goals: What is the period's focus?
- Major strategic goals: What are the key areas which relate to that focus, and exactly what needs to be achieved?
- Metrics: What are the ongoing measures that allow the organization to keep score?

Discipline Three: Over Communicate Organizational Clarity

The first step is to embrace the three most critical practices of effective organizational communication: repetition, simple messages, and multiple mediums. (168)

Discipline Four: Reinforce Organizational Clarity Through Human Systems

Unfortunately, most organizations place the wrong kind of emphasis on performance management, and in the

process they lose the true essence of what performance management is about: communication and alignment.
(176)