



The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business

Patrick Lencioni

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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. Simply put, an organization is healthy when it is whole, consistent and complete, when its management, operations and culture are unified. Healthy organizations outperform their counterparts, are free of politics and confusion and provide an environment where star performers never want to leave. Lencioni's first non-fiction book provides leaders with a groundbreaking, approachable model for achieving organizational health--complete with stories, tips and anecdotes from his experiences consulting to some of the nation's leading organizations. In this age of informational ubiquity and nano-second change, it is no longer enough to build a competitive advantage based on intelligence alone. The Advantage provides a foundational construct for conducting business in a new way--one that maximizes human potential and aligns the organization around a common set of principles.

The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business Details

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Joya Cousin says

This easy-to-read leadership handbook is Patrick Lencioni's follow up effort to his earlier and very effectively presented business fables. The subtitle - why organizational health trumps everything else in business - is a theme that resonates with me, and would with any manager who knows what attempting to lead in a dysfunctional organization feels like. Nothing gets done until you fix the core issues.

Lencioni presents the deceptively simple 4 disciplines model, which is centered on building cohesiveness throughout an organization through clarity. Clarity is obtained by establishing and reinforcing 5 behaviors, and continually answering 6 important questions.

To some, this approach may seem too touchy-feely, but in my experience, this is where the real hard work lies. Investing the intensive effort and high levels of discipline required to tackle destructive problems such as lack of trust will put dedicated leaders on the right track toward transforming even very troubled organizations.

I recommend this book, and Patrick Lencioni's work in general, to any General Manager or CEO seeking to achieve lasting results by build a humane, effective and resilient organization.

Denis Vasilev says

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Romans Karpelcevs says

Great book, short and very useful. Rhymes a lot with The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (and probably with other books of his), but isn't too repetitive to be boring.
Will definitely re-read and will start by implementing some of the things in the small(-er) team, not execs.

David says

My pastor had all the team leaders at our church read this book. Leadership organization and business books are not usually my cup of tea, though they can be quite helpful. This one was great! I see lots of lessons and principles in here to use in my full-time ministry as well as my volunteer work at my church. It is great for ministry leaders, but is not faith based. Actually, it barely mentions churches at all. So if you're a business leader, this book would be great for you too. Basically, anyone who leads people and works with teams could benefit from this.

Szymon Kulec says

The book starts in an unfortunate "I'm the expert, let me share my stories supporting my theories" way. Recently, whenever I read a book like this, I get a rash. Fortunately, beside patting on his own back, author delivers value.

The value delivered in this book, would create a perfect mix with "E-Myth Revisited". This one is all about creating a clear mission statement for the company, dividing between strategy and tactics, making the company better. One could argue that some arguments and approaches presented in here a bit old-fashioned, but still, it delivers a solid foundation for having a coherent way to organizing a company.

Brandy says

A great outline of how to structure a healthy organization. Though there are many great examples and tips, it is not an instruction manual... just an excellent first step toward creating a strong healthy organization.

Tung says

Disclaimer: I absolutely detest business books. For me, they are self-help books (which I also detest) for monolithic organizations. I don't care about the habits of leaders; I don't care about the dysfunctions of teams; I don't care about strategy or process improvements. I read for good prose (which all business books lack), and I read for good stories (also, which business books lack). Every business book I've ever read I read because I was forced to read them; reading this book was for the same reason. Lencioni is a well-known business consultant who has worked with many successful and unsuccessful organizations, and who has written several popular business book. In this book, he reveals what he considers the secret of what separates great organizations from terrible ones. Ready for the secret? The best companies: build good teams, have a clear vision/mission, and communicate that well. Lencioni provides details about why each component matters, and how to discern whether or not your organization implements that component well. Throughout, he also provides personal anecdotes about organizations that succeeded and or failed in each area. My problems remain that I have no investment in businesses, so I don't care about the subject matter. I also wish he didn't provide each anecdote anonymously – I would have found it eminently better if he had included the real names of the anecdotes he used; for all I know he made them all up. The book is a quick read, so I'm sure the audience for which this book was intended will enjoy it.

Gabriela says

3 stars because I'm rating it as it is: a detailed checklist on how to build a cohesive team, set goals, communicate within the organization, have effective meetings, and so on (otherwise, I'd give it a 2 for an awful writing style, rushed last part and general consultant patronizing feel). It is like listening to a person you don't like at all, and yet knowing that there's some sense and truth in what he says. I'm focusing on the latter.

Swaroop says

Simple ideas organised and communicated in an easy to read. Could have been a bit more concise.

John says

Lencioni is one of my favorite business leaders to learn from. "The Advantage" might pack the most punch in terms of the advice Lencioni offers, but being a personal fan of his fable style, it was my least favorite book of his to read. That isn't because it is poorly written, it is just written in a typical business style.

In "The Advantage," Lencioni asks the question: what is the most important thing a business can do? The answer to that isn't found in an organization's strategy, intelligence, or hiring practices. The answer is creating a healthy culture. Lencioni says, "The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health."

He considers, "The seminal difference between successful companies and mediocre or unsuccessful ones has little, if anything, to do with what they know or how smart they are; it has everything to do with how healthy they are. An organization that is healthy will inevitably get smarter over time. That's because people in a healthy organization, beginning with the leaders, learn from one another, identify critical issues, and recover quickly from mistakes."

I couldn't agree more. How does one achieve organizational health? The best companies build good teams, have a clear mission, and communicate that well. "There is no such thing as too much communication," Lencioni says. Clarity, Lencioni argues, is obtained by establishing and reinforcing behaviors, and answering six important questions.

Those six critical questions leaders must give their employees are:

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, now?
6. Who must do what?

Creating a healthy organization is a magnet for attracting not just high level performers, but high level performers who are a good fit with the organization. Healthy organizations get the best out of every employee, and align employees in a unified goal.

The responsibility of creating healthy organizations, of course, lies on the leader. Lencioni says, “The only way for the leader of a team to create a safe environment for his team members to be vulnerable is by stepping up and doing something that feels unsafe and uncomfortable first. By getting naked before anyone else, by taking the risk of making himself vulnerable with no guarantee that other members of the team will respond in kind, a leader demonstrates an extraordinary level of selflessness and dedication to the team. And that gives him the right, and the confidence, to ask others to do the same.”

"The Advantage" is a helpful book. For those who prepare a cut-to-the-chase style, it might even be your favorite Lencioni book. While it isn't my favorite, I certainly recommend it.

Jeff says

Great book. Some takeaways:

"The seminal difference between successful companies and mediocre or unsuccessful ones has little, if anything, to do with what they know or how smart they are; it has everything to do with how healthy they are. An organization that is healthy will inevitably get smarter over time. That's because people in a healthy organization, beginning with the leaders, learn from one another, identify critical issues, and recover quickly from mistakes."

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Ray Bliss says

The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni

The Advantage is about organizational health improvement. The four disciplines are building a cohesive leadership team, create clarity, over communicate clarity and reinforce clarity. That might not sound like much to you, but it's everything. Having read almost all of Patrick Lencioni's books, this is the first one I read that was not a parable. That made it a little difficult to start really getting into but once I reached page 20 I was hooked. What he presents is so uncomplicated and easy to follow, that you would assume (there I go using that word) that everyone would already be doing this. Sadly many businesses do not follow these simple principles, despite them not wanting to see their company fail. I feel Mr. Lencioni's books should be required reading for anyone in management and above or anyone looking to be in a leadership position. All of his books have a comprehensive cohesion that fit together nicely with all his other books.

If you have never read any of Patrick's books, start with "The Three Signs of a Miserable Job." To pass up his works I feel your doing a great disservice to your business, team and employees.

As a final note, please grab your highlighter, as every book has great things you will want to remember.

