⊕ **table**group
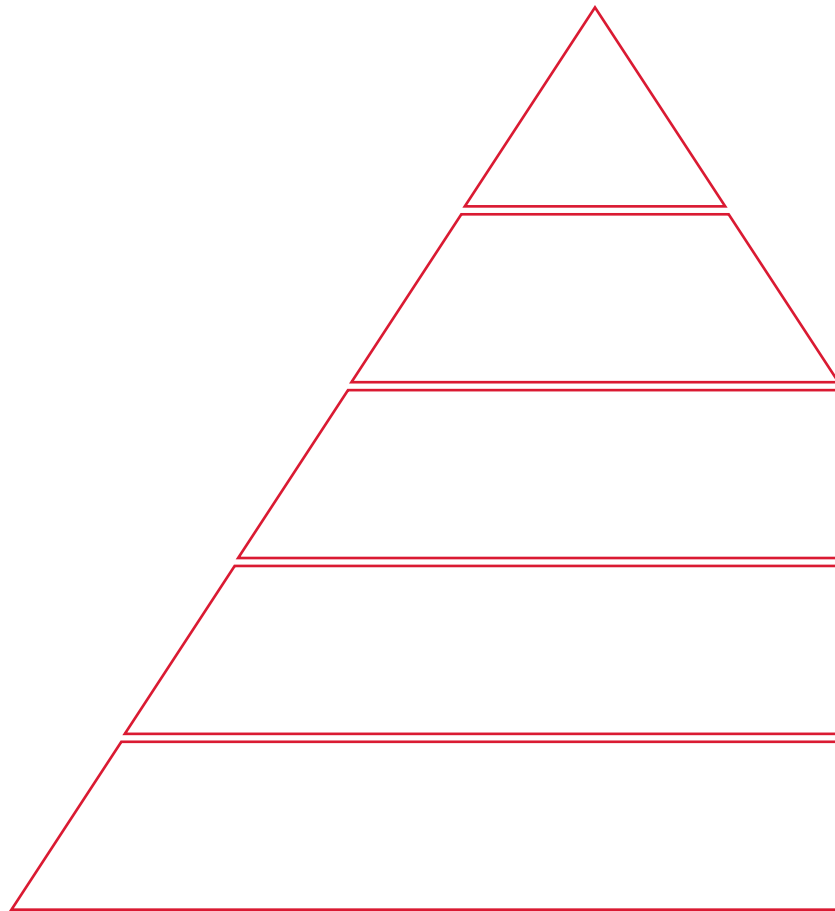
Team Assessment Report

BASED ON THE MODEL IN THE BEST-SELLING BOOK, *THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM*

A Sample Team from A Sample Company | 11-06-2019

Introduction

The primary purpose of this report is to provide your team with a sense of its strengths and areas for improvement. While the Assessment itself is certainly quantitative and data-driven, its most important aspect is the qualitative perspective it provides for your team and the discussion that it provokes around specific issues.
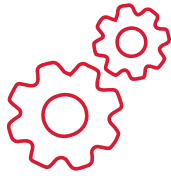
If you have not yet read the book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, the following pages are included to give you a summary of the teamwork model that this Assessment is based upon. This will help you interpret your team's results.

*If you are familiar with the dysfunctions model, you can skip ahead to page 5, and investigate the interpretations of your scores.

The Model

Like it or not, all teams are potentially dysfunctional. This is inevitable because they are made up of fallible, imperfect human beings. From the basketball court to the executive suite, politics and confusion are more the rule than the exception.

But the power of teamwork is great. The founder of a billion dollar company best expressed that power when he once said, "If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time."

Whenever a group of leaders hears this adage, they immediately nod their heads, but in a desperate sort of way. They seem to grasp the truth of it while simultaneously surrendering to the impossibility of actually making it happen.

Fortunately, the causes of dysfunction are both identifiable and curable. However, they don't die easily. Making a team functional and cohesive requires extraordinary levels of courage and discipline.

The following section provides an overview of the five behavioral challenges all teams must continuously work to avoid.

Fortunately, the causes of dysfunction are both identifiable and curable. However, they don't die easily. Making a team functional and cohesive requires extraordinary levels of courage and discipline.

The Five Dysfunctions

DYSFUNCTION #1:

01

ABSENCE OF TRUST

This occurs when team members are reluctant to be vulnerable with one another, and are thus unwilling to admit their mistakes, acknowledge their weaknesses or ask for help. Without a certain comfort level among team members, a foundation of trust is impossible.

DYSFUNCTION #2:

02

FEAR OF CONFLICT

Trust is critical because without it, teams are unlikely to engage in unfiltered, passionate debate about key issues. This creates two problems. First, stifling conflict actually increases the likelihood of destructive, back channel sniping. Second, it leads to sub-optimal decision-making because the team is not benefiting from the true ideas and perspectives of its members.

DYSFUNCTION #3:

03

LACK OF COMMITMENT

Without conflict, it is extremely difficult for team members to truly commit to decisions because they don't feel that they are part of the decision. This often creates an environment of ambiguity and confusion in an organization, leading to frustration among employees, especially top performers.

DYSFUNCTION #4:

04

AVOIDANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

When teams don't commit to a clear plan of action, peer-to-peer accountability suffers greatly. Even the most focused and driven individuals will hesitate to call their peers on counterproductive actions and behaviors if they believe those actions and behaviors were never agreed upon in the first place.

DYSFUNCTION #5:

05

INATTENTION TO RESULTS

When team members are not holding one another accountable, they increase the likelihood that individual ego and recognition will become more important than collective team results. When this occurs, the business suffers and the team starts to unravel.
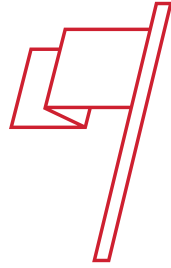
The Rewards

Striving to create a functional, cohesive team is one of the few remaining competitive advantages available to any organization looking for a powerful point of differentiation.

Functional teams get more accomplished in less time than other teams because they avoid wasting time on the wrong issues and revisiting the same topics again and again. They also make higher quality decisions and stick to those decisions by eliminating politics and confusion among themselves and the people they lead. Finally, functional teams keep their best employees longer because "A" players rarely leave organizations where they are part of, or being led by, a cohesive team.

Functional teams get more accomplished in less time than other teams because they avoid wasting time on the wrong issues and revisiting the same topics again and again.

Team Summary

Your assessment scores indicate that results and commitment are likely areas of strength for your team, while trust is potentially an area for improvement, and accountability and conflict are areas of likely concern..

HIGH ——————————— **RESULTS**

LOW ——————————— **ACCOUNTABILITY**

HIGH ——————————— **COMMITMENT**

LOW ——————————— **CONFLICT**

MEDIUM ——— **TRUST**

🟥 **LOW** (LESS THAN 3)   🟨 **MEDIUM** (3 — 3.99)   🟩 **HIGH** (4 & ABOVE)

The Five Behaviors

RESULTS	4.02	
ACCOUNTABILITY	2.98	
COMMITMENT	4.15	
CONFLICT	2.93	
TRUST	3.56	
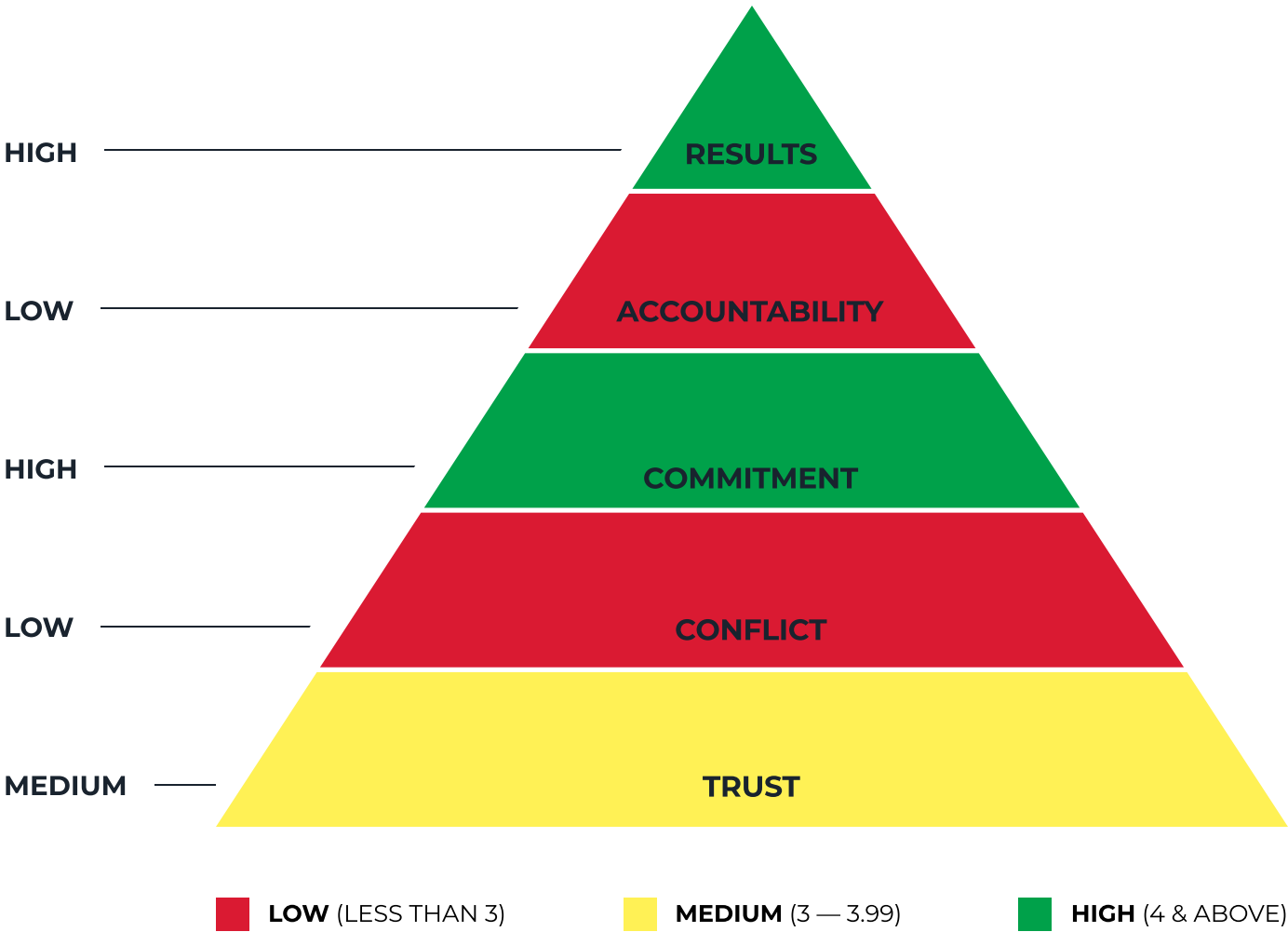
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS
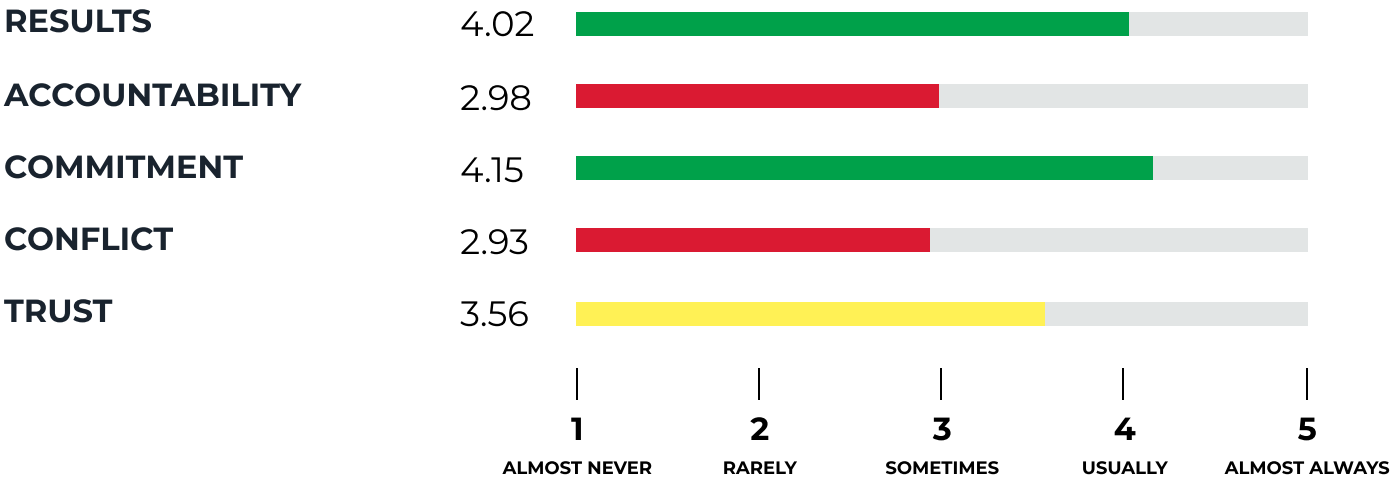
TRUST

Your score in this area was medium, which indicates that your team may need to get more comfortable being vulnerable and open with one another about individual strengths, weaknesses, mistakes and needs for help.

CONFLICT

Your score in this area was low, which indicates that your team is not comfortable engaging in unfiltered discussion around important topics.

COMMITMENT

Your score in this area was high, which indicates that your team is able to buy-in to clear decisions leaving little room for ambiguity and second-guessing.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Your score in this area was low, which indicates that your team hesitates to confront one another about performance and behavioral concerns.

RESULTS

Your score in this area was high, which indicates that your team values collective outcomes more than individual recognition and attainment of status.

The questions listed below represent the top 6 areas where your team scored highest relative to other questions. Understanding and continuing to leverage your team's strengths is as important as identifying and correcting its weaknesses. Please note that questions with an average score above a 4.50 are areas where your team scored particularly high.

24. **The team is clear about its direction and priorities.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.50**

28. **The team is aligned around common objectives.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.38**

19. **Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.38**

09. **The team has a reputation for consistently achieving its objectives.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.38**

37. **Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagreed.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.13**

30. **Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.13**

The questions listed below represent the bottom 8 areas where your team scored lowest relative to other questions. To improve the cohesiveness of your team, it is critical that you understand and address these areas. Please note that questions with an average score below a 3.00 are areas where your team scored particularly low.

07. **Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **2.00**

23. **Team members communicate unpopular opinions to the group.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **2.50**

08. **Team members point out one another's behaviors that hold the team back.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **2.50**

26. **All members of this team are held to the same high standards.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **2.75**

02. **Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

12. **During discussions, team members challenge one another about how they arrived at their conclusions and opinions.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

✕

(Continued from the previous page.)

01. **Team members admit their mistakes.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**	AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

20. **Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**	AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

Areas of Key Differences

(!)

The questions listed below represent the areas where your team members' scores differed from each other in a significant manner. Each question indicates an area that needs to be better understood across the team. The numbers below each question identify the distribution of responses within the team. If there are no questions listed below, each member of your team answered consistently.

26. **All members of this team are held to the same high standards.**
Number of team members in each category:

2	2	0	4	0
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **2.75**

15. **Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.**
Number of team members in each category:

1	0	0	4	3
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.00**

23. **Team members communicate unpopular opinions to the group.**
Number of team members in each category:

2	2	3	0	1
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **2.50**

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(Continued from the previous page.)

21. **The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform.**

Number of team members in each category:

1	2	1	4	0
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **3.00**

Team Culture Questions

BUILDING TRUST
WHAT IS NEEDED TO BUILD TRUST?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members were asked to identify specific areas to build more trust. The number of team members who selected each response appears below. You and your team members had the option to select all that apply.

There would be more trust on our team if people:

4	Admitted their mistakes
3	Reduced the amount of gossiping
1	Let go of grudges
0	Were more forthright with information
0	Would give credit where credit is due
0	Understood each other's working styles
0	Shared professional failures and successes
0	Readily apologized
0	Got to know each other on a personal level
0	Spent more time together

Team Culture Questions

(Continued from the previous page.)

MASTERING CONFLICT

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR DURING CONFLICT?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members were asked whether certain behaviors or actions are acceptable while engaging in conflict and how many of you display them at work.

RESPONSE TO CONFLICT:	UNACCEPTABLE	TOLERABLE	PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE	# OF TEAM MEMBERS WHO ADMIT THEY DO THIS AT WORK
Expressing anger through indirect actions rather than voicing it directly	7	1	0	0
Using strong language when you're upset	6	2	0	2
Raising your voice when you get passionate	2	5	1	7
Excluding other team members from difficult conversations	1	5	2	3
Being outwardly emotional	1	4	3	4
Avoiding someone when you're angry	1	2	5	2
Going beyond the meeting end time to resolve an issue	0	3	5	8

Team Culture Questions
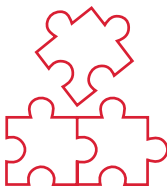
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ACHIEVING COMMITMENT

WHAT PREVENTS TEAM MEMBERS FROM COMMITTING TO DECISIONS?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members had an opportunity to identify reasons that could be contributing to the lack of commitment. The number of team members who selected each option appears next to the corresponding bar. You and your team members had the option to select all that apply.

I sometimes don't buy-in to the team's decisions because:

Decisions are counter to my personal goals

5 OUT OF 8

There is not enough time during meetings

3 OUT OF 8

We are not clear about priorities

2 OUT OF 8

I don't trust my team to follow through

0 OUT OF 8

I don't have all the information

0 OUT OF 8
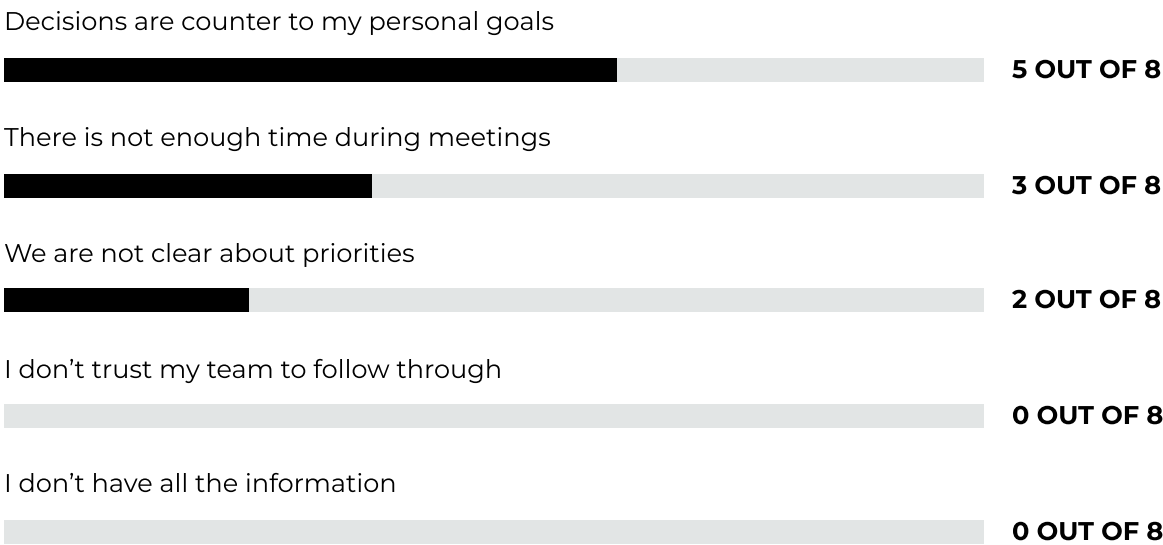
Team Culture Questions
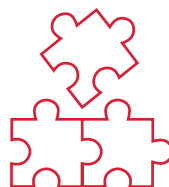
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EMBRACING ACCOUNTABILITY

WHAT WOULD IMPROVE YOUR TEAM'S ABILITY TO HOLD ONE ANOTHER ACCOUNTABLE?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members had an opportunity to identify areas where it would be possible to hold one another accountable more. The number of team members who selected each response appears below. You and your team members had the option to select all that apply.

Our ability to hold one another accountable could improve if we challenged one another to:

6	Review progress against goals during team meetings
6	Have more productive meetings
5	Give one another feedback
2	Address missed deadlines immediately
2	Call one another on unproductive behaviors
1	Follow through on personal commitments
0	Spend more time together
0	Be more direct
0	Publicly share goals
0	Have clearer priorities and goals

Team Culture Questions
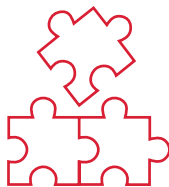
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FOCUSING ON RESULTS
WHAT IS NEEDED TO FOCUS ON RESULTS?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members had an opportunity to identify what you believe might be a distraction from achieving results. The number of team members who selected each option appears next to the corresponding bar. You and your team members had the option to select all that apply.

Some distractions that keep us from focusing on results are:

More emphasis on personal goals than team goals

7 OUT OF 8

Emphasis on career status or progression

5 OUT OF 8

Vague or shifting goals

4 OUT OF 8

Lack of shared rewards

2 OUT OF 8

Lack of drive and urgency

0 OUT OF 8

Insufficient/ineffective processes and structure

0 OUT OF 8
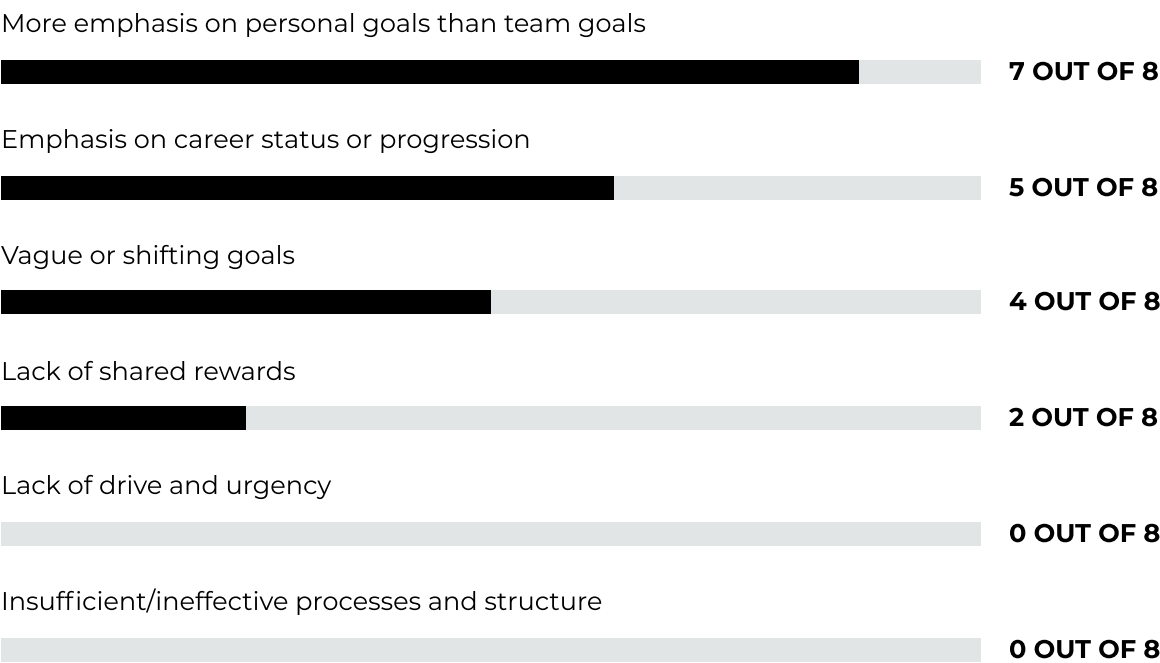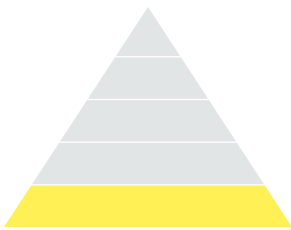
Trust

YOUR TEAM'S AVERAGE SCORE: 3.56

While your team scored medium in trust, it is recommended that you consider using many of the suggestions in the 'Tips & Exercises' section of this report. Please note that by increasing your trust score, your team will have more success in overcoming the other dysfunctions.

01. Team members admit their mistakes.

2.88

06. Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.

3.75

10. Team members ask for help without hesitation.

3.75

13. Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility.

3.75

17. Team members acknowledge and tap into one another's skills and expertise.

4.00

22. Team members willingly apologize to one another.

3.25

31. Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.

3.63

32. Team members can comfortably discuss their personal lives with one another.

3.50

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

Conflict

YOUR TEAM'S AVERAGE SCORE: 2.93

Because your team scored low in conflict, it is recommended that you consider using many of the suggestions in the 'Tips & Exercises' section of this report.

02. **Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.**

2.88

04. **Team meetings are interesting and compelling (not boring).**

3.13

05. **During team meetings, the most important—and difficult—issues are discussed.**

3.00

07. **Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement.**

2.00

12. **During discussions, team members challenge one another about how they arrived at their conclusions and opinions.**

2.88

18. **Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings.**

3.63

23. **Team members communicate unpopular opinions to the group.**

2.50

27. **When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject.**

3.38

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

Commitment

YOUR TEAM'S AVERAGE SCORE: 4.15

Though your team scored high in commitment, it is recommended that you consider one or more of the exercises in the 'Tips & Exercises' section of this report to maintain current levels.

11. **Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon.**

3.88

19. **Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.**

4.38

24. **The team is clear about its direction and priorities.**

4.50

28. **The team is aligned around common objectives.**

4.38

29. **The team is decisive, even when perfect information is not available.**

3.75

33. **The team sticks to decisions.**

4.00

37. **Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagreed.**

4.13

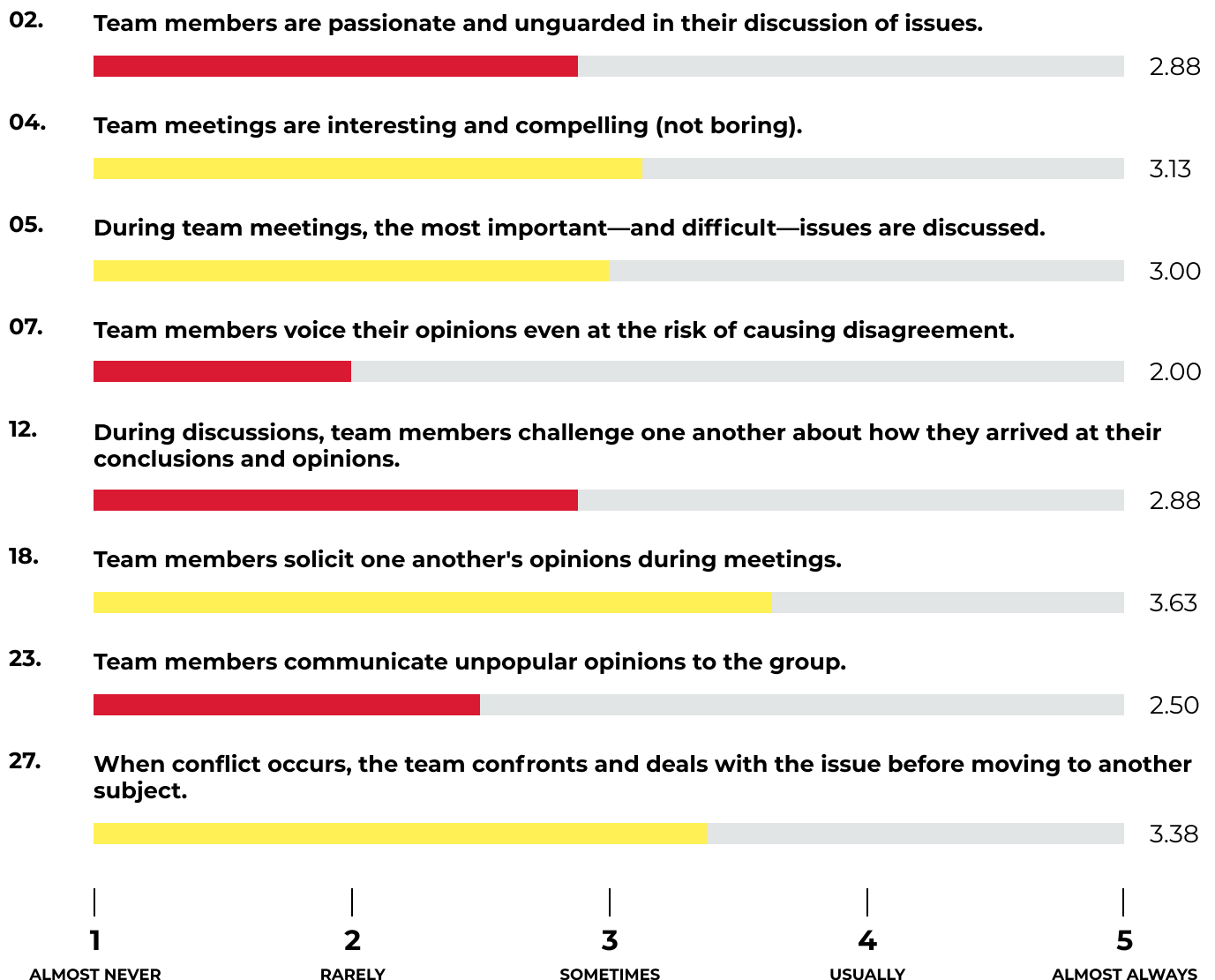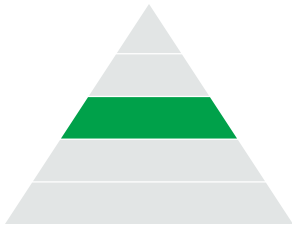| 1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

Accountability

YOUR TEAM'S AVERAGE SCORE: 2.98

Because your team scored low in accountability, it is recommended that you consider using many of the suggestions in the 'Tips & Exercises' section of this report.
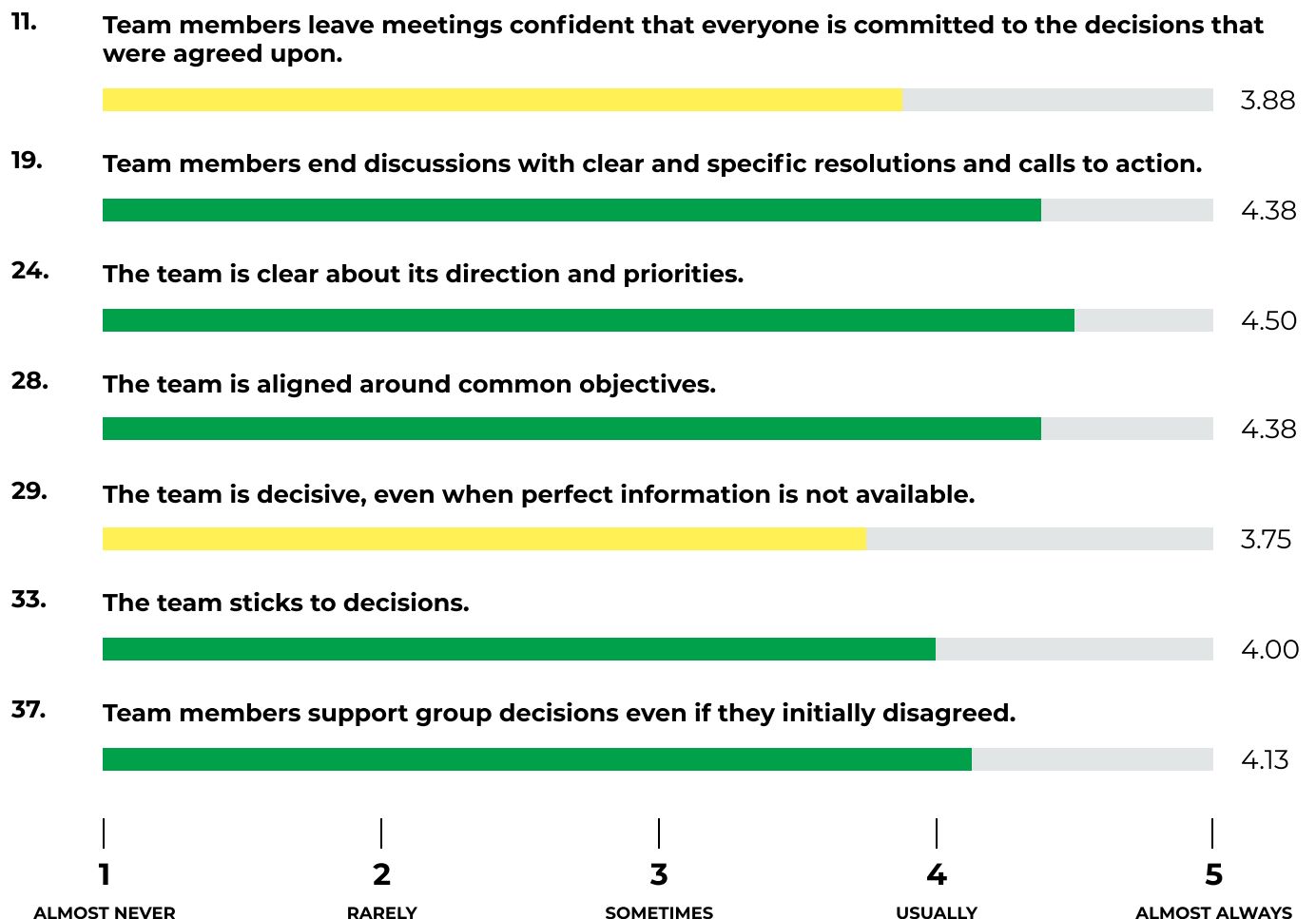
08. Team members point out one another's behaviors that hold the team back.

2.50

16. Team members are quick to confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility.

3.00

20. Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods.

2.88

21. The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform.

3.00

26. All members of this team are held to the same high standards.

2.75

34. Team members consistently follow through on promises and commitments.

3.63

35. Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another.

3.13

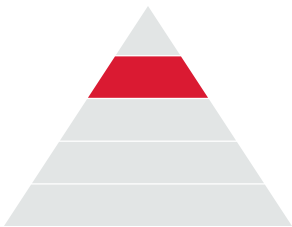| 1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

Results

YOUR TEAM'S AVERAGE SCORE: 4.02

Though your team scored high in results, it is recommended that you consider one or more of the exercises in the 'Tips & Exercises' section of this report to maintain current levels.
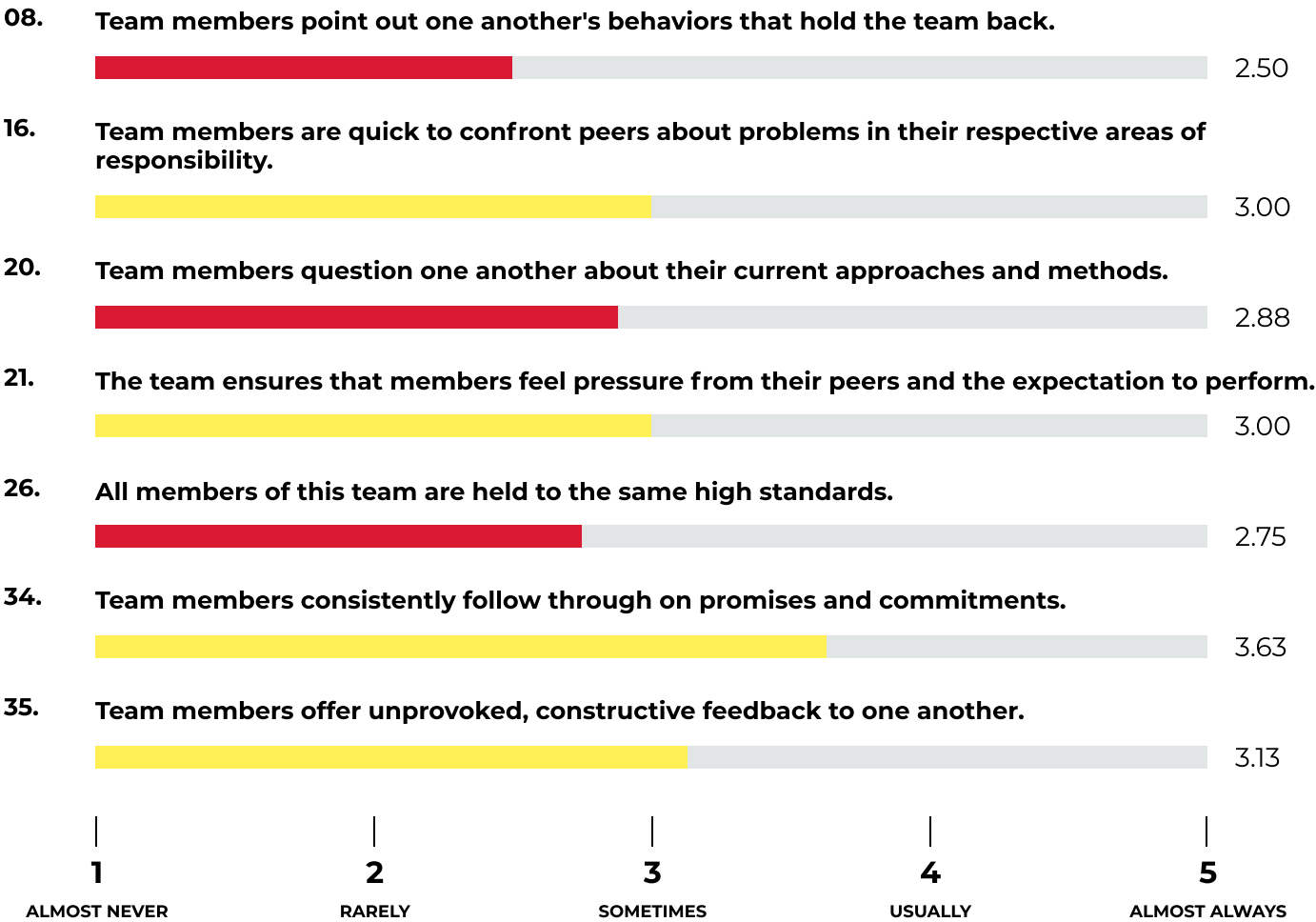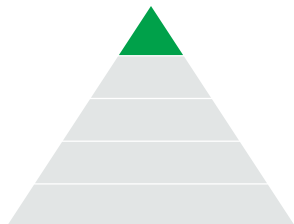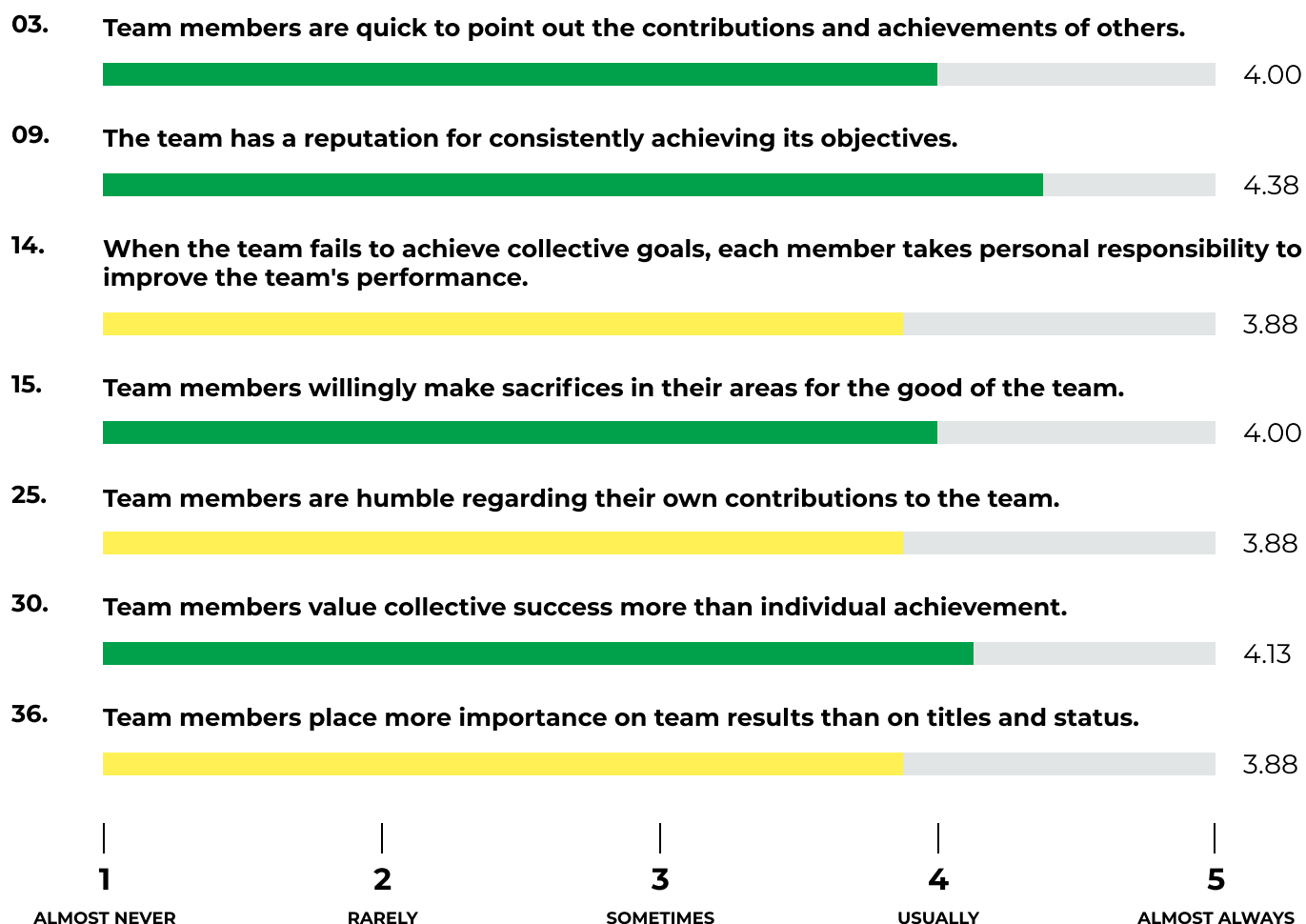
03. Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.

4.00

09. The team has a reputation for consistently achieving its objectives.

4.38

14. When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance.

3.88

15. Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.

4.00

25. Team members are humble regarding their own contributions to the team.

3.88

30. Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.

4.13

36. Team members place more importance on team results than on titles and status.

3.88

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

Item Ranking

These pages shows the ranking, from the most frequent to least frequent, of all 37 statements. A dotted red line separates the 10 least frequent behaviors from the others.

24.   **The team is clear about its direction and priorities.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.50**

28.   **The team is aligned around common objectives.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.38**

19.   **Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.38**

09.   **The team has a reputation for consistently achieving its objectives.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.38**

37.   **Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagreed.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.13**

30.   **Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.13**

17.   **Team members acknowledge and tap into one another's skills and expertise.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **4.00**

15.   **Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.00**

33.   **The team sticks to decisions.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **4.00**

03.   **Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **4.00**

Item Ranking

(Continued from the previous page.)

25.   **Team members are humble regarding their own contributions to the team.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **3.88**

36.   **Team members place more importance on team results than on titles and status.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **3.88**

14.   **When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance.**

BEHAVIOR: **RESULTS**   AVG. SCORE: **3.88**

11.   **Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **3.88**

10.   **Team members ask for help without hesitation.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **3.75**

13.   **Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **3.75**

29.   **The team is decisive, even when perfect information is not available.**

BEHAVIOR: **COMMITMENT**   AVG. SCORE: **3.75**

06.   **Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **3.75**

34.   **Team members consistently follow through on promises and commitments.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **3.63**

31.   **Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **3.63**

Item Ranking

(Continued from the previous page.)

18.   **Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **3.63**

32.   **Team members can comfortably discuss their personal lives with one another.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **3.50**

27.   **When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **3.38**

22.   **Team members willingly apologize to one another.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**   AVG. SCORE: **3.25**

04.   **Team meetings are interesting and compelling (not boring).**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **3.13**

35.   **Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **3.13**

05.   **During team meetings, the most important—and difficult—issues are discussed.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**   AVG. SCORE: **3.00**

- -

21.   **The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **3.00**

16.   **Team members are quick to confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**   AVG. SCORE: **3.00**

Item Ranking

(Continued from the previous page.)

01.   **Team members admit their mistakes.**

BEHAVIOR: **TRUST**	AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

02.   **Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**	AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

12.   **During discussions, team members challenge one another about how they arrived at their conclusions and opinions.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**	AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

20.   **Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**	AVG. SCORE: **2.88**

26.   **All members of this team are held to the same high standards.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**	AVG. SCORE: **2.75**

23.   **Team members communicate unpopular opinions to the group.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**	AVG. SCORE: **2.50**

08.   **Team members point out one another's behaviors that hold the team back.**

BEHAVIOR: **ACCOUNTABILITY**	AVG. SCORE: **2.50**

07.   **Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement.**

BEHAVIOR: **CONFLICT**	AVG. SCORE: **2.00**

Tips & Exercises

**PRACTICAL GUIDELINES
FOR OVERCOMING
THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS**

Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. It is the foundation, and without it, real teamwork cannot occur. Team trust comes from the vulnerability of members' sharing their weaknesses, skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings, mistakes, requests for help, etc. Such trust enables team members to focus on the job at hand rather than on protecting themselves, their turf, or their individual jobs.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Personal Histories Exercise**   Download a PDF

One of the simplest and most effective ways to build vulnerability on a team is to use the Personal Histories Exercise. This exercise consists of three simple questions, takes no more than 25 minutes and without fail, team members walk away with a deeper knowledge of one another's stories. This is a great place to start building vulnerability and trust on the team.

⊕ **Personality Instrument**

All team members are wired differently. Personality instruments (i.e., Myers-Briggs, DiSC or Social Styles) help team members understand one another's different preferences, skills and attitudes, and identify collective strengths and potential blind spots of the team. This will help team members avoid making unproductive judgments about one another and instead leverage the diverse approaches and perspectives of the team.

⊕ **Fundamental Attribution Error**   Watch the Video

The fundamental attribution error occurs when human beings falsely attribute the negative behaviors of others to their character (an internal attribution), while they attribute their own negative behaviors to their environment (an external attribution). View the video on the Fundamental Attribution Error and discuss how using a personality instrument can help team members avoid making bad judgments about one another's character and intentions.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Self-ranking Exercise**   <u>Download a PDF</u>

In Pat's related book *The Ideal Team Player*, he looks at the individual team member and identifies three essential virtues of real team players. When individuals on a team are *humble, hungry, and smart*, it makes overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team much more attainable. This self-ranking exercise is a great way for team members to assess themselves against the three virtues and build trust by sharing with the team.

Additional content: <u>How To Spot Ideal Team Players</u>

⊕ **An Important Note for Virtual Teams: Intentional Time Together**

Virtual teams need to commit to spending face-to-face time together, as much and as often as possible, and to use that time wisely. That means working hard to build vulnerability-based trust with one another. It's hard enough for people who work in the same office every day and who look at each other in the face during meetings to do this well. Teams who don't have that luxury are going to have to be much more intentional about getting to know one another when they are together.

Once trust is established, conflict on a team becomes nothing but the pursuit of the best idea. True conflict is about the productive exchange of diverse ideas and opinions in a focused and unfiltered way. Without conflict, decision-making suffers and relationships among team members stagnate. Additionally, if healthy conflict around ideas is not a regular part of team meetings and discussion it generally degenerates to mean-spirited, back-channel comments behind closed doors.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Real-time Permission**   Watch the Video

For most teams, conflict can feel foreign and uncomfortable. Real-time permission is when the leader interrupts team members who are in the midst of an uncustomary debate, to remind them that what they are doing is okay. It is the role of the leader to provide real-time permission when healthy conflict is occurring, encouraging the team to continue to passionately debate in pursuit of the best answer.

⊕ **Mine for Conflict**

If team members remain hesitant to engage in conflict or avoid sharing dissenting opinions, it is the leader's job to provoke team conflict. We call this "mining for conflict." It is important that a team member, most often the leader, is responsible for drawing out any potential unresolved issues and forcing the team to confront them.

⊕ **Personality Instrument**

Many personality instruments include an analysis of how each style or type deals with conflict. Explore and discuss how different team members naturally engage in conflict.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Conflict Norms**

Establish rules of engagement for dealing with conflict within the team (e.g., behaviors, displays of emotion, language, process). Having clear standards of behavior allows a team to focus on the discussion of issues without having to slow down to think about what is and is not appropriate. Capture the team conflict norms and refer to them in meetings.

⊕ **Conflict Continuum** <u>Watch the Video</u>

The conflict continuum is a spectrum depicting the full range of conflict, from artificial harmony (zero conflict) to aggressive and destructive politics (extreme conflict). At the middle of the continuum is the point where conflict changes from constructive and ideological to destructive and personal. View the video on the conflict continuum and discuss where the team might fall on the scale. Discuss ways artificial harmony shows up and identify how to introduce more healthy conflict into team meetings and discussions.

Teams that have a strong level of commitment understand that members do not need to get their way to support a decision but only need to know that their opinions have been heard and seriously considered. Teams with high levels of commitment can unite behind a decision even though there is no certainty that the decision is correct. They know that a decision is better than no decision and that it is better to make a choice, act with boldness, be wrong and change direction than it is to waffle or wait for 100% certainty.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Weigh-in to Buy-in**

A team cannot achieve commitment without conflict. Team members will not actively commit to a decision if they have not had the opportunity to provide input, ask questions, and understand the rationale behind it. If people don't weigh-in, they can't buy-in. It is the job of the leader to solicit the input of each team member during meetings and discussions.

⊕ **Thematic Goal**   Download a PDF

With a foundation of trust and a good dose of healthy conflict, a team needs to agree upon their most important near-term priority, a thematic goal, and how they are going to go about achieving it. Agreeing on a top priority and reviewing progress towards it during weekly meetings reinforces commitment.

⊕ **Meetings**

The Meeting Advantage is an online tool designed to help a team focus on their most important priorities by using the thematic goal to guide weekly meetings.

Additional content: tablegroup.com/organizational-health/meeting-advantage

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Cascading Communication**

At the end of every meeting, a team should explicitly review the key decisions made and agree on what needs to be communicated to employees and other constituents. The use of this simple exercise, called cascading communication, demonstrates a public commitment to agreements and aligns employees throughout the organization around common objectives. Even naturally hesitant team members commit to decisions when they have communicated them to their direct reports.

⊕ **Clarity and Closure**

Force the team to achieve clarity and closure. Leaders of teams who commit to decisions demand that their people eliminate ambiguity and leave meetings and discussions clear about what they are agreeing to do. Do the hard work of wrestling issues to the ground. Be sure not to shy away from lively, often lengthy discussion around big strategic topics or to move on to new agenda items too early for the sake of time.

Overcoming the Avoidance
of Accountability

For teams, accountability means the willingness of team members to call their peers on behaviors that might hurt the team's performance. Team members avoid accountability because of the personal discomfort that comes from calling a peer on his/her behaviors and a more general tendency to avoid difficult conversations. Holding peers accountable means that team members must "enter the danger" with one another. Of course, they can do this only if levels of trust, healthy conflict and commitment are sufficiently high.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Team Effectiveness Exercise**   Download a PDF

The Team Effectiveness Exercise provides a forum for quick and effective exchange of feedback. Ask team members to identify and communicate one another's positive and negative actions/behaviors. By doing so, teams can quickly and constructively surface issues that might take months to address using a more formal, politically divisive 360-degree program.

⊕ **The Lightning Round—Meetings**

While a sense of accountability should pervade virtually every aspect of organizational life at a great company, the place where it must be demonstrated and addressed most clearly is meetings. Start a weekly meeting with a lightning round. A lightning round allows each team members 30 seconds to share what they are working on in the coming week. When team members keep one another informed about what they are doing, it allows peers to provide feedback and advice on whether team members are focused on the right things as well as ensure those things are moving toward completion.

⊕ **The Thematic Goal—Meetings**

During every weekly meeting, review progress on the team's agreed upon thematic goal. When a team ensures deviations from plans are identified quickly, they make it more likely that performance issues of team members will be highlighted and addressed. The Meeting Advantage is an online tool that can help a team measure progress on shared goals and hold one another accountable to their commitments.

Additional content: tablegroup.com/organizational-health/meeting-advantage

Overcoming the Inattention to Results

One of the main reasons to work in teams is that they can achieve results that would be impossible for an individual working alone. An unrelenting focus on collective goals is a requirement for any team that judges itself on results. Teams that have this dysfunction suffer because individuals work to satisfy their individual status, ego or departmental needs, rather than focusing on the collective goals of the group.

TIPS & EXERCISES

⊕ **Team #1**   [Watch the Video](#)

Getting all members of the team to value and emphasize the collective success of the group over their own personal needs or departmental goals is essential for effective teams. Results suffer when team members put a higher priority on the activities of their own departments or divisions. Review the video and ensure each individual commits to the team goals/results as his/her top priority.

⊕ **The Thematic Goal—Meetings**

During every weekly meeting, a team should focus on its thematic goal. This is a way of reinforcing collective results in a public way, and team members are much more likely to follow through and less likely to let personal needs take precedence. The Meetings Advantage is an online tool that can help a team measure progress on shared goals and hold one another accountable to their commitments, which ultimately leads to team-based results.

Additional content: tablegroup.com/organizational-health/meeting-advantage

⊕ **Team-based Rewards**

Ensure that team-based rewards form the basis for most compensation and recognition programs. When team members have incentives to focus on their individual performance objectives and not those of the team, it becomes easy for results to take a back seat to personal financial goals and career development.