

# THE FIVE BEHAVIORS OF A COHESIVE TEAM™

*Patrick Lencioni*

BASED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING BOOK  
*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*

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# The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team

## Are you part of a truly cohesive team?

As much effort as it takes to build a cohesive team, the process does not have to be complicated. In fact, keeping it simple is critical. Based on the best-selling book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni, this report is designed to provide a clear, concise, and practical guide to improve your team.

Quite simply, a cohesive team needs to master five behaviors: building trust, mastering conflict, achieving commitment, embracing accountability, and focusing on results. Before you begin, bear in mind that

- Each behavior builds on the previous one, so the behaviors should not be addressed in isolation of one another.
- Team members need to have a meaningful understanding of themselves and their peers, which is why this report is reinforced by DiSC®, a powerful behavioral tool that has been helping people connect better for years.

You and your team are about to embark on what could be a very challenging—and very enlightening—journey. Before you begin, take a look at the overview of the five behaviors and your team’s results below:

### Trust One Another

When team members are genuinely transparent and honest with one another, they are able to build vulnerability-based trust.

### Engage in Conflict Around Ideas

When there is trust, team members are able to engage in unfiltered, constructive debate of ideas.

### Commit to Decisions

When team members are able to offer opinions and debate ideas, they will be more likely to commit to decisions.

### Hold One Another Accountable

When everyone is committed to a clear plan of action, they will be more willing to hold one another accountable.

### Focus on Achieving Collective Results

The ultimate goal of building greater trust, conflict, commitment, and accountability is one thing: the achievement of results.



# The Five Behaviors And Your Team

Remember, the five behaviors can be mistakenly interpreted as five distinct issues that can be addressed in isolation of one another. But in reality they form an interrelated model, and neglecting even one of the behaviors can be potentially harmful to the success of a team. Consider the following connection:



## Summary of Your Team Survey Results

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



# Building Trust

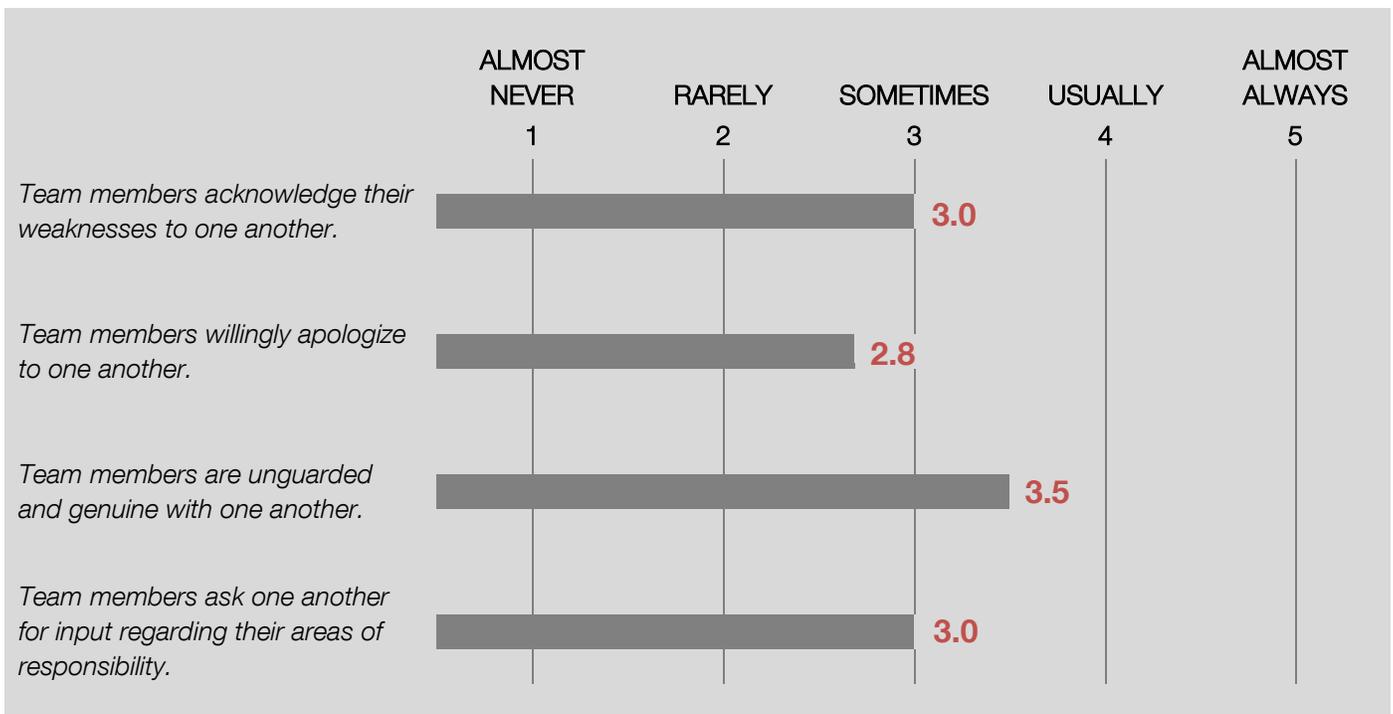
The first and foundational behavior of a cohesive team is trust. Unfortunately, the word trust is used—and misused—so often it may not impart the same meaning to everyone. The definition here *isn't* centered around the ability to predict a person's behavior based on past experience (a standard description). Rather, in the context of a cohesive team, **trust** means:

- A willingness to be completely vulnerable with one another
- Confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the team

Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. No matter how a team scores on the assessment, teams should always begin with trust because there is no quality or characteristic that is more important for building a team.

## Team Survey Results

The following table reflects the team's responses to the trust-related questions from the team survey. The bars to the right of the question reflect the team's **average score** on the five-point scale. The tables on page 5-6 will identify the distribution of responses within the team.



**Your Team's Survey Results for Trust: 3.1=MEDIUM**

# Your Team And Trust

Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Great teams don't waste time and energy putting on airs or pretending to be someone they're not. Everyone on the team knows that no one is going to hide his or her weaknesses, which helps build a deep and uncommon sense of trust.

Genghis, there doesn't appear to be clear agreement as to whether or not members of your team acknowledge their weaknesses. It might be that individuals interpreted this question differently, or perhaps team members have had varying experiences. Ultimately, if your team is having trouble showing vulnerability, it will impact the ability to build trust and work effectively toward a common goal.

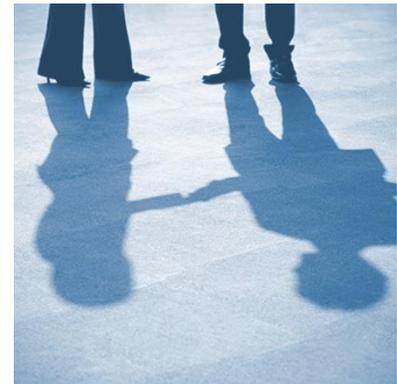


Team members willingly apologize to one another.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

When great teams have vulnerability-based trust, they are completely comfortable being transparent and saying things like "I screwed up" or "your idea was better than mine."

There doesn't appear to be clear agreement as to whether or not members of your team are comfortable apologizing for their mistakes. The conflicting responses might be a result of interpersonal dynamics on the team, or perhaps people simply have different expectations about what it means to apologize. Whatever the reason, remember that a willingness to say "I'm sorry" is an important contributing factor to establishing trust on your team.





# Your Team And Trust

Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

At the heart of vulnerability lies the willingness of people to abandon pride and fear, to be open and honest with one another to help the team achieve its goals. While this can be a bit threatening at first, ultimately it becomes liberating for people who are tired of overthinking their actions and worrying about how they might be perceived at work.



Genghis, there doesn't appear to be clear agreement as to whether or not team members are willing to express themselves honestly. This disparity in responses may be due to individuals assessing the team through their own perspective—people who are usually open may believe that others are as well, whereas people who are more guarded may believe that others act that way too. Whatever the reason for the inconsistency, greater openness and transparency will likely lead to an increased level of trust on the team.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

When people trust that their teammates have their best interests in mind, they feel comfortable asking one another for input and opinions. They aren't worried about being overshadowed or shot down. This lack of territorial behavior leaves everyone feeling that the lines of communication are truly open.



There doesn't appear to be clear agreement as to whether or not team members are comfortable asking one another for input. It's possible that some team members are more frequently asked for input than others, resulting in conflicting responses to this question. Another reason for a mixed response might be that some team members interpret even a casual conversation as "input," whereas others consider "input" to be more formal. Remember that seeking more input may lead to better ideas and solutions, which, in turn, will drive team success.

## How Do We Build Vulnerability-Based Trust? ▶▶▶

Using a behavioral tool like DiSC can give team members deeper insights into themselves and their peers. It can help people understand one another and get comfortable being transparent about personal limitations.



# The Impact of Your DiSC Style

## Your DiSC style: S

Because you have an S style, Genghis, you're probably a cooperative person who takes pride in doing your part to help the team. Even if you're competitive, you don't need to win to feel good about yourself. In fact, when you receive credit for a job well done, you're probably quick to share it with others.

You probably tend to be quite accommodating, and you find it important to maintain the approval of others. Consequently, you may put a lot of energy into catering to other people. In fact, you may have difficulty saying no, and you may fail to let people know when you've been inconvenienced.

You tend to have a strong need for harmony, so conflict is probably difficult for you. Most likely, you're troubled by the idea of hurting someone's feelings, and you may spend time dwelling on incidents that other people wouldn't think twice about. In group situations, you often play the role of peacemaker, but when things become heated, you may shut down and simply wait for the tension to pass.

Because your self-esteem isn't primarily tied to accomplishments, you're probably fine working quietly behind the scenes. While you like to feel appreciated, you may get embarrassed if the praise is too public or gushing. And, because you often downplay your own performance, others may fail to recognize your contributions altogether.

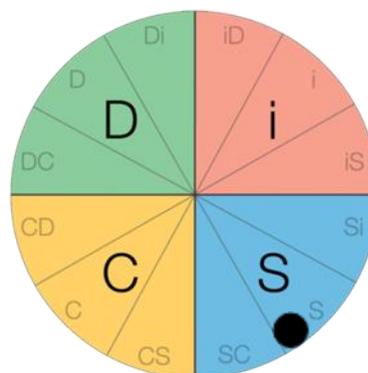
You tend to be very accepting of both people and ideas. In fact, because you're instinctively trusting, you usually give people the benefit of the doubt. Likewise, when people present new ideas, you try to keep an open mind and show support. And, if someone fails to meet your expectations, you'd often rather redo the work than give negative feedback because you don't want to damage the relationship.

You tend to be soft-spoken, and your fear of speaking out of turn may cause you to keep ideas to yourself. And, because you tend to speak hesitantly and qualify your statements, others may find your ideas unconvincing. However, because filtering your responses comes so naturally to you, you may not realize how much more efficient it would be to say exactly what you're thinking.

Compared to others, you probably have more patience for long, routine projects. You show steadiness and consistency, and you want to be known as someone people can count on. Because you don't want to let anyone down, you like to have a clear understanding of what's expected of you. You probably feel most secure when you've perfected a set of specialized skills that you can perform reliably.

You tend to be on the careful side, avoiding risk when possible. Because you assume that rules and traditions are there for a reason, you dislike shortcuts. When considering bold changes, you may focus more on the possibility of failure than on the potential benefits. You may require a great deal of certainty before making major decisions, and this indecisiveness can stand in the way of progress.

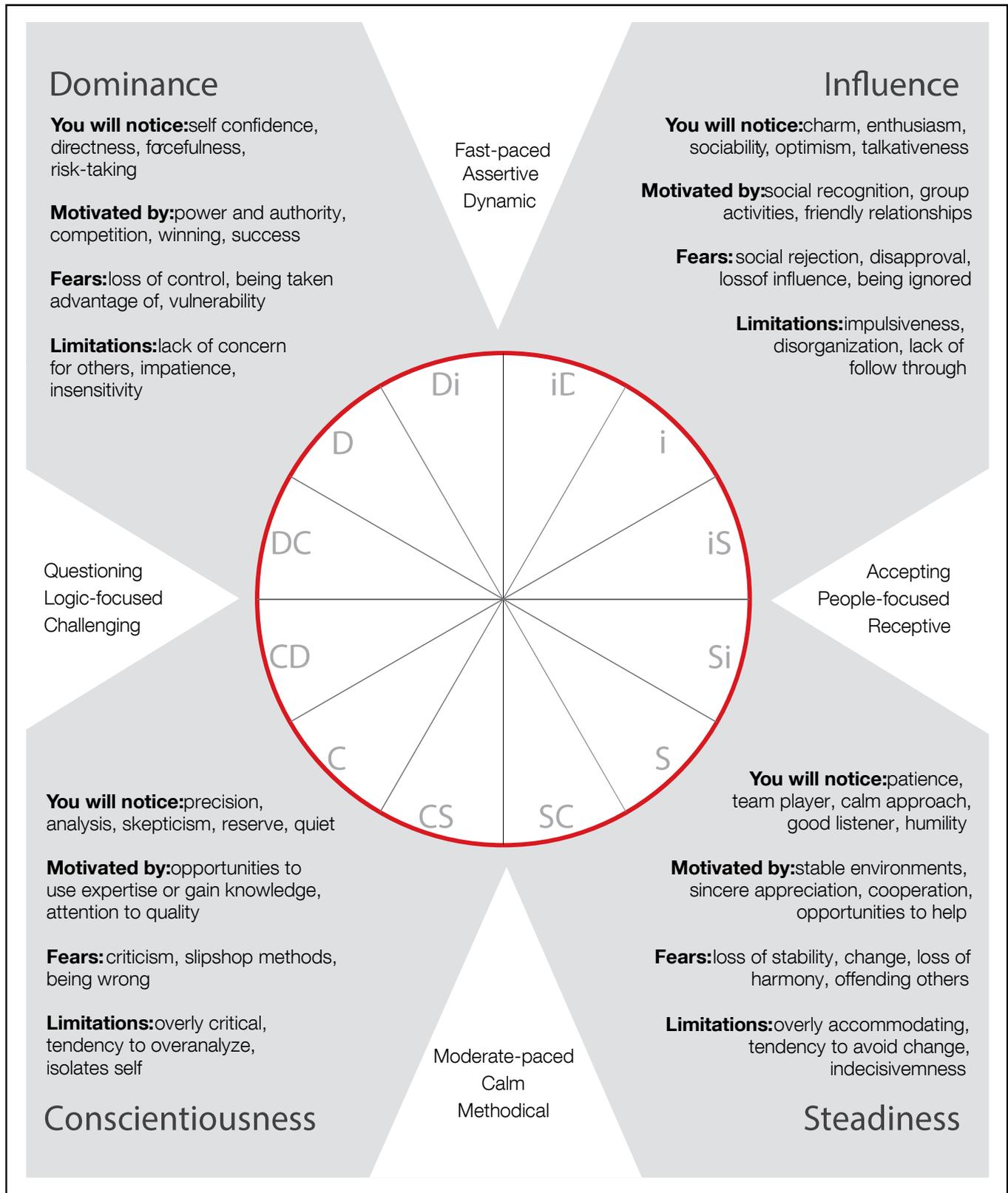
Genghis, like others with the S style, your most valuable contributions to the workplace may include your acceptance of others, your dependability, and your ability to be a team player. In fact, these are probably some of the qualities that others admire most about you.



Your dot location is near the edge of the circle, so you probably relate well to the characteristics associated with the S style.

# The Everything DiSC® Team Map

The Everything DiSC map below shows the locations of all team members (10 people), differentiated by their initials, along with a snapshot of the characteristics tied to the four basic DiSC styles.





# Building Trust

## What is needed to achieve trust?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members also had an opportunity to identify specific areas for the team to focus on in the interest of building trust. The following are the responses chosen by your team, along with the number of team mates who selected the option (indicated to the left of the response). **Note: You had the option to select all that apply.**

*There would be more trust on our team if people:*

<b>8</b>	Spent more time together	<b>0</b>	Let go of grudges
<b>8</b>	Got to know one another on a personal level	<b>0</b>	Admitted their mistakes
<b>6</b>	Shared professional failures and successes	<b>0</b>	Readily apologized
<b>5</b>	Understood one another's working styles	<b>0</b>	Were more forthright with information
<b>3</b>	Reduced the amount of gossiping	<b>0</b>	Would give credit where credit is due

## Points of Discussion

1. Members of your team chose "Apologizing" as a way to help achieve trust. What factors make it difficult to apologize?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Members of your team chose "Letting go of grudges" as a way to help achieve trust. What are the long-term effects on the team if individuals are holding onto grudges?



# Taking Action to Build Trust

How does a team go about developing vulnerability-based trust? Unfortunately, trust cannot be built overnight. It requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members. However, taking a focused approach, a team can dramatically accelerate the process and build trust in relatively short order. Consider the importance of building trust, outlined below, as you create an action plan.

## Without Trust, Team Members...

- Conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
- Hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- Hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility
- Jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitudes of others
- Hold grudges

## If a Team is Trusting, Team Members...

- Admit their weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation

## Action Plan

Use the following questions to help build an action plan for your team.

1. Looking at the team survey (on page 5), your team rated itself lowest on acknowledging weaknesses. What keeps people from doing this more openly? Can people envision being able to admit important weaknesses on this team?
  
2. Based on your team survey, the group probably sees itself as having a moderate level of trust right now. What reactions do people have to the idea of “vulnerability based trust?” In what ways is it uncomfortable? What potential gains might come with more of this type of trust?

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## The Connection to Conflict ▶▶▶

When team members build a foundation of vulnerability-based trust, conflict simply becomes an attempt to find the best possible answer.



# Mastering Conflict

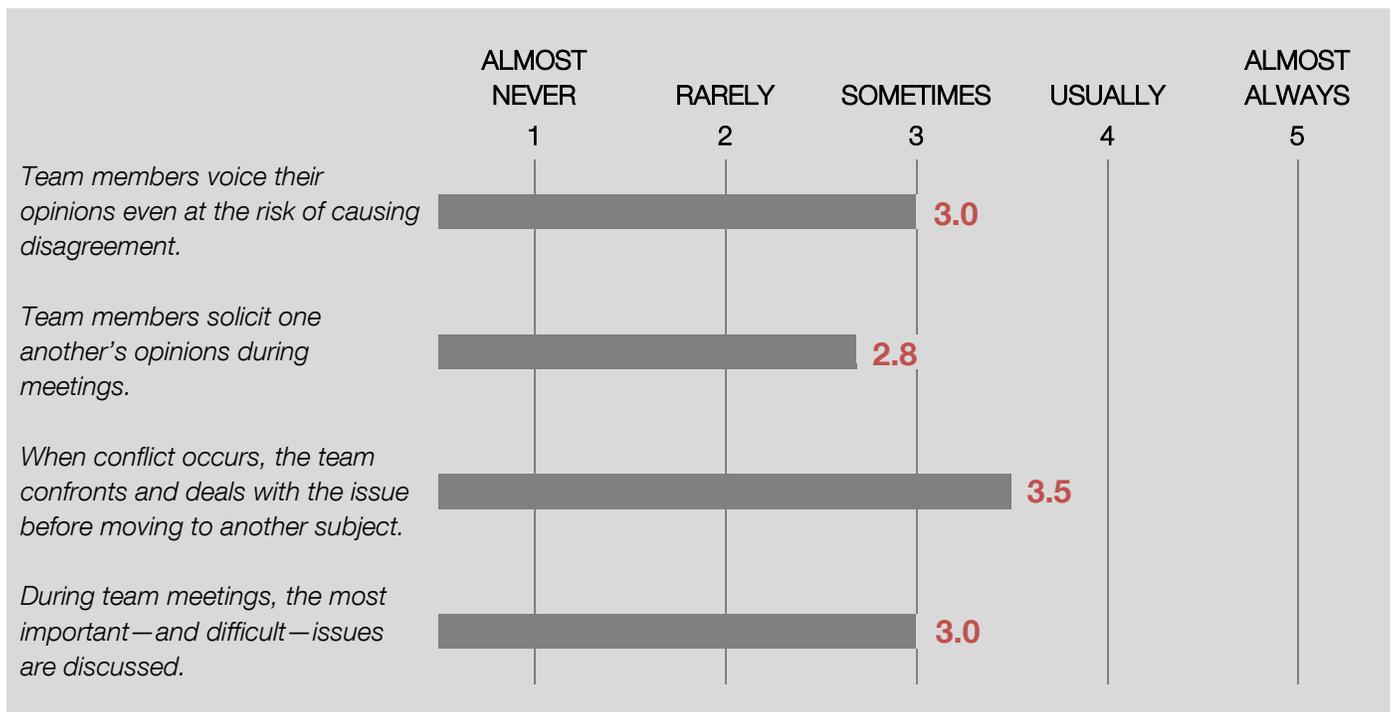
All great relationships, the ones that last over time, require productive conflict in order to grow. It's important to distinguish productive, ideological conflict from destructive fighting and interpersonal politics. **Productive conflict::**

- is focused on concepts and ideas
- avoids mean-spirited, personal attacks

Conflict is often considered taboo, especially at work, and people may spend inordinate amounts of time and energy trying to avoid the kind of passionate debates that are *essential* to any great team. Teams that engage in productive conflict know that the only purpose is to produce the best possible solution in the shortest period of time.

## Team Survey Results

The following table reflects the team's responses to the conflict-related questions from the team survey. The bars to the right of the question reflect the team's **average score** on the five-point scale. The tables on page 13 will identify the distribution of responses within the team.



**Your Team's Survey Results for Trust: 3.1=MEDIUM**



# Conflict on Your Team

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Your team seems to agree that members often voice opinions and debate important ideas. Occasionally, team members may withhold their opinions, perhaps to avoid conflict or to maintain diplomacy. A willingness to engage in productive conflict, however, makes it possible to resolve issues more quickly, which leads to higher-quality solutions without damaging team relationships.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

There is disagreement as to whether team members solicit one another's opinions. It may be that certain members are asked for input more often than others, or perhaps there are different expectations about this process. Regardless, drawing out everyone's point of view helps the team gain valuable insight and lays the foundation for making commitments.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Most team members seem to agree that, when conflict does occur, your team would rather move on than address the problem directly. Your team members may view arguments as time-consuming or they may be uncomfortable confronting issues. By avoiding conflict, however, your team may actually waste more time by having to revisit unresolved issues.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

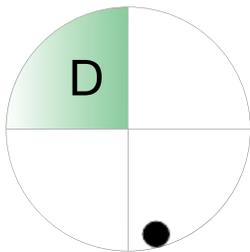
It's often the most important issues that can be the touchiest and hardest to discuss. Generally, your team seems willing to take the risk of broaching these topics during meetings, although people may occasionally hold back to avoid hurting others' feelings or starting a battle. An open discussion, however, will help get to the heart of problems so you can resolve them and move forward.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

It's important to understand that different people participate in conflict in different ways. We all have our own preferences and tendencies. And that's okay, because there is more than one way to engage in healthy conflict. Genghis, because you have an SC style, you may tiptoe around issues rather than confront them head-on. You often internalize your feelings and withdraw from emotionally charged situations. Consequently, you're not likely to initiate a conflict, and you may fail to discuss important issues altogether. However, burying your feelings may allow negativity to linger and resentment to build. The following describes how you may react to conflict:

- You may compromise to avoid conflict but end up frustrated.
- You may waste energy worrying that people are mad at you.
- You're probably willing to allow conflicts to drag on unresolved so you don't have to face them directly.

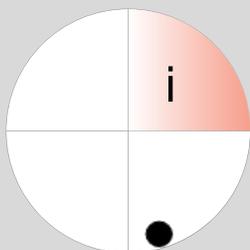
# Your S Style In Conflict



## Conflict with the D Style

Because you want to maintain harmony, you're less likely than your "D" coworkers to address conflict directly. They're probably very frank and even argumentative at times, so you may try to avoid them during tense situations. As a result, they may assume that an issue is resolved when you have simply buried your resentment. Therefore,

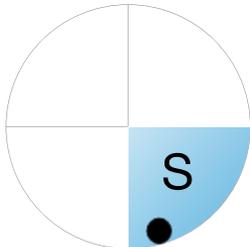
- Speak up when you have a difference of opinion.
- Avoid giving in to their demands just to regain harmony.
- Make sure that your needs are considered.



## Conflict with the i Style

People with the i style want to maintain friendly relationships and they share your tendency to initially gloss over differences and avoid conflict. However, they're so focused on being heard that they're more likely to become emotional and lash out when confronted. You may give in just to keep them happy and fail to resolve the conflict. Therefore,

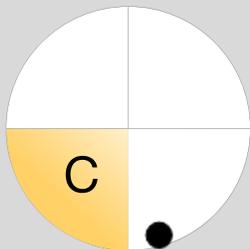
- Show them that you're open to creative solutions.
- Share your doubts rather than just going along with their ideas.
- Remember that conflict will ultimately strengthen your relationship.



## Conflict with the S Style

You both avoid addressing issues head-on so open conflict is likely to be rare between you and your "S" coworkers. However, this may lead to a breakdown in communication. Remember, two people who are engaged in something important should feel compelled to disagree with one another when they see things differently. Therefore,

- Address the situation directly and honestly.
- Don't assume their silence means they agree with you.
- Follow up to make sure the issue is resolved.



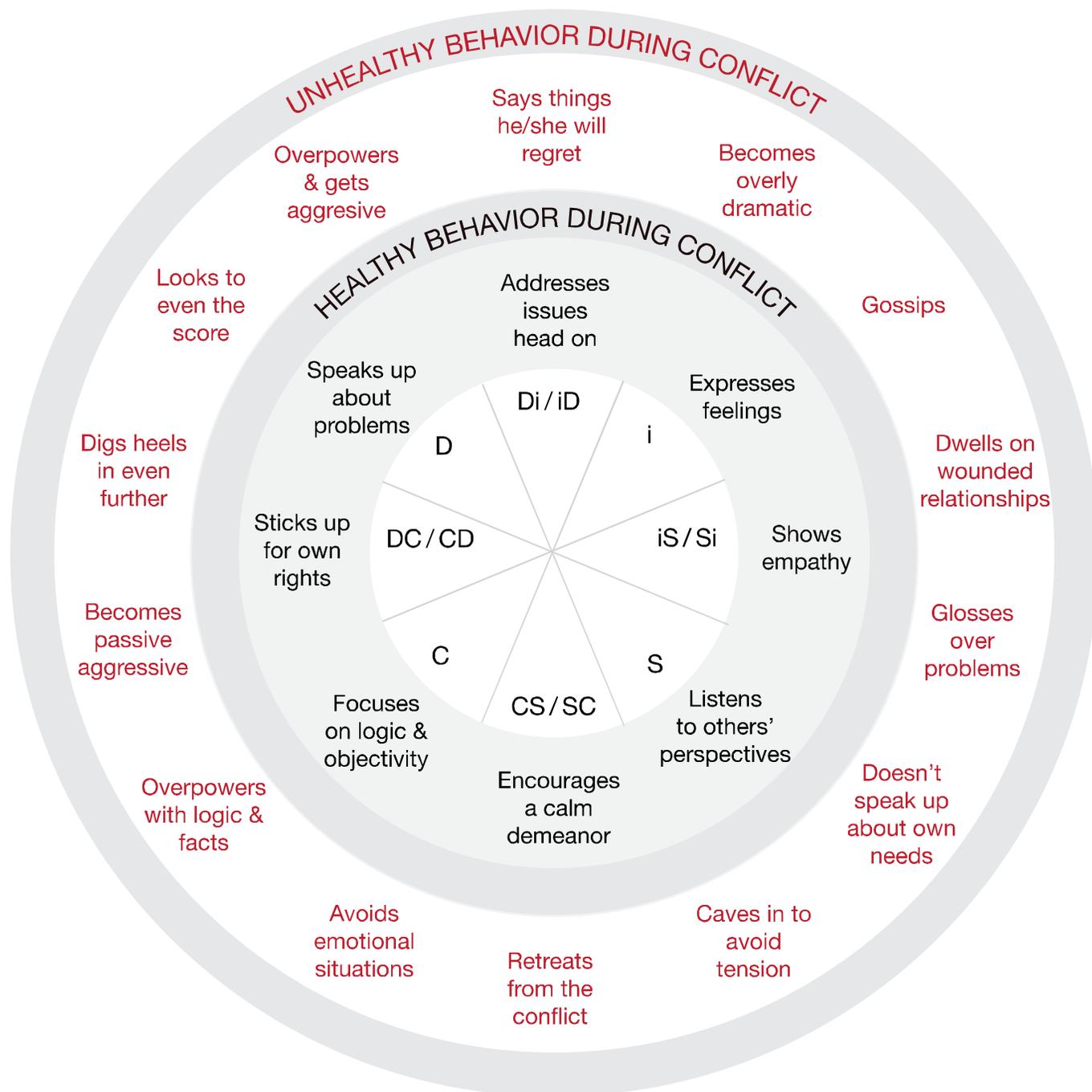
## Conflict with the C Style

People with the C style often view conflict as a disagreement over who is correct and usually want to avoid direct aggression and focus on the facts. Since you share their objective approach, the two of you may sometimes engage in logic wars. However, you may wind up giving in to end the disagreement, and this will only stifle productivity. Therefore,

- Assert your own position instead of just giving in.
- Avoid withdrawing from the conflict until it is clearly resolved.
- Have the courage and confidence to call out sensitive issues.

# Conflict Team Map

The descriptions on the inner, gray circle illustrate what healthy behavior during conflict might look like. The descriptions in red on the outer circle illustrate unhealthy behavior related to each style. The numbers in the innermost circle reflect the **people on your team** who fall into each of the style regions (10 people).



# Mastering Conflict

## What is acceptable behavior during conflict?

In some cultures, there is very little direct disagreement and debate during meetings, while in others people tend to “get in one another’s faces.” In some families, parents and siblings rarely engage in raw, emotional dialogue, while in others people argue passionately and then make up with equal passion. Which is better on a team? The only thing that really matters is—are people holding back their opinions? Members of great teams do not.

As part of the assessment, you and your team members were asked whether you think certain behaviors or actions are acceptable while engaging in conflict at work and how many of you display them (last column). Here are the results of the team survey (10 people):

<i>When there's a conflict on our team, I find this:</i>	Unacceptable	Tolerable	Perfectly Acceptable	<i>Number of team members who admit they do this at work</i>
Raising your voice when you get passionate	3	4	2	1
Going beyond the meeting end time to resolve an issue	4	0	2	4
Using strong language when you're upset	2	6	0	2
Avoiding someone when you're angry	3	4	2	1
Excluding other team members from difficult conversations	2	3	5	6
Being outwardly emotional	6	0	2	2
Expressing anger through indirect actions rather than voicing it directly	5	1	3	1

### Points of Discussion

1. In the survey above, your team had a mixed response to which behaviors are acceptable, which are tolerable, and which are unacceptable. Discuss why the team finds these behaviors either acceptable or unacceptable.
2. Based on the team’s feelings about acceptable behaviors during conflict, what rules could your team put in place to encourage conflict and keep it productive? How could your team remind one another of and enforce these rules?



# Taking Action to Master Conflict

How does a team develop the willingness to engage in healthy conflict? The first step is acknowledging that conflict can be productive, and that many teams have a tendency to avoid it. As long as some team members believe that conflict is undesirable and unnecessary, there is little chance that it will occur. Consider the importance of engaging in conflict, outlined below, as you create an action plan.

## A Team That Fears Conflict...

- Has boring meetings
- Creates environments where personal attacks thrive
- Ignores controversial topics that are critical to team success
- Fails to tap into all the opinions and perspectives of team members
- Wastes time and energy with posturing and interpersonal risk management

## A Team That Engages In Conflict...

- Has lively, interesting meetings
- Extracts and exploits the ideas of all team members
- Solves real problems quickly
- Minimizes politics
- Puts critical topics on the table for discussion

## Action Plan

Use the following questions to help build an action plan for your team.

1. On the team survey (page 13), one of the areas where the group rated itself lowest is about dealing with conflict immediately. How would the team benefit if it confronted conflict before moving on to another subject? How can it make sure this type of confrontation happens?
2. Based on the team survey, your team does a reasonable job at handling conflict, but there's still room for improvement. What factors are most likely to shut down productive conflicts?

## The Connection to Commitment ▶▶▶

By engaging in productive conflict and tapping into a variety of perspectives and opinions, team members can confidently commit and buy in to a decision knowing that they have benefited from everyone's ideas.



# Achieving Commitment

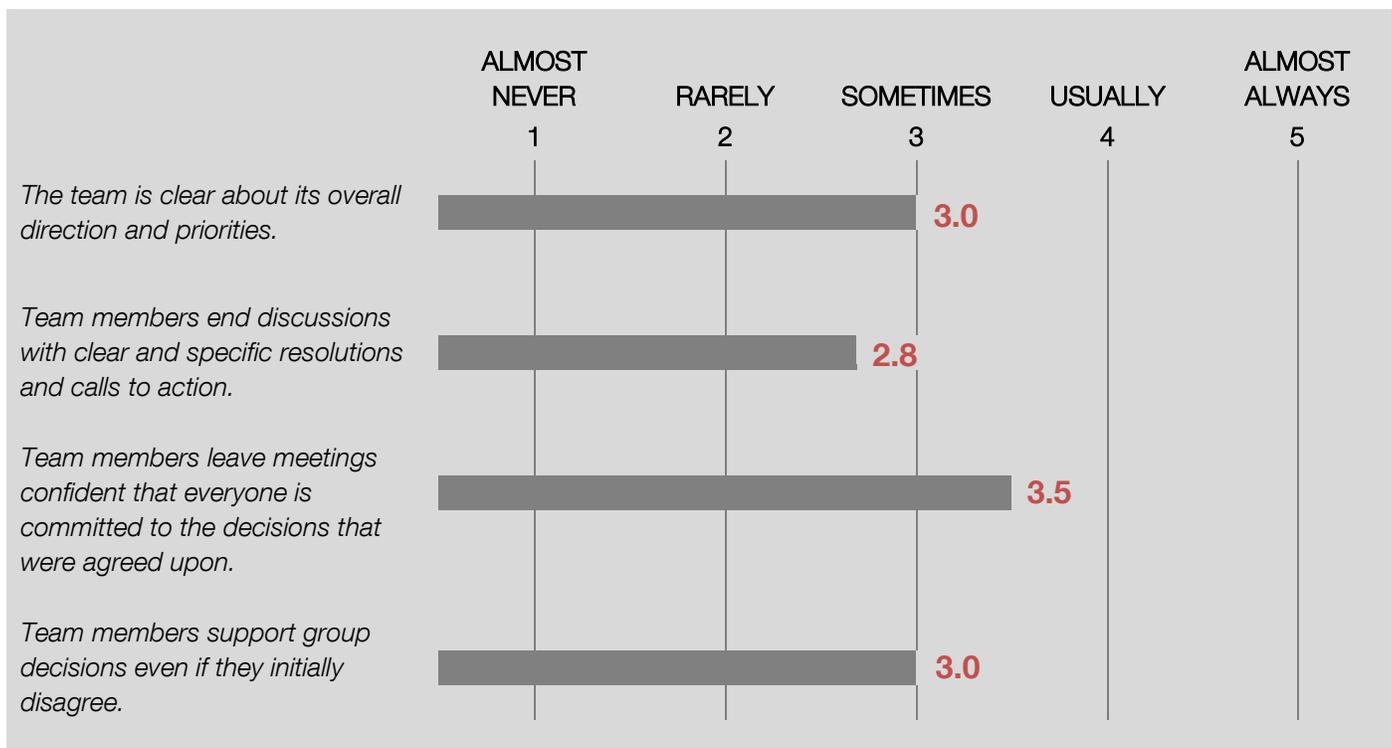
What do we mean by commitment? In the context of a cohesive team, **commitment** is:

- clarity around decisions
- moving forward with complete buy-in from every member of the team, even those who initially disagreed with the decision

The bottom line is, if people don't commit, they're just half-heartedly going along with decisions. The two greatest causes of a lack of commitment are the desire for consensus and the need for certainty, which are just not possible in all situations. Great teams understand that they must be able to commit even when the outcome is uncertain and not everyone initially agrees.

## Team Survey Results

The following table reflects the team's responses to the commitment-related questions from the team survey. The bars to the right of the questions reflect the team's **average score** on the five-point scale. The tables on page 19 and 20 will identify the distribution of responses within the team.



**Your Team's Survey Results for Trust: 3.1=MEDIUM**

# Commitment with Clarity

The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Great teams move forward with complete buy-in from every member of the team. Members leave meetings confident that no one is quietly harboring doubts about whether to support the agreed-to actions. There is disagreement among your team members about whether the team is clear about its direction and priorities. Maybe the team doesn't regularly check to ensure that everyone is on the same page, or perhaps some team members confuse individual and team priorities. Taking the time to check for clarity can lead to a team that commits to decisions and moves forward with confidence.



Team members end meetings with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Commitment does not mean consensus. It's important to understand the danger of seeking consensus and find ways to achieve buy-in even when complete agreement is impossible. Reasonable human beings do not need to get their way in order to support a decision, but only need to know that their opinions have been heard and considered. However, your team members don't agree on whether people leave meetings with a clear idea of the next steps. It may be that some members believe that a directive is clear to everyone when it is not, or perhaps some members are distracted and miss out on final clarifications. Whatever the reason, taking the time to review commitments will increase the chances of successful implementations of team decisions.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

Genghis, because you have an S style, you like having a clear, predictable goal that you can work toward steadily. In fact, you may be very uncomfortable with unclear expectations or confusion. However, if clarity is missing on your team, you'll probably go with the flow rather than demanding further instruction. Remember, if you and your teammates aren't all on the same page, commitment will be unlikely.

Consider how other DiSC styles may react to a lack of clarity:

- **D** coworkers have a take-charge attitude and want to make up their minds quickly.
- **i** coworkers rely on personal relationships and may be more apt to commit when they feel a sense of team spirit.
- **S** coworkers are careful, sometimes reluctant, decision-makers and want to be absolutely sure before they commit.
- **C** coworkers are swayed by objective information rather than emotion or intuition.

## Commitment with Buy-In

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Team members will be unlikely to commit to decisions that seem vague or incomplete. After all, how can you really commit if you're not sure what you're *committing to*? According to the assessment results, your team often achieves this alignment. This means, however, that there also may be times when decisions are pushed through without everyone's buy-in. Perhaps people don't have a forum to air their concerns, or there are egos or politics involved. Whatever the case, it's important for the team to spot a lack of buy-in and address it directly.



Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagree.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

At the end of every meeting, cohesive teams take a few minutes to ensure that everyone sitting at the table is walking away with the same understanding about what has been agreed to. While there was some difference of opinion, most of your team agrees that there is difficulty gaining this sort of support for team decisions. Perhaps people are reluctant to engage in debate or assume that disagreements make commitment less likely. But taking the time to wrestle with issues is actually more likely to result in buy in.

### The Impact of Your DiSC Style

Genghis, because you have an S style, you like having a clear, predictable goal that you can work toward steadily. In fact, you may be very uncomfortable with unclear expectations or confusion. However, if clarity is missing on your team, you'll probably go with the flow rather than demanding further instruction. Remember, if you and your teammates aren't all on the same page, commitment will be unlikely.

Consider how other DiSC styles may react to a lack of clarity:

- **D** coworkers are likely to push back on and resist decisions they don't understand.
- **i** coworkers are prone to impulsiveness and may be disorganized at times, so without clear goals they may simply fail to follow through.
- **S** coworkers may second-guess themselves and their work, which may impede their productivity.
- **C** coworkers tend to be solitary and may simply focus on their own objectives, deepening the sense of misalignment.

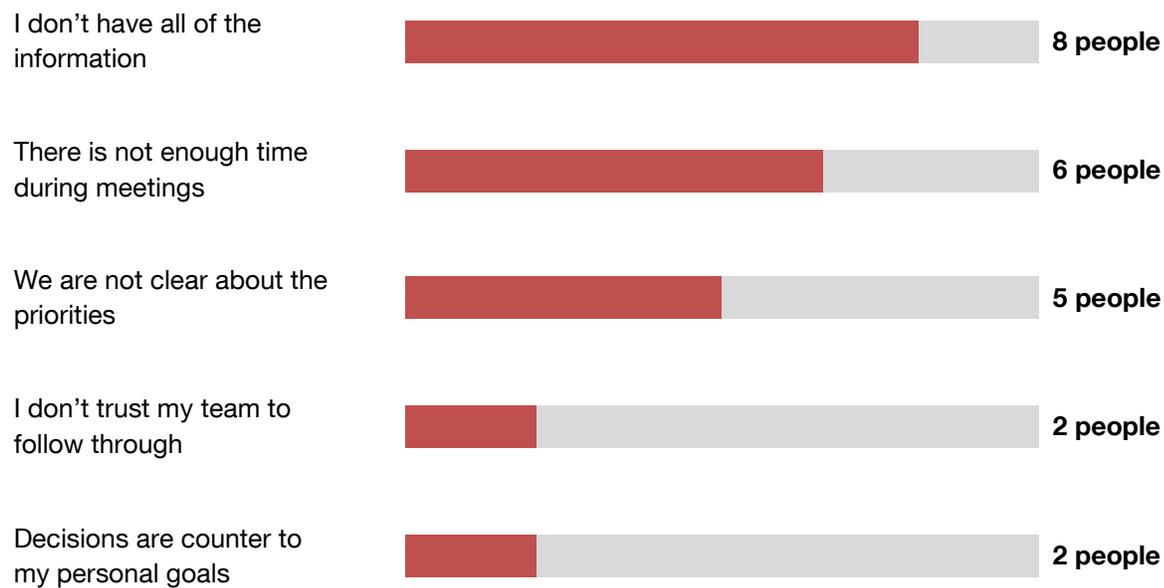


# Achieving Commitment

## Why don't our team members commit?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members also had an opportunity to identify reasons that could be contributing to a lack of commitment. The number of people (out of 10) who selected each explanation appears next to the corresponding bar below). **Note: You had the option to select all that apply.**

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



### Points of Discussion

1. Based on your team's responses above, several members of the team seem to believe they lack sufficient information about decisions. How are decisions typically made on your team? What level of discussion occurs before a decision is made?
2. Six members of your team don't believe there is enough time during meetings to make commitments. What systems or standards could be put in place to help remedy this?



# Taking Action to Achieve Commitment

It is important to understand that one of the greatest consequences for a team that does not commit to decisions is unresolvable discord. When a team fails to achieve buy-in from all team members, even if the disparities that exist seem relatively small, there will be a clash of priorities. And small gaps can become major disagreements. Consider the importance of commitment, outlined below, as you create an action plan.

## A Team That Fails to Commit...

- Creates ambiguity among the team members about direction and priorities
- Misses opportunities due to excessive analysis and unnecessary delay
- Breeds lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Revisits discussions and decisions again and again
- Encourages second-guessing among team members

## A Team That Commits...

- Creates clarity around direction and priorities
- Aligns the entire team around common objectives
- Develops an ability to learn from mistakes
- Moves forward without hesitation
- Changes direction without hesitation or guilt

## Action Plan

Use the following questions to help build an action plan for your team.

1. Based on the team survey (page 19), the overall level of buy-in on the team is fairly high. Are there any specific areas where the team has trouble getting full buy in? If so, what are they?
  
2. The team survey suggests that your group has a high level of clarity around its decisions. Is there any room for improvement in this area? If so, where?

## The Connection to Accountability ►►►

If everyone is clearly committed to the team's priorities, they will be more willing to hold one another accountable.

# Embracing Accountability

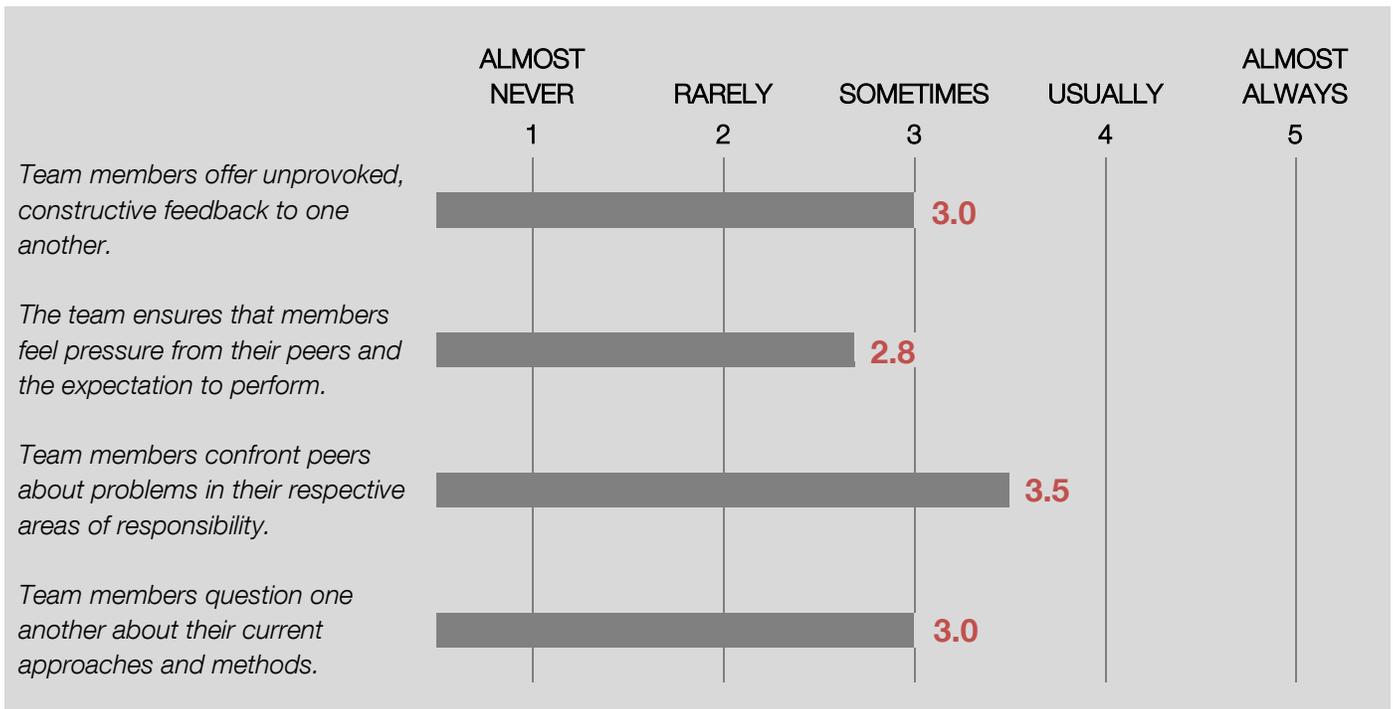
Accountability has become a buzzword—so overused and with so many different interpretations—that it has lost much of its meaning. In the context of teamwork, however, **accountability** is:

*the willingness of team members to call their peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team*

The usual source of dysfunction in this area is the unwillingness of team members to tolerate the interpersonal discomfort that accompanies calling a peer on his or her behavior. This includes the more general tendency to avoid difficult conversations. Functional teams overcome these natural inclinations, opting instead to “enter the danger” with one another.

## Team Survey Results

The following table reflects the team’s responses to the accountability-related questions from the team survey. The bars to the right of the questions reflect the team’s **average score** on the five-point scale. The tables on page 24-27 will identify the distribution of responses within the team.



**Your Team’s Survey Results for Trust: 3.1=MEDIUM**

# Your Team and Accountability

Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Great teams are able to call out members' poor performance or unproductive behaviors. There isn't clear agreement as to whether your team members are willing to confront one another about these kinds of issues. It might be that people interpret "constructive" differently, so one person's helpful feedback is another's harsh critique. Or perhaps some individuals offer feedback more (or less) frequently and think that their teammates do the same. In any case, a willingness to hold one another accountable in a constructive way is key to developing cohesiveness and can help a team avoid far more costly and difficult situations later.



What does it look like when team members . . .

### **DON'T** call out deficiencies:

- Team members lack confidence and are paranoid about what others may not be saying.
- People feel a sense of unfairness when others perform at a subpar level.
- Passive aggressive approaches start to thrive.

### **DO** call out deficiencies:

- People know what others think so they don't have to waste time and energy wondering.
- Team members own their shortcomings and accept suggestions.
- There is an increased sense of being part of a team.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

Genghis, because you have the Di style, you are probably determined to get results, so you may be willing to point out issues and problems as they relate to the end goal. When giving feedback, you probably want to ensure that people feel energized about their work, but you also don't want your ideas to be compromised. Your approach can help enhance the team's accountability as long as you remain open to other team members' input.

Consider how other DiSC styles prefer to receive productive feedback:

- D coworkers prefer a straightforward delivery.
- i coworkers want a gentle, positive explanation.
- S coworkers prefer a considerate but direct delivery.
- C coworkers want a truthful, logical explanation.

# Your Team and Accountability

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

More than any policy or system, there is nothing like the fear of letting down respected teammates that motivates people to improve their performance. However, your team members don't seem comfortable applying appropriate pressure to each other. Perhaps people don't think it's right to push their peers, or maybe they're afraid that this sort of pressure will create unhealthy conflict. Nonetheless, peer pressure is a highly effective and efficient means of maintaining high standards on a team.



What does it look like when team members . . .

### **DON'T** call out deficiencies:

- Team members lack confidence and are paranoid about what others may not be saying.
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### **DO** call out deficiencies:

- People know what others think so they don't have to waste time and energy wondering.
- Team members own their shortcomings and accept suggestions.
- There is an increased sense of being part of a team.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

Genghis, because you have an S style, calling out your teammates for poor performance may feel particularly painful to you. In fact, you're probably naturally inclined to maintain harmony and avoid conflict at all costs. Instead of addressing unproductive behavior head-on, you may often sweep problems under the rug or tiptoe around the real issues. However, your failure to call out deficiencies directly may cause communication to break down and hidden hostility to intensify.

Consider how other DiSC styles prefer to receive productive feedback:

- D coworkers may be motivated by competition and challenging projects that will garner respect.
- i coworkers may be motivated by positive energy and encouragement.
- S coworkers may be motivated by opportunities to support people and contribute to team success.
- C coworkers may be motivated by defining quality standards and completing complex assignments.

# Your Team and Accountability

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

On effective teams, members are able to confront one another when things aren't going well. Your team likely benefits from people's willingness to challenge one another about what's being done, how time is spent, and whether enough progress is being made. As a result, issues and bottlenecks are identified earlier, and problems are resolved before they get out of hand.



What does it look like when team members . . .

### **DON'T** challenge one another:

- There is limited understanding and interest in what other team members are doing.
- There are misconceptions among team members, causing an overall sense of disjointedness.
- People feel comfortable doing subpar work knowing they won't be confronted.

### **DO** challenge one another:

- People have a better understanding and appreciation for one another's roles.
- People continually check in with one another, ensuring they're on the same page.
- Better ideas emerge.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

Like others with your D style, Genghis, you're probably assertive, and therefore not afraid to be forceful when necessary. Confrontation doesn't make you uncomfortable, and because you are so driven to succeed, you won't stand by quietly if you think someone is dragging you down or not doing his or her part. In fact, you may be quite outspoken in your criticism when others have not performed to your expectations.

Consider how other DiSC styles prefer to receive productive feedback:

- D coworkers often need to be convinced before they will change their minds or behaviors.
- i coworkers typically don't want people to be angry or upset with them.
- S coworkers are often eager to compromise and tend to listen to other people's opinions.
- C coworkers may want facts and need proof that they're wrong before they will take corrective action.

# Your Team and Accountability

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

When team members know that their colleagues are truly committed to a common goal, they can question one another without fearing defensiveness or backlash. After all, they're merely helping someone get back on track or seeking clarity about something that doesn't seem right. However, it doesn't appear that all the members of your team feel comfortable questioning one another about approaches and methods. It's possible that some team members fear confrontation, or perhaps expectations are not always clear, making it difficult to call someone out. Learning to hold each other accountable will benefit the team, allowing higher levels of respect and productivity.



What does it look like when team members . . .

### **DON'T** challenge one another:

- Mistakes are made.
- Team members aren't clear about one another's roles and responsibilities, leading to misunderstandings.
- Team members fear stepping on one another's toes.

### **DO** challenge one another:

- Team members understand how everything fits together.
- People are prepared to answer inquiries.
- Team members are able to adjust their behavior accordingly.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

Genghis, you probably communicate clearly and vividly using an expressive style. Most likely, you'll get to the heart of an issue, and when you have questions, you don't hold back. At times, your more reserved coworkers may find your inquisitiveness disruptive or intrusive, but in the end, it might help to keep everyone on their toes.

Consider how to question other DiSC® styles about their current approaches and methods:

- D coworkers appreciate a direct approach. Remember not to confuse their confidence with competence.
- i coworkers may improvise and make spontaneous decisions, so be proactive in asking for detailed explanations of their approach.
- S coworkers don't want to be rushed for answers, but you may need to ask enough questions to unearth any concerns they have with their roles or responsibilities.
- C coworkers may become defensive if the quality of their work is called into question. Be sure to back your opinions with facts, and give them time to think over your suggestions.



# Embracing Accountability

## What are your team's accountability needs?

As part of the assessment, you and your team members also had an opportunity to identify aspects of your team's practices that could use improvement—or areas where it would be possible and desirable to hold one another more accountable. The number of people (out of 10) who selected each improvement appears in the corresponding box below. **Note: You had the option to select all that apply.**

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

- |          |   |          |  |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| <b>0</b> | Be more direct                              | <b>0</b> | Give one another feedback                          |
| <b>0</b> | Call one another on unproductive behaviors  | <b>4</b> | Address missed deadlines immediately               |
| <b>5</b> | Spend more time together                    | <b>0</b> | Follow through on personal commitments             |
| <b>8</b> | Have more efficient and productive meetings | <b>0</b> | Review progress against goals during team meetings |
| <b>2</b> | Publicly share goals                        | <b>5</b> | Have clearer priorities and goals                  |

## Points of Discussion

1. Eight team members believe this team could have more efficient or productive meetings. What are the main barriers to having productive meetings? How could you challenge one another to make sure meetings are more efficient?
2. Another highly selected are is “call one another on unproductive behaviors.” How would the team benefit if people challenged one another to do this more often? How realistic is that goal for this team?



# Taking Action to Hold Each Other Accountable

It must be clear to all team members that accountability is a shared team responsibility. As uncomfortable and difficult as it can often be, accountability helps a team and an organization avoid far more costly and difficult situations later. Consider the importance of accountability, outlined below, as you create an action plan.

## A Team That Avoids Accountability...

- Creates resentment among team members who have different standards of performance
- Encourages mediocrity
- Misses deadlines and key deliverables
- Places an undue burden on the team leader as the sole source of discipline

## A Team That Embraces Accountability...

- Ensures that poor performers feel pressure to improve
- Identifies potential problems quickly by questioning one another's approaches without hesitation
- Establishes respect among team members who are held to the same high standards
- Avoids excessive bureaucracy around performance management and corrective action

## Action Plan

Use the following questions to help build an action plan for your team.

1. On the team survey (page 24), one of the areas where the group rated itself lowest is confronting peers about problems. What makes this behavior difficult on your team? What expectations or processes could your team put in place to make confrontation feel less threatening or intimidating?
2. On the team survey (page 24), one of the areas where the group rated itself lowest is about giving unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another. What makes this behavior difficult on your team? What expectations or processes could your team put in place to make feedback feel less threatening or intimidating?

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## The Connection to Results ►►►

If teammates are not being held accountable for their contributions and behaviors, they will be more likely to shift their attention to areas other than collective results.



# Focusing on Results

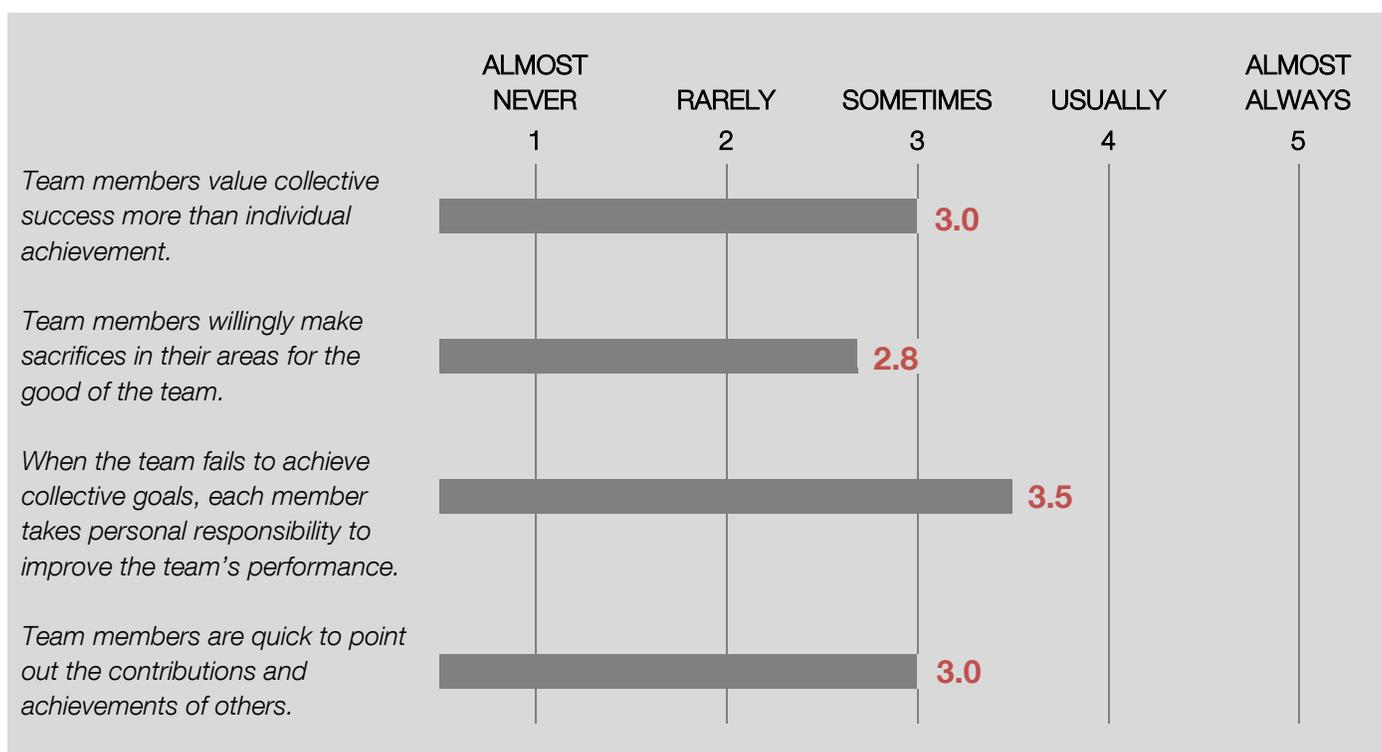
The ultimate goal of encouraging trust, conflict, commitment, and accountability is to achieve results. And yet, as it turns out, one of the greatest challenges to team success is the inattention to results. In the context of a cohesive team, **results**:

- refer to the collective goals of the team
- are not limited to financial measures, but are more broadly related to expectations and outcome-based performance

But what would a team be focused on other than results? Team status and individual status are the prime candidates. A focus on *team status* occurs when merely being part of a group is satisfying enough, regardless of results. *Individual status* refers to the familiar tendency of people to focus on enhancing their own positions or career prospects at the expense of their team.

## Team Survey Results

The following table reflects the team's responses to the results-related questions from the team survey. The bars to the right of the question reflect the team's **average score** on the five-point scale. The tables on page 31 will identify the distribution of responses within the team.



**Your Team's Survey Results for Trust: 3.1=MEDIUM**



# Your Team and Results

Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Members of your team differed in their responses to this question. It may be that some people equate personal and team success, or perhaps there is a lack of clarity about the team's goals. Whatever the reason, a functional team must make the collective results of the group more important to each person than his or her own personal goals.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Sometimes this means making sacrifices to help others who might be struggling. Your team members didn't seem to agree on how well the team does this. It may be that some people regularly help their teammates, whereas others are so focused on their own responsibilities that they don't make themselves available.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

Team members had differing responses to this issue. It may be that there is some confusion as to what the team's collective goals are, or perhaps some team members have trouble distinguishing between personal and team responsibility. In any case, the team is much more likely to achieve its goals if everyone takes ownership of the team's overall performance.

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

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0	6	1	3	0

There was some disagreement on this issue. Some team members may not be paying attention to the team's work, or there may be differences of opinion as to what is praise-worthy. In any case, acknowledging one another in a positive way is a healthy reminder that you're all working toward the same collective goal.

## The Impact of Your DiSC Style

With your S style, Genghis, you likely contribute to results with a cooperative, team-player approach. You may be quick to show appreciation for others' contributions, and since you're so supportive, you may often set your own responsibilities aside to help someone else. Furthermore, you avoid calling attention to yourself, allowing the team to concentrate on collective goals instead. However, you may find a focus on results to be a little cold, and you're probably tolerant and forgiving when it comes to setbacks or mediocre performance.

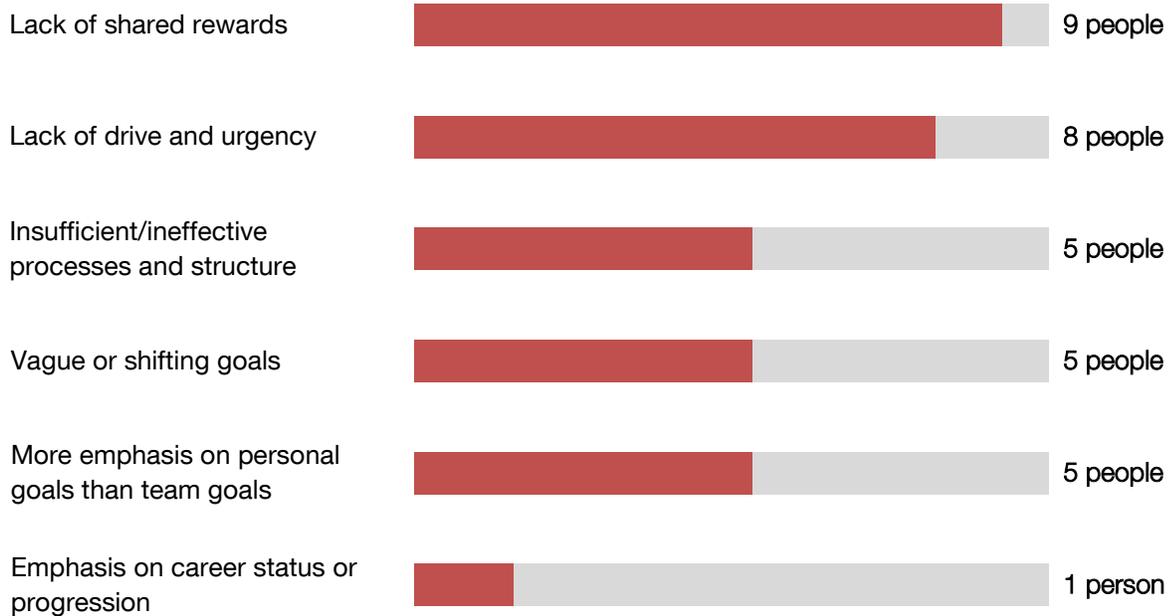
- Be willing to ask difficult questions that could help pinpoint struggles or issues that could jeopardize success.
- Place a greater focus on specific, results-oriented objectives.
- Urge less collaborative coworkers to focus on the collective success of the team.

# Common Distractions

## What is needed to focus on results?

Teams have difficulty staying focused on results because of self-interest and self-preservation. As part of the assessment, you and your team members had an opportunity to identify possible distractions from results for the people on your team. The number of people (out of 10) who selected each distraction appears next to the corresponding bar below. **Note: You had the option to select all that apply.**

*Some distractions that keep us from focusing on results are:*



## Points of Discussion

1. The results of the survey above indicate that a top distraction for your team is “vague or shifting goals.” What level of influence (directly or indirectly) does your team have in defining its goals?
2. In the survey above, your team identified the lack of drive and urgency as a major distraction. Are there currently deadlines in place? Are the deadlines realistic? Do people understand why a date was chosen and why it’s important? What are the consequences of missing a deadline?



# Taking Action to Achieve Results

There is no getting around the fact that the only measure of a great team is whether it accomplishes what it sets out to accomplish. Great teams ensure that all members, in spite of their individual responsibilities and areas of expertise, are doing whatever they can to help the team accomplish its goals. Consider the importance of focusing on collective results, outlined below, as you create an action plan.

## A Team That Is Not Focused on Results...

- Stagnates/fails to grow
- Rarely defeats competitors
- Loses achievement-oriented employees
- Encourages team members to focus on their own careers and individual goals
- Is easily distracted

## A Team That Focuses on Results...

- Retains achievement-oriented employees
- Minimizes individualistic behavior
- Enjoys success and suffers failure acutely
- Benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals/interest for the good of the team
- Avoids distractions

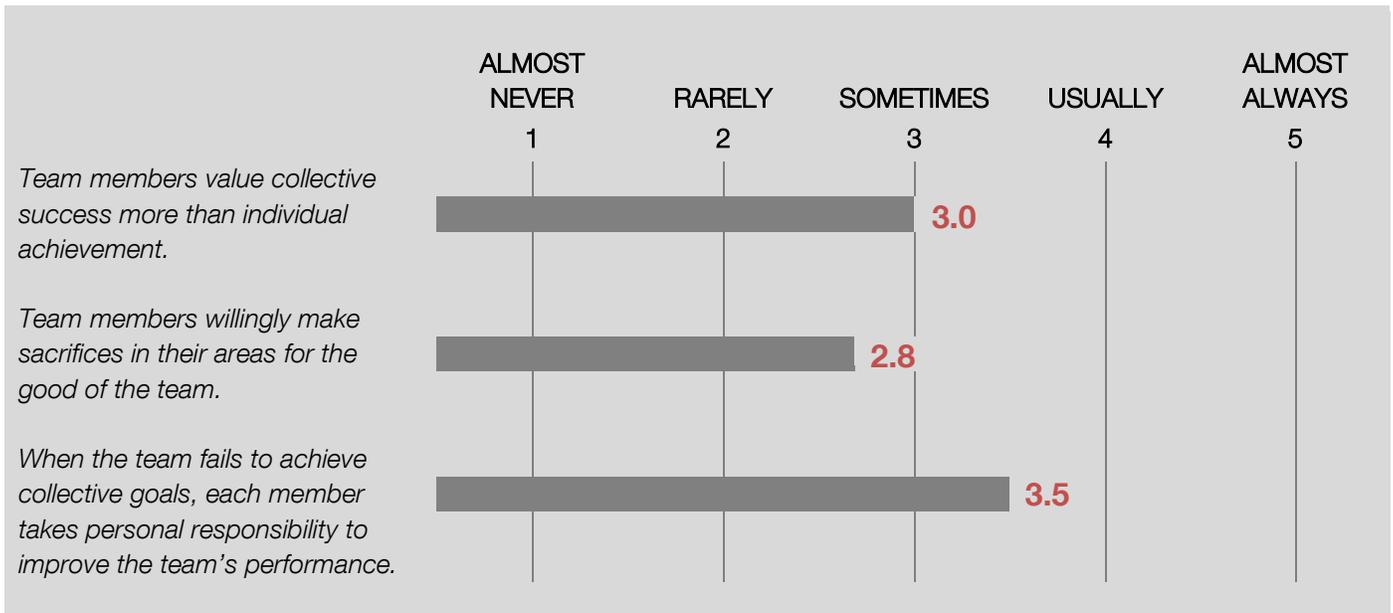
## Action Plan

Use the following questions to help build an action plan for your team.

1. On the team survey (page 24), one of the areas where the group rated itself lowest is confronting peers about problems. What makes this behavior difficult on your team? What expectations or processes could your team put in place to make confrontation feel less threatening or intimidating?
  
2. On the team survey (page 24), one of the areas where the group rated itself lowest is about giving unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another. What makes this behavior difficult on your team? What expectations or processes could your team put in place to make feedback feel less threatening or intimidating?

Summary ▶▶▶

# Your Team's Strengths



## Recognizing Your Team's Strengths

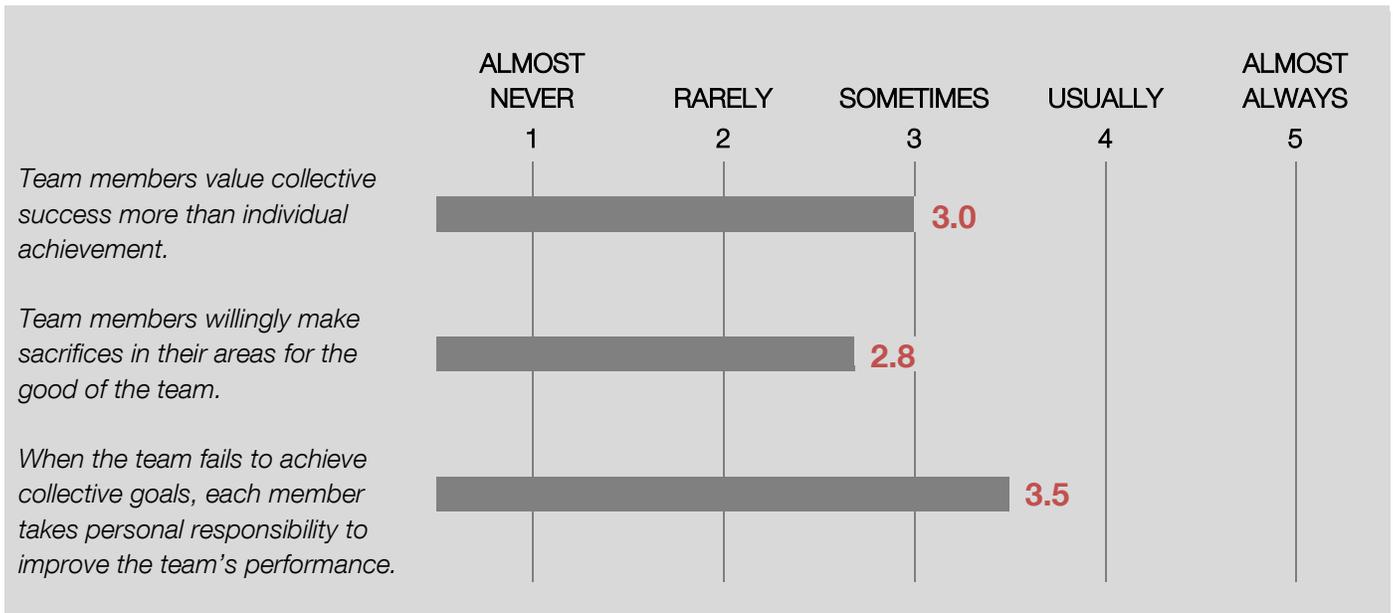
Based on the assessment, your team members probably demonstrate many of the following strengths:

- Speaking openly and honestly to one another
- Acting naturally around one another
- Supporting decisions, even when there is doubt
- Producing a common understanding of priorities
- Making sure decisions are made so the group is always moving forward
- Having confidence in the team's ability to act

## Points of Discussion

1. One of your strengths is being unguarded and genuine with one another (in trust). How can you use this part of trust to help with your difficulty in conflict?
2. One of your strengths is being unguarded and genuine with one another (in trust). How can you use this part of trust to help with your difficulty in conflict?
3. One of your strengths is being unguarded and genuine with one another (in trust). How can you use this part of trust to help with your difficulty in conflict?

# Overcoming Your Team's Challenges



## Recognizing Your Team's Challenges

Based on the assessment, your team members probably experience many of the following challenges:

- Speaking openly and honestly to one another
- Acting naturally around one another
- Supporting decisions, even when there is doubt
- Producing a common understanding of priorities
- Making sure decisions are made so the group is always moving forward
- Having confidence in the team's ability to act

## Points of Discussion

1. One of your strengths is being unguarded and genuine with one another (in trust). How can you use this part of trust to help with your difficulty in conflict?
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