Chairman's Toolkit– Recommended Reading by Topic

Below are books and manuscripts that are reviewed by ADFM members to help leaders who are looking for information on specific topics. The opinions expressed are those of the authors, and more than 1 review may be present for any given source. The resources are ranked on the following scale.

- 1 chair – Some information but of limited value or difficult to read.

- 2 chairs - Some useful information but limited by lack of clarity, complexity or less usable style

- 3 chairs – Useful information but not in-depth enough or limited by lack of clarity or poorer style

- 4 chairs – Good, useful, clear information that is easy to grasp

- 5 chairs – Outstanding or seminal work – highly recommended reading

Teamwork

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team is Patrick Lencioni’s seminal work on teamwork. In it, he uses a storytelling format to teach key points about how teamwork and teams go wrong, and how to alleviate these problems. He interweaves the fictional story of a new CEO of a struggling company with a dysfunctional executive team, an analysis of the five dysfunctions, and diagnostic questions to help readers assess their organizations. The CEO is not some sort of leader superhero, but a regular leader with insecurities and occasional slip-ups while still effectively modeling behaviors. She’s an achievable role model. Lencioni presents a teamwork model that is easy to understand and use. The book is a rapid read, and the information in it is easy to grasp. Don’t let it short length and simple format fool you, however. This book is one of the key works that will help a leader organize and create functioning teams, especially leadership teams. I pull it out and reread it from time to time. Lencioni captures the human essence of teamwork and connects the dots from trust to success. I highly recommend it.
Leadership

The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business by Patrick Lencioni

“Organizational health will one day surpass all other disciplines in business as the greatest opportunity for improvement and competitive advantage.” In this book, Mr. Lencioni contends that instead of searching for advantage in the largely exhausted areas like marketing, strategy, and technology, there is an untapped gold mine sitting right beneath them. Instead of trying to become smarter, he asserts that leaders and organizations need to shift their focus to becoming healthier, allowing them to tap into the more-than-sufficient intelligence and expertise they already have in their organizations. Organizational health is neither sexy nor quantifiable, which is why more people don't take advantage. Lencioni covers four steps to health: build a cohesive leadership team, create clarity, over-communicate clarity, and reinforce clarity. Through examples of his own experiences and others', he addresses the behaviors of a cohesive team, peer-to-peer accountability, office politics and bureaucracy and strategy, and how all organizations should strive to make people's lives better. I recommend this book to anyone who wishes to improve their organizations operations, moral, or bottom line.

Death by Meeting by Patrick Lencioni

Death by Meeting focuses on a fresh approach to cure one of the most painful, common, and underestimated problem of modern business- bad meetings. The cure he recommends is both simple and revolutionary. He provides a framework for his functional model, and makes it applicable to real world settings. It is a blueprint for leaders who want to eliminate wasted time and frustration among their teams, and create meetings with meaningful engagement and passion. After reading this book, I changed how I ran meetings, and started judging the success of individual meetings by the level of energetic or animated discussion or laughter that happens as we leave the room. Although not all parts are directly applicable to a medical environment, the problems we face are well represented and it is an extremely useful book. I suggest all chairs and ADs read and discuss this book.

--E.J. Mayeaux, Jr., M.D., reviewed 3/2015
The Five Temptations of a CEO by Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni has a talent for cutting through the complexities of leadership and teamwork topics to highlight core principles, and then presenting them in easily digestible fictional forms. The Five Temptations of a CEO highlights some of the common problems and pitfalls faced by leaders. It is designed to be read in a single sitting, but the lessons are timeless, and the special anniversary edition has reflections from Mr. Lencioni on the new challenges in business and leadership. In the book he weaves a tale of a young CEO who, facing his first annual board review, knows he is failing and doesn't know why. As the fictional CEO is being mentored, Mr. Lencioni mentors the reader. The five temptations of a CEO are: choosing status over results (i.e. wanting to protect own status instead of focusing on bottom-line results), choosing popularity over accountability, choosing certainty over clarity (i.e. analysis paralysis - always delaying to make key decisions until all facts are gathered), choosing harmony over healthy conflict in meetings, choosing invulnerability ("I am never wrong") over trust ("I too can make mistakes") in the face of subordinates. Any leader can learn how to recognize these mistakes that leaders make in themselves and others and how to avoid or correct them.

--E.J. Mayeaux, Jr., M.D., reviewed 3/2015

Positive Leadership by Mike Magee, MD

This book offers 52 anecdotes drawn from the author's family life to illustrate leadership lessons.

Although a pleasant read, it offers little information to develop leaders.

--E.J. Mayeaux, Jr., M.D., reviewed 3/2015

The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive: A Leadership Fable Hardcover by Patrick Lencioni

In this follow-up to the Five Temptations of a CEO, Mr. Patrick Lencioni focuses is on a leader's crucial role in building a healthy organization. The story focuses on a frustrated head of one consulting firm facing a leadership challenge that could threaten to topple his company and career. Lencioni helps his readers understand the power of creating organizational health and how to achieve it with less politics, lower turnover, more productivity, and higher morale. The model he presents centers includes: Build and maintain a cohesive leadership team, create organizational clarity, communicate organizational clarity, and reinforce organizational clarity through human systems. The story moves quickly and is followed by a analytical summary, which includes self-assessment tools and suggestions for putting the ideas into practice. If you read it and honestly assess yourself, it is a great tool for growth.