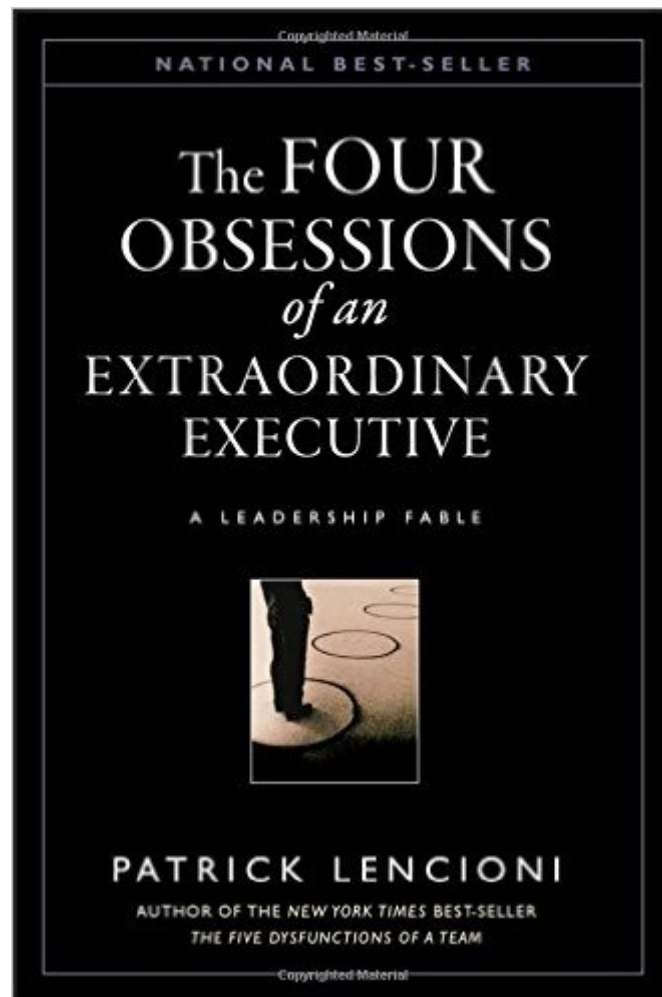


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The Four Obsessions Of An Extraordinary Executive: A Leadership Fable



Synopsis

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

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book offers executives and business owners guidance on how to design and maintain an effective and efficient organization. The author decided to apply a fable format, similar to the business classic "The Goal," to drive the ideas home. The fable dramatizes two competing firms where one owner has incorrectly identified his competitive advantage. The fable is based on a clueless HR executive's experience and description of what he thinks is a dysfunctional team at one firm as he attempts to wiggle his way into a job at the competing firm. For some this may be an effective method. For others like me you will have no need for the fable. While the fable format worked very well in "The Goal" it seems superfluous here. For those of you that have been in

business for a while you will already know all too well the elements and characteristics of a functional and dysfunctional team highlighted in the fable. Furthermore, you know that some effective elements and structure exist --after all, why did you pick up this book? Even though it is a quick and easy read, for those with little time or care to delve into the fable, I recommend that you just skip right to the section (p 139 - p 180) called "Putting The Disciplines Into Practice: A Summary And Self Assessment." This pamphlet-sized section is the information you are after and it does offer some nice insight and clarity to building an effective and efficient team. Much of the information will be ideas or concepts that you have heard before, maybe many times, through coworkers, b-school, management seminars, etc. However, the author is correct in identifying the lack of true implementation, clarity, and consistency in most organizations.

This book is Lencioni's second leadership fable. Weaving a story around a set of principles can be an effective teaching technique, and Lencioni is skillful in the art of moral-based storytelling. The first 136 pages of the book are consumed in telling the story of a CEO who discovered an effective way to lead his organization. The basis of the approach is a set of four disciplines, which are not revealed to the reader until the problem scenario has been established. This sequencing is valuable, since it forces the reader to come to grips with the real-life experiences of the characters of the story. The plot is intriguing. The engaging tale holds the reader's attention strongly enough that there is minimal temptation to read ahead to see if the butler did it. The lure of the story holds your attention. The realistic scenes and dialog give an "edge" to the story; you forget you're reading a business book. It's not difficult at all to relate to each of the characters, even to the extent, perhaps, of identifying some of the characters with colleagues at work in your own organization. But there are surprises, so don't think you can second-guess this book. The story told, the author changes hats on page 137 to slide into the role of consultant and teacher. He explains the four disciplines through a narrative style that I'd liken to a friend sitting across the table from you. But then the questions start. Lots of questions . . . and answers. This effective consulting style comes naturally: Lencioni is president of a consulting firm in the San Francisco area. I recommend this book for CEOs, company owners, and consultants who serve them. You'll learn some interesting principles and how to convey them, but you'll also learn from the experience of reading the fable.

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