The **Five** Dysfunctions of a **Team** Assessment Report

A Sample Company
A Sample Team
May 27, 2008

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.

The Five Dysfunctions

Dysfunction #1: 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: 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: 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: 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.

The Model (continued)

Dysfunction #5: 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 lead by, a cohesive team.

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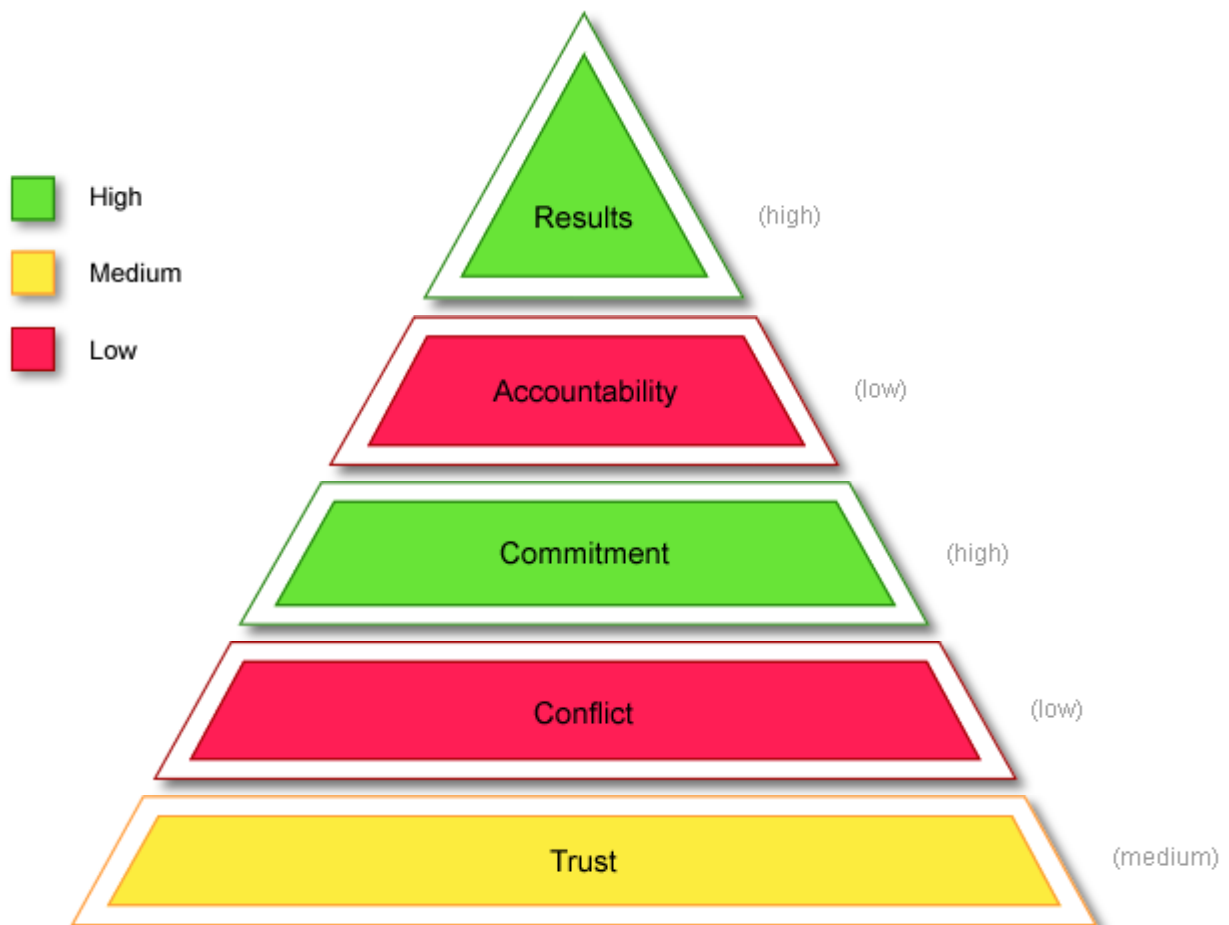
Your assessment scores indicate that results and commitment are likely areas of strength for your team, while trust is potentially an area for improvement, and accountability and conflict are areas of likely concern.

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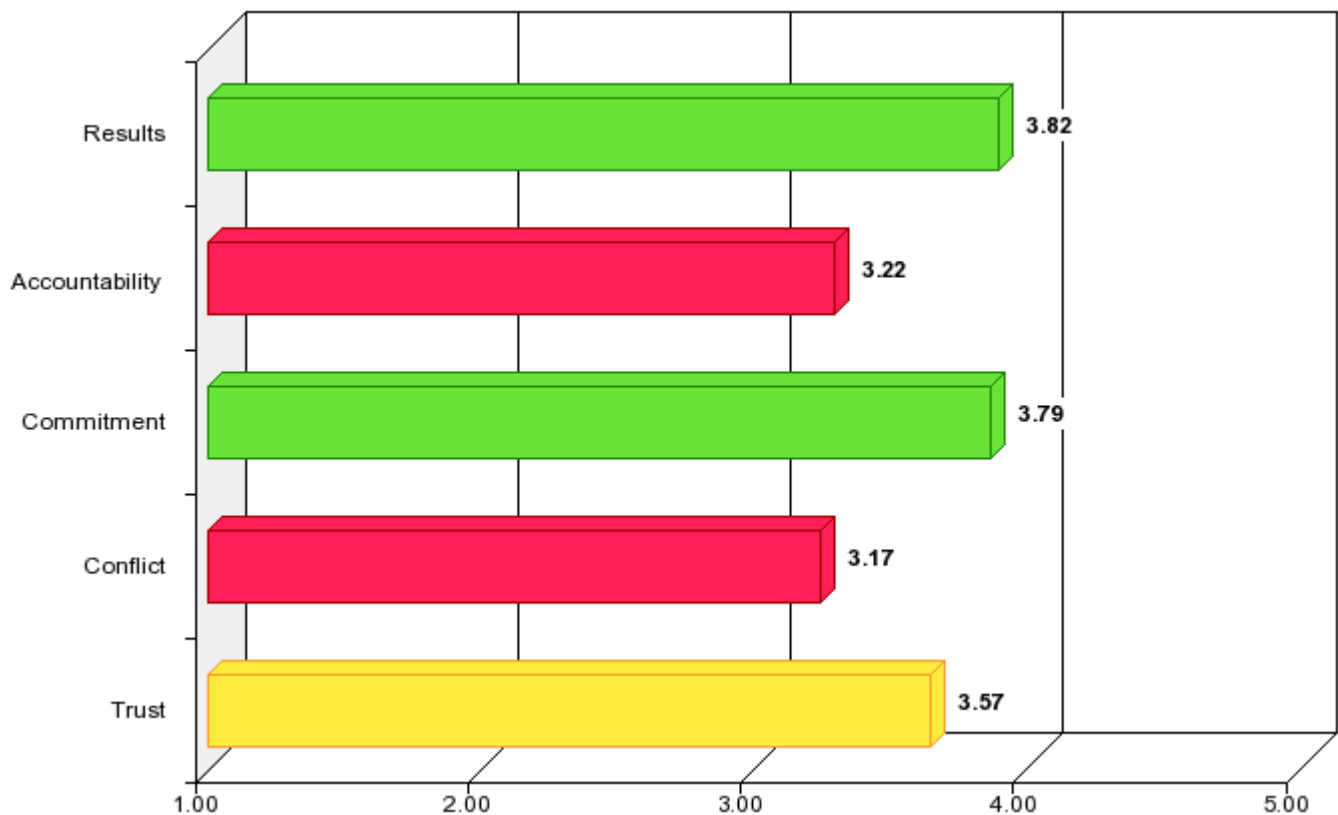
Trust: Your score in this area was medium, which indicates that your team may need to get more comfortable being vulnerable and open with one another about individual strengths, weaknesses, mistakes and needs for help.

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 Strongest Areas

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.

9. *The team has a reputation for high performance.*

   Dysfunction: Inattention to Results

   The average score for this question was **4.38**

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

   Dysfunction: Lack of Commitment

   The average score for this question was **4.13**

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

   Dysfunction: Lack of Commitment

   The average score for this question was **4.00**

29. *The team consistently achieves its objectives.*

   Dysfunction: Inattention to Results

   The average score for this question was **4.00**

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

   Dysfunction: Inattention to Results

   The average score for this question was **4.00**

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

   Dysfunction: Lack of Commitment

   The average score for this question was **4.00**

The Weakest Areas

The questions listed below represent the bottom 6 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.

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

Dysfunction: Fear of Conflict

The average score for this question was **2.75**

8.   *Team members point out one another's unproductive behaviors.*

Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

The average score for this question was **2.75**

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

Dysfunction: Fear of Conflict

The average score for this question was **2.88**

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

Dysfunction: Absence of Trust

The average score for this question was **2.88**

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

Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

The average score for this question was **3.00**

21.   *The team ensures that poor performers feel pressure and the expectation to improve.*

Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

The average score for this question was **3.00**

Areas of Key Differences

The questions listed below represent the areas where your team member's 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 the team are held to the same high standards.*

    Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

    The average score for this question was **3.75**

    Number of team members in each category:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
0	2	1	2	3

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

    Dysfunction: Fear of Conflict

    The average score for this question was **3.13**

    Number of team members in each category:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1	2	0	5	0

21. *The team ensures that poor performers feel pressure and the expectation to improve.*

    Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

    The average score for this question was **3**

    Number of team members in each category:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1	2	1	4	0

Areas of Key Differences (continued)

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

Dysfunction: Absence of Trust

The average score for this question was **3.25**

Number of team members in each category:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
0	3	1	3	1

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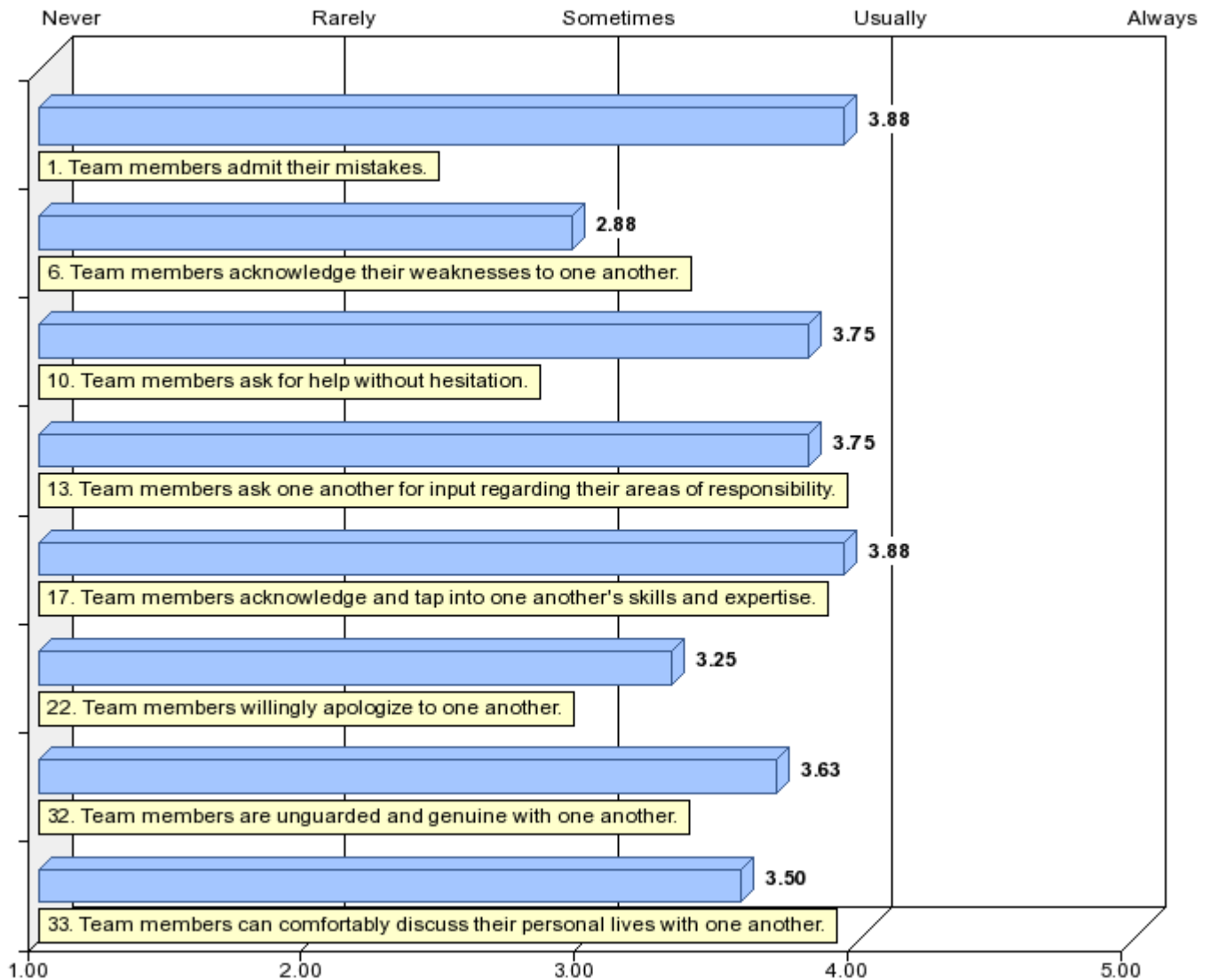
Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

The average score for this question was **3**

Number of team members in each category:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
0	3	3	1	1

Trust

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |

- **3.88** — 1. Team members admit their mistakes.
- **2.88** — 6. 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.
- **3.88** — 17. Team members acknowledge and tap into one another's skills and expertise.
- **3.25** — 22. Team members willingly apologize to one another.
- **3.63** — 32. Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.
- **3.50** — 33. Team members can comfortably discuss their personal lives with one another.

Scale: 1.00 2.00 3.00 4.00 5.00

Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. In fact, 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.

Results
Accountability
Commitment
Conflict
Trust

Your Team's Score: Medium
While your team scored medium in trust, it is recommended that you consider using many of the suggestions on the following page.*Please note that by increasing your trust score, your team will have more success in overcoming the other Dysfunctions.*
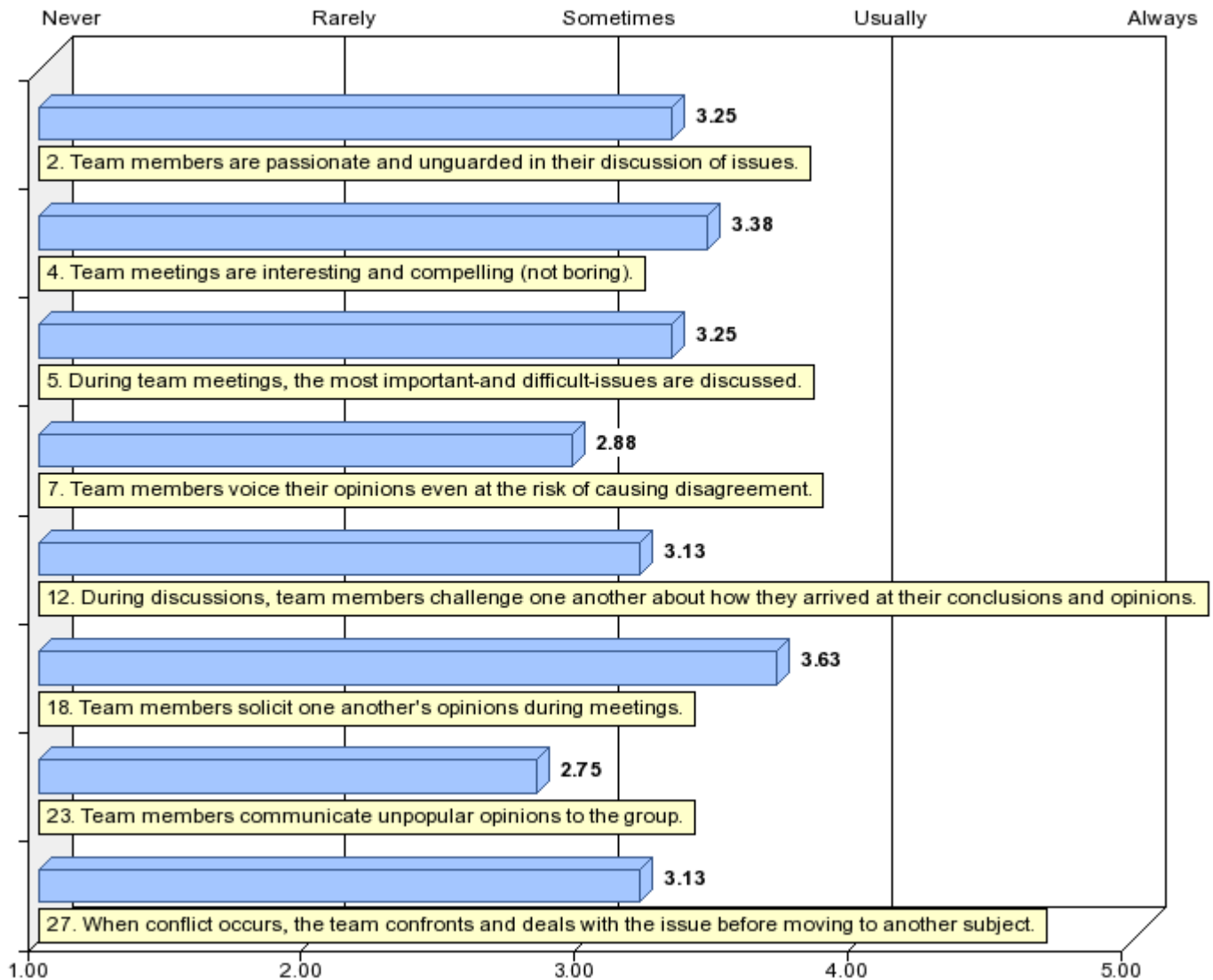
Trust (continued)

Tips and Exercises for Maintaining or Improving Trust

- Use a **personality instrument** (e.g. Myers-Briggs, DISC or Social Styles) to 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. It will also accelerate trust by speeding up the process of team members getting to know one another.

- Find opportunities to **spend more time together**, face-to-face. One of the biggest impediments to trust building on a team is the lack of time spent working collectively. This can include off-site meetings, strategic planning sessions, and even social activities. Avoid the temptation to "save time" at the expense of improving productivity by building a stronger team.

- Share **personal histories** with one another. Team members that understand one another's backgrounds are more likely to leverage their strengths and avoid unfair judgments about their behaviors.

- Implement the **Team Effectiveness Exercise** to provide 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, and politically divisive 360-degree program.

Conflict

| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |

3.25
2. Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.

3.38
4. Team meetings are interesting and compelling (not boring).

3.25
5. During team meetings, the most important-and difficult-issues are discussed.

2.88
7. Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement.

3.13
12. During discussions, team members challenge one another about how they arrived at their conclusions and opinions.

3.63
18. Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings.

2.75
23. Team members communicate unpopular opinions to the group.

3.13
27. When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject.

1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00   5.00

Conflict is about the productive exchange of diverse ideas and opinions in a focused, efficient and unfiltered way. Without conflict, decision-making suffers and relationships among team members stagnate. Additionally, if conflict does not surface it generally degenerates to mean-spirited, back channel comments behind closed doors.

Results

Accountability

Commitment

Conflict

Trust

Your Team's Score: Low
Because your team scored low in conflict, it is recommended that you consider using many of the suggestions on the following page.
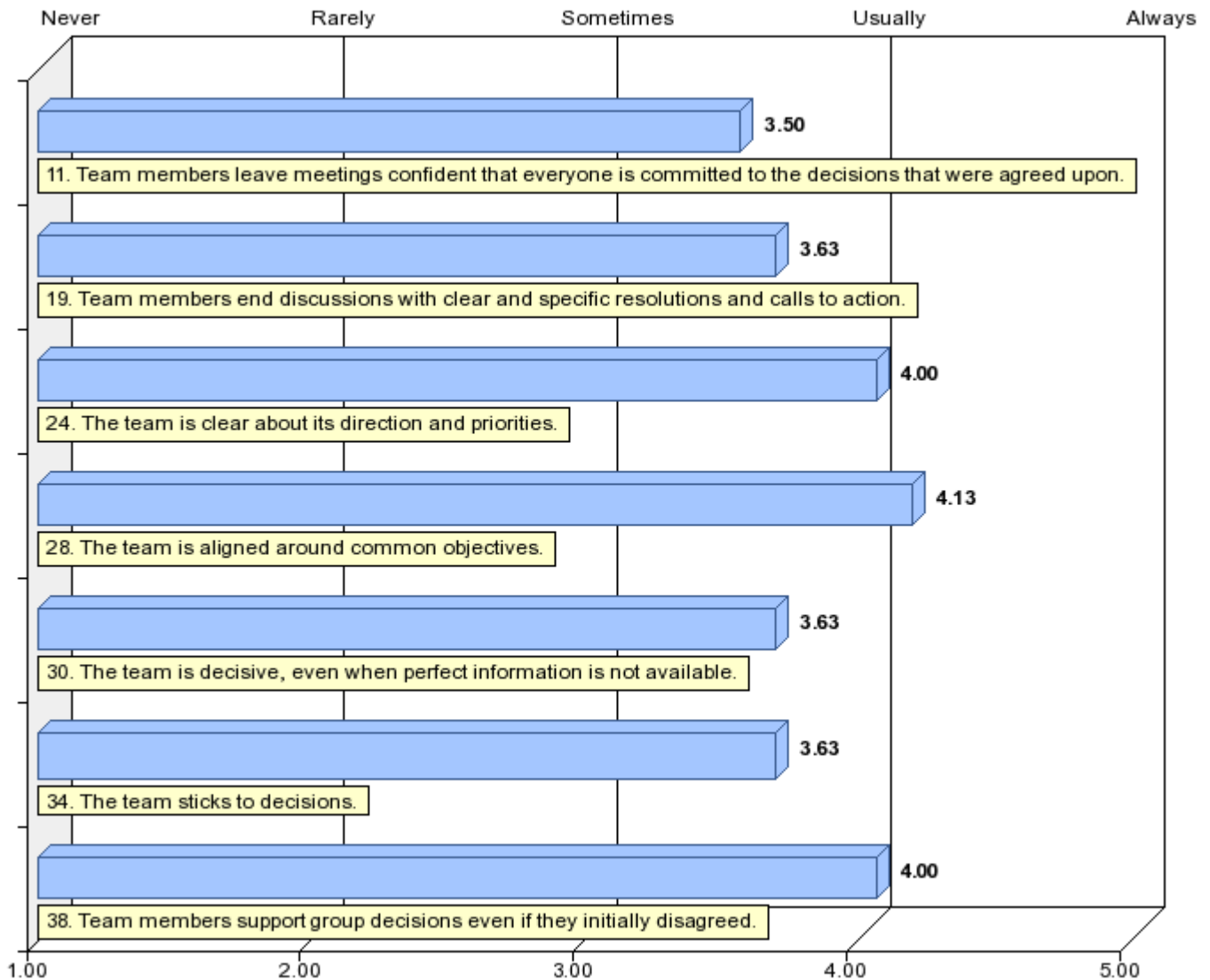
Conflict (continued)

Tips and Exercises for Maintaining or Improving Conflict

- Clearly **set the expectation** that conflict is both good and necessary for the team. One of the greatest inhibitors of conflict is the failure of the team leader to communicate the expectation that conflict is required, and then to demand it during meetings.

- Use a **personality assessment** to understand specifically how different team members naturally engage in conflict.

- Understand how different strategies for conflict should be employed by using the **Thomas-Kilman Instrument (TKI)**. Understanding and overcoming natural inclinations will lead to more strategic decisions about conflict.

- Establish team **rules of engagement** for acceptable conflict (e.g. behaviors, displays of emotion, language, process).

- Improve the **effectiveness of meetings**, which is the most important setting where conflict must occur. Setting aside enough time for critical issues makes it easier for team members to engage in constructive conflict and resolve issues.

- Ensure that someone on the team is **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.

Commitment

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always

3.50
11. Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon.

3.63
19. Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.

4.00
24. The team is clear about its direction and priorities.

4.13
28. The team is aligned around common objectives.

3.63
30. The team is decisive, even when perfect information is not available.

3.63
34. The team sticks to decisions.

4.00
38. Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagreed.

1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00   5.00

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.

Results
Accountability
Commitment
Conflict
Trust

Your Team's Score: High

Though your team scored high in commitment, it is recommended that you consider one or more of the exercises on the following page to maintain current levels.
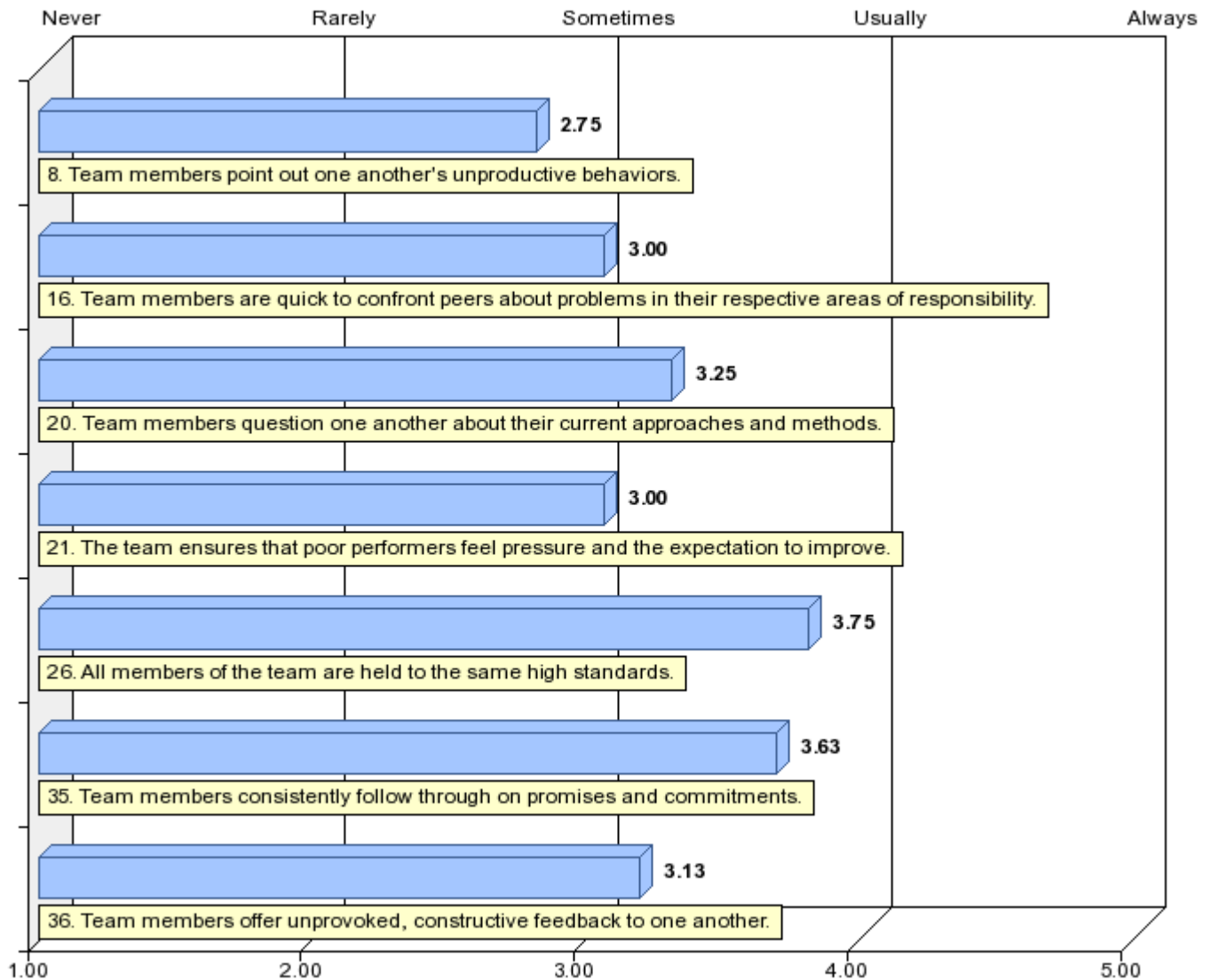
Commitment (continued)

Tips and Exercises for Maintaining or Improving Commitment

- Force the team to **achieve clarity and closure**. Leaders of teams who commit to decisions demand that their people eliminate ambiguity and leave meetings clear about what they are agreeing to do.

- 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 constituencies. The use of this simple exercise, called **cascading communication**, demonstrates 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.

- **Collectively set objectives and deadlines** to remove any temptations around procrastination and waffling.

- Articulate the **worst-case scenario** to diminish fear of failure by realizing that even a poor decision is survivable.

- Establish **contingency plans** to dispel the misconception that a commitment cannot be revisited after substantial new information invalidates the wisdom of the initial decision.

Results

Accountability

Commitment

Conflict

Trust

Accountability

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always

2.75
8. Team members point out one another's unproductive behaviors.

3.00
16. Team members are quick to confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility.

3.25
20. Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods.

3.00
21. The team ensures that poor performers feel pressure and the expectation to improve.

3.75
26. All members of the team are held to the same high standards.

3.63
35. Team members consistently follow through on promises and commitments.

3.13
36. Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another.

1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00   5.00

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.

Results
Accountability
Commitment
Conflict
Trust

Your Team's Score: Low

Because your team scored low in accountability, it is recommended that you consider using many of the suggestions on the following page.
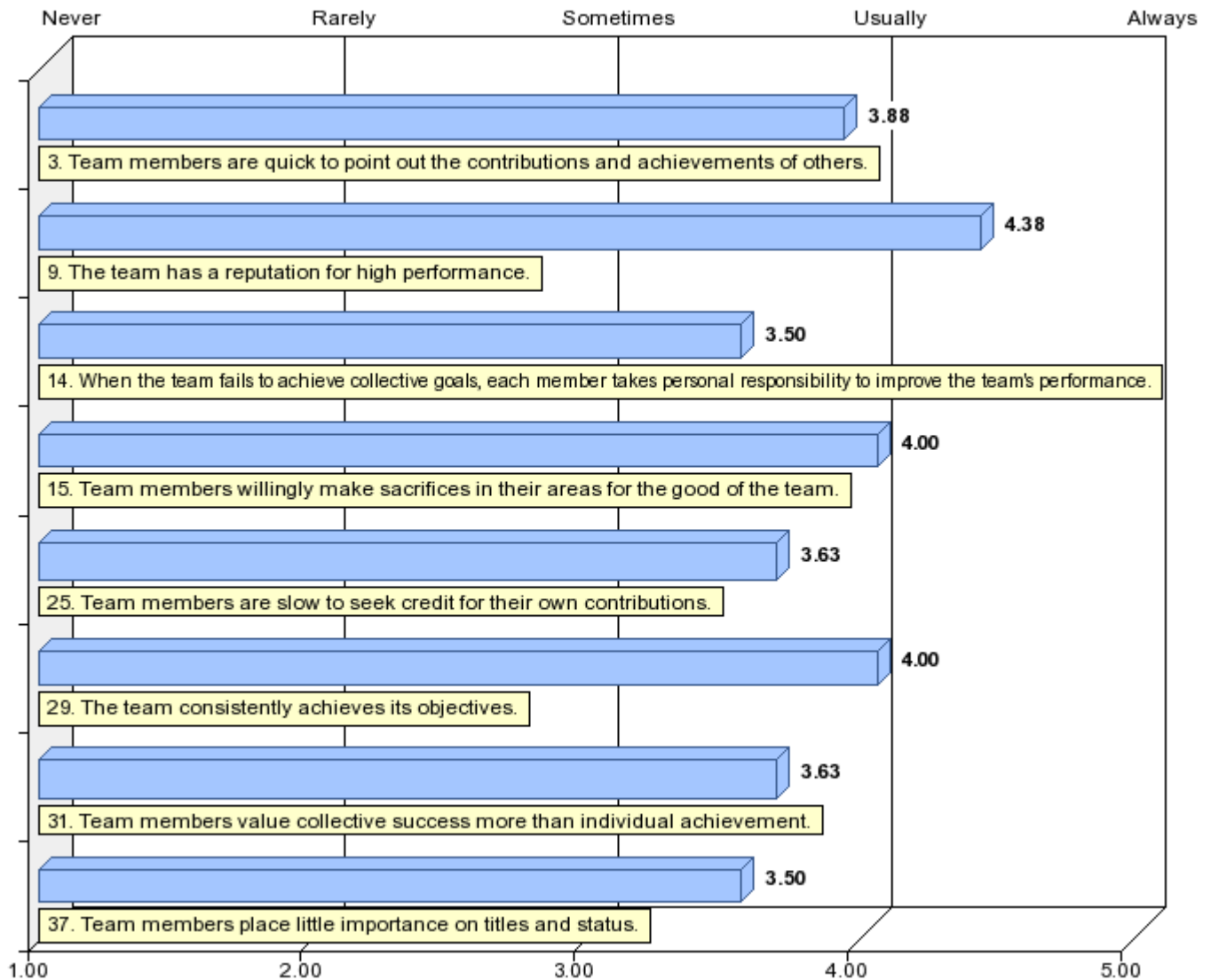
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Accountability (continued)

Tips and Exercises for Maintaining or Improving Accountability

- Use the **Team Effectiveness Exercise** to provide 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.

- Publish **goals and standards** of behavior. A team increases the likelihood that members will call out one another's aberrant behaviors when it clearly articulates the behaviors that are destructive to the team's performance.

- Regularly **review progress against goals**. 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.

- Start meetings using **the lightning round**. This is when team members quickly review what they are working on. When team members keep one another informed about what they are doing, it gives peers an opportunity to provide feedback and advice before a mistake can occur.

Results

Accountability

Commitment

Conflict

Trust

Results

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always

3.88
3. Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.

4.38
9. The team has a reputation for high performance.

3.50
14. When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance.

4.00
15. Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.

3.63
25. Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions.

4.00
29. The team consistently achieves its objectives.

3.63
31. Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.

3.50
37. Team members place little importance on titles and status.

1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00   5.00

The only real reason to work in teams is because 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.

Results
Accountability
Commitment
Conflict
Trust

Your Team's Score: High
Though your team scored high in results, it is recommended that you consider one or more of the exercises on the following page to maintain current levels.

Results (continued)

Tips and Exercises for Maintaining or Improving Results

- Have all team members make **public commitments to objectives**. When people make public declarations of their intention to do something, they are much more likely to follow through and less likely to let personal needs take precedence.

- Ensure the **alignment of goals** throughout the organization. When team members understand how the team's objectives provide a context for other goals deeper in the organization, they are much more likely to stay focused on collective results, rather than departmental or individual ones.

- 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.

- Confirm that the **team priority** is in order. It is critical–and difficult–for team members to subordinate the needs and interests of the teams they manage to those of the team they belong to. Results suffer when team members put a higher priority on the activities of their own departments or divisions.