

3 Leadership Biases Holding Your Church Back

The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health. Yet it is ignored by most leaders even though it is simple, free, and available to anyone who wants it.

- Patrick Lencioni, [The Advantage](#)

With that bold statement, Patrick Lencioni delivers perhaps his finest work to date – no mean feat considering that his eight business fables remain required reading for leaders in any organization.

I respect the thought leadership of Lencioni. But in order to apply his new and culminating book for church leaders, I prefer to reframe the big idea just a bit. He is really packaging the **discipline of clarity around the big idea of “organization health.”** Why is he doing this? Well as someone who is helping others with clarity every day, the first thing you learn is that **clarity is rarely a felt need, but is always a real need.**

*The problem for church leaders with focusing on health, is that we experienced and **passed through an mini-era called the “church health movement” in the 90’s** as thought leaders wrestled with the limitations of the church growth movement. Therefore I want to substitute the word “health” with the word “clarity” so you can ponder the connection.*

Instead of trying to become smarter, Lencioni 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.

*What’s the secret to discovering organizational health [clarity]? **Or to reframe the question completely, why do leaders struggle to embrace it?***

According to Lencioni, it’s because too many leaders quietly believe they are too sophisticated, too busy, or too analytical to bother with it. In other words, they think it’s beneath them. Before leaders can tap into the power of organizational health, they must humble themselves enough to overcome the three biases that prevent them from embracing it:

- **The Sophistication Bias:** organizational health [clarity] is so simple and accessible that many leaders have a hard time seeing it as a real opportunity for meaningful advantage. It doesn’t require great intelligence or sophistication – **just uncommon levels of discipline, courage, persistence, and common sense.** In Church Unique I call this the “competency trap.”

- **The Adrenaline Bias:** becoming a healthy organization takes a little time; unfortunately, too many leaders suffer from adrenaline addiction, hooked on the daily rush of activity and firefighting within their own organizations. In Church Unique I called this “ministry treadmill.”
- **The Quantification Bias:** the benefits of becoming a healthy organization are difficult to accurately quantify. It requires a level of conviction and intuition that many overly analytical leaders have a hard time accepting. In Flux we talk about the barriers to developing metrics around discipleship. That is, for church leaders, we rely on attendance not spiritual formation as the validation of success. This especially hurts the “buzz church-” when more people are coming its easier to feel good about your success.

To close this post is one of the boldest quotes you will ever hear or read:

Once organizational health [clarity] is properly understood and placed into the right context, it will surpass all other disciplines in business as the greatest opportunity for improvement and competitive advantage. Really.

Or as we like to say around Auxano, clarity isn't everything but it changes everything. What bias is holding your clarity back?

To read more about the 6 biases I use for church leaders check out this post from Church Unique. I call the biases, [Thinkholes](#).

Read Part 2 of this series [here](#).