Book Summary: Death by Meeting - A leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is a bestselling author and management consultant. Death by Meeting is a good book that can help anyone who has management responsibility. Controlling meetings and engaging team members is critical for company growth.

Why is this important to me?

I understand that you are going to invest the next 8 minutes of your life watching this video so it needs to be important and relevant. Everybody has been in bad meetings and I have run a few of them myself. Bad meetings cost companies a lot of money. If you have a 1 hour meeting with 10 people in the room and don’t come away with clear deceive action steps then you wasted a lot of time and money.

Time and human energy are critical parts of a company’s intellectual property. Wasted time equates to wasted profits. Having bad meetings is disengaging and demotivating.

Death by Meeting covers several points. All of them are worth the time to study. For the sake of time, I will profile three areas and answer What, Why and How for each.

1. **Movies and Meetings** – Meetings need to be interactive and filled with conflict. Conflict is happening everyday between competitors, team members, customers and departments. Getting to the core conflict and taking decisive action is required for growth. Every great movie has conflict and each meeting should have it as well. Also, people pay attention to narrative. This is important to keep the attention of the meeting members. Well run meetings should be better than movies because they are interactive and directly affect your life at work.

2. **Tactical Meetings** – Weekly meetings are important and should be 45 minutes to an hour long. These meetings should be a review of the weekly activities and scorecard for each person. A quick summary of the week and any immediate things that need to be address should be addressed. If a strategic issue comes up then it should be noted but not covered in this meeting. Also, if there are any issues that the team members need help with, that needs to be covered as well.

3. **Strategic Meetings** – Monthly strategic meetings are typically two hours. These meetings cover strategic topics and require analyzing, debating and deciding on a course of action. If this is a sales meeting then topics covered would be Value Proposition execution, competitive strategy, key target account acquisition and so on. There has to be conflict in these meetings and at the end, once a course of action is agreed upon, everybody has to get behind the decision. This is important especially if you disagreed with the course of action. This is why constructive arguing is so important. If a strategic course of action is simply jammed down your throat with not hearing all ideas then the initiative will die. Remember that it is the team members that execute the tactics behind the strategy and if they can’t argue their point, they will not support it in their actions.
Death by Meeting is a good book. If followed, it has the potential of transforming your unproductive meetings to company changing events.

I hope you have found this short video summary useful. The key to any new idea is to work it into your daily routine until it becomes habit. Habits form in as little as 21 days. One thing you can take away from this book is mine for conflict. Ask good questions and probe to uncover the real issues in meetings. If there is a big elephant in the room and nobody is touching it then ask questions and address it dead on.