

THE IDEAL TEAM PLAYER

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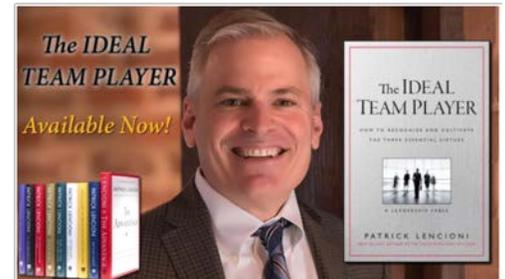
by Patrick Lencioni

The ideal team player is about Jeff Shanley who had devoted twenty years of his life to working in Silicon Valley. He worked in high-tech marketing, at age thirty-five he cofounded a technology start up. After years and years of working in Silicon Valley he and his wife began to grow tired of trying to keep up with the Joneses. He has been wanting to make a career change and when his uncle Bob Shanley told him he was going to retire from his Valley Builders contracting company. When Jeff asked Bob to appoint him to the new position of CEO and Bob agreed. Jeff took over the management of the firm with a workforce of more than two hundred people. The company had just received two new contracts, a new hotel in Celina, and the queen of the valley hospital project. The company had never worked on two projects that big simultaneously. Each job was as big as anything the firm had ever handled. The firm would have to hire more help to complete these projects. Bob told Jeff that they would have to hire sixty more employees to accomplish the completion of these projects. If they wanted sixty employees he told Jeff that he would probably need to hire eighty employees since twenty would probably quit. Jeff was shocked at the thirty three percent turnover,

and that Bob wanted them to fit the Valley Builders culture. Which meant that they needed to be good team players. Jeff did some extensive internal research to determine what traits distinguished VBs ideal team players. He found out that the valley builder workers need to have three main characteristics: Humility, Hunger, and people smarts. These characteristics became the foundation of Valley Builders new hiring model; the morale skyrocketed, turnover plummeted, and the two new projects went well.

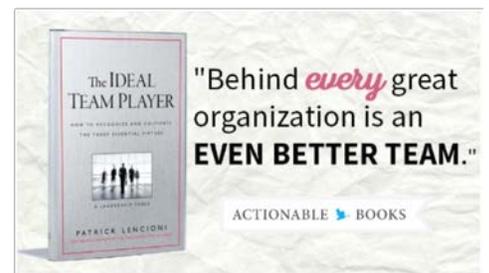
The Three Virtues: Humble, Hungry, and Smart

HUMBLE- The most important virtue of an idea team player is humility. A humble employee is someone who is more concerned with the success of the team than with getting credit for his or her contributions. People who lack humility in a significant way, the ones who demand a disproportionate amount of attention, are dangerous for a team.



"Humility is the most sensitive of the three virtues, which is why the process of improving in this area is often the most psychologically nuanced"

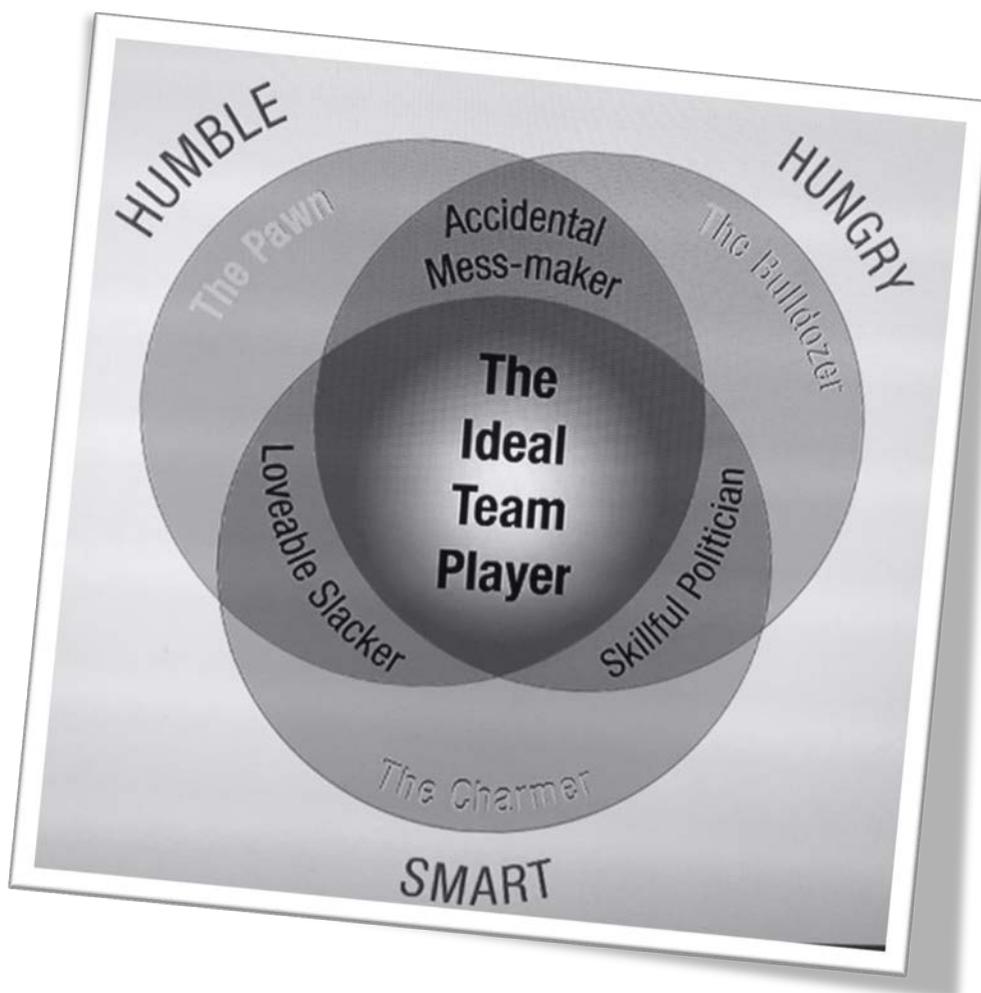
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Humble team players are not afraid to honestly acknowledge the skills and talents that they bring to the team, though never in a proud or boastful way.

Hungry- The next virtue of an ideal player is hunger, the desire to work hard and do whatever is necessary to help the team succeed. Hungry employees almost never have to be pushed by a manager to work harder because they are self-motivated. They volunteer to fill gaps and take on more responsibilities and are eagerly looking around corners for new way to contribute to the team

Smart- The final virtue of a team player is not about being intelligent, but rather about being wise in how to deal with people. Smart employees understand the nuances of team dynamics, and know how their words and actions impact others. Their good judgment and intuition help them deal with others in the most effective way.

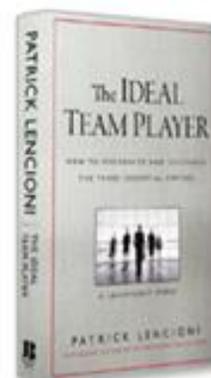


"If you want the ideal team player than throw the conventional interview out of the window"

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To fill your workforce with ideal team players, seek employees with all of the three core team-player virtues. Employees who lack them all will be terrible team members. Those who have only one of the three values will have an extremely hard time performing useful team members. Those who have only one of the three values will have an extremely hard time performing as useful team members. People with two of the these three characteristics can become valued team members that will take a lot of hard work

- **Hungry and smart, but not humble** – This person is a "skillful politician" who will be unwilling to support team decisions that don't further his or her own personal interests.
- **Humble and smart, but not hungry** – This person will be a "lovable slacker" who won't work hard to help the team achieve its goals.
- **Humble and hungry, but not smart** – This employee will be an "accidental mess-maker" who will inadvertently create vexing problems for the team.

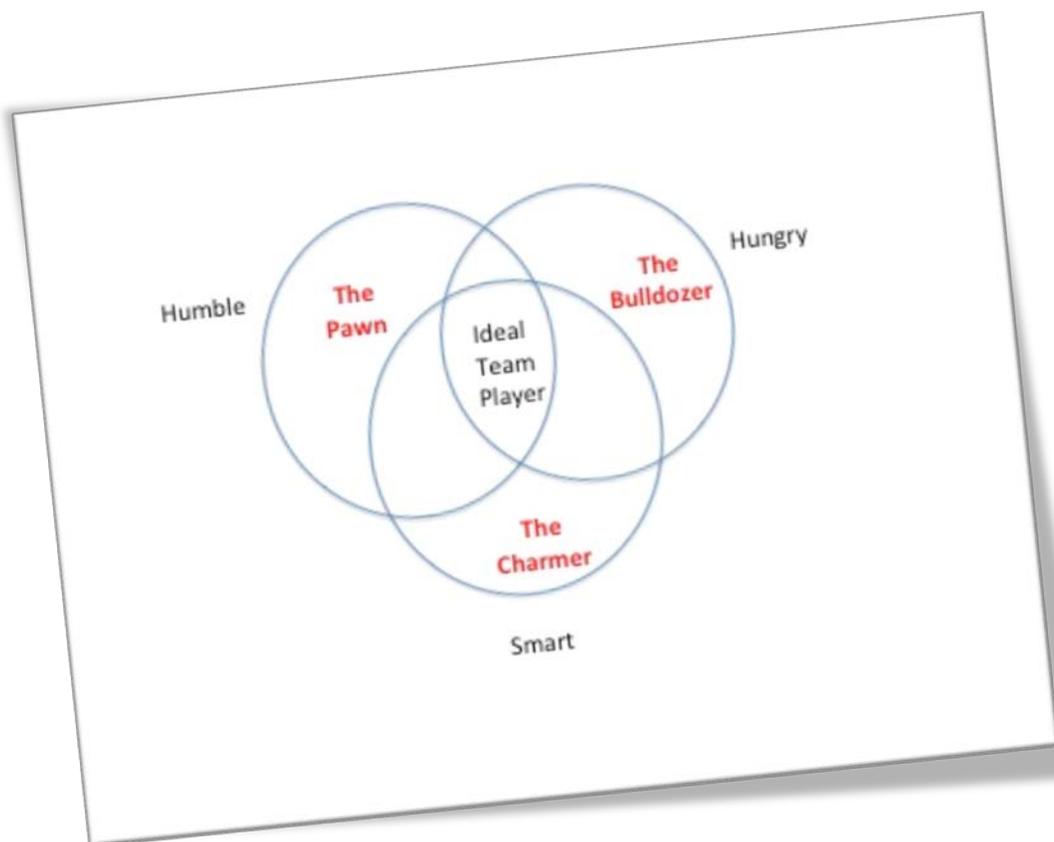


Lencioni describes for those who lack two of the three in a big way, it's also going to be an uphill battle—not impossible, but not easy. Here is a look at team members who is only hungry, humble, or smart.

Pawns- unassuming people who don't have much drive to accomplish things and lack social smarts to build effective relationships with others on the team. Because they are nice and get along, pawns tend to get tolerated by teams for a good period of time.

Bulldozers- have great drive and can push the team forward, but they tend to hurt morale because they don't care much about other people's feelings. They focus on me and want to take advantage of the team for their own purpose.

Charmers- like to put on a good show for the team but don't contribute much. They like to tell people how good they are but don't really care for the team's success. Unfortunately, their entertaining style will keep them on the team even longer than the Pawn.



The next three categories that are talked about represent people who are more difficult to identify because the strengths associated with them often camouflage their weaknesses. Team members who fit into these categories lack only one of the three traits and thus have a little higher likelihood of overcoming their challenges

The Accidental Mess-Maker

People who are humble and hungry but decidedly not smarter are the "accidental mess-makers". They mean well and don't want any credit but lack the people skills to communicate effectively with other team members. While colleagues will respect their work ethic and sincere desire to be helpful, those colleagues can get tired of having to clean up the emotional and interpersonal problems that accidental mess-makers so often leave behind.

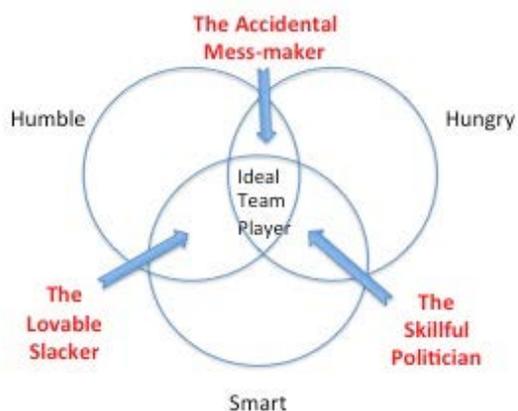
The Lovable Slacker

People who are humble and smart but not adequately hungry are the "lovable slackers". They have the humbleness and people skills to get on well with other team members but lack the drive to contribute to team goals. Lovable slackers need significant motivation and oversight, making them a drag on the team's performance. Their friendly disposition often makes it hard for leaders to confront them on their lack of drive.

The Skillful Politician

People who are hungry and smart but lack humility are the "Skillful Politicians". They are willing to work extremely hard, but only in as

much as it will benefit them personally. Skillful Politicians need to be identified, called out and corrected.



INTERVIEWING

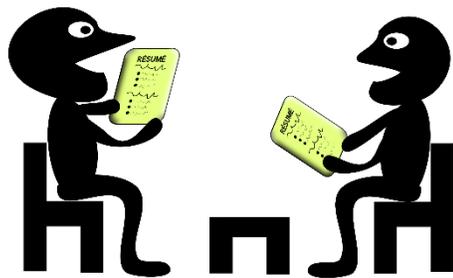
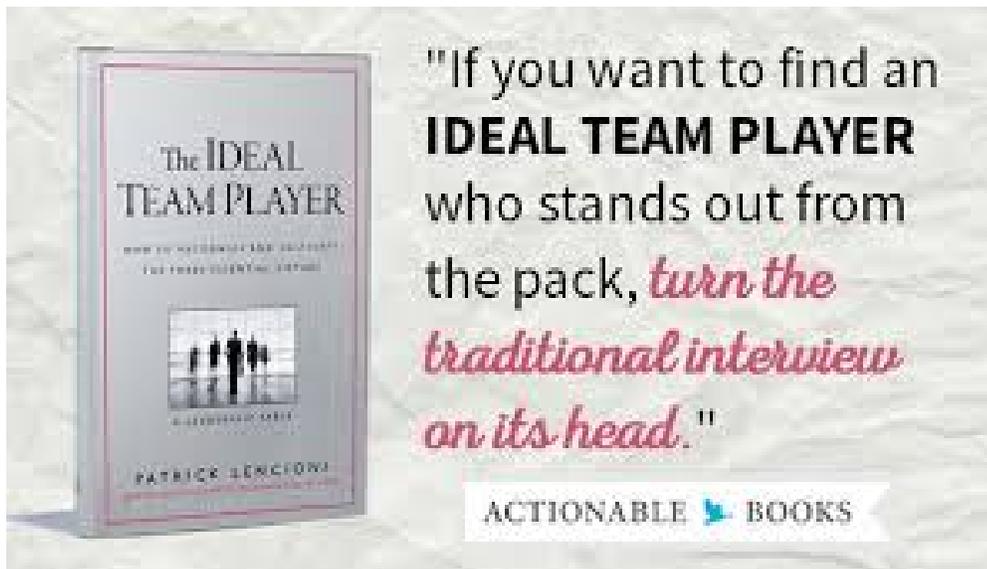
"Though it would be nice to have a perfectly reliable, diagnostic tool for accurately identifying and selecting people who are humble, hungry, and smart, no such tool currently exists" (Lencioni, pg174)

Lencioni talks about what you should look for in the ideal player. Look for specific behaviors and attributes that demonstrate your interviewee is humble, hungry, and smart. Make sure to avoid "silo hiring" - don't have different people from your firm interview the same person separately without conferring immediately after meeting the applicant. As an interviewer you should talk to each other promptly about what they recognize about the three crucial personality traits.

Conduct nontraditional interviews. For example, ask the applicant to accompany you on a shopping trip so you see how he or she interacts with other people. Just riding in your car with an applicant can prove quite revealing about what counts most to him or her. Ask applicants how their current or previous colleagues might describe them. Also ask, "How would your manager describe your relationships with your colleagues?"

Pay attention to your hunches about the applicant. Tell the applicant your organization hires only humble, hungry, smart people, and that those who don't fit this description will be uncomfortable working there. To detect humble, hungry and smart personality characteristics, ask:

Always make sure that an applicant's reference contact feels comfortable talking to you. Don't lead a previous boss to think that he or she is governing the applicant's fate. Ask the reference to describe the applicant in three or four adjectives. Ask how the applicant's colleagues would describe him or her.



About the Author

Pat is the founder of The Table Group and the author of 10 books which have sold nearly 5 million copies and been translated into more than 30 languages. *The Wall Street Journal* called him "one of the most in demand speakers in America." He has addressed millions of people at conferences and events around the world over the past 15 years. Pat has written for or been featured in numerous publications including *Harvard Business Review*, *Inc.*, *Fortune*, *Fast Company*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *BusinessWeek*.

As CEO, Pat spends his time writing books and articles related to leadership and organizational health, speaking to audiences interested in those topics and consulting to CEOs and their teams.

Prior to founding The Table Group, Pat worked at Bain & Company, Oracle Corporation and Sybase. Pat lives in the Bay Area with his wife and four boys.

In *The Ideal Team Player*, beyond the fable, Lencioni presents a powerful framework and easy-to-use tools for identifying, hiring, and developing ideal team players in any kind of organization. Whether you are a leader striving to create a culture of teamwork, a human resources professional looking to hire real team players, or an employee wanting to make yourself an invaluable team member. *The Ideal Team Player* is as practical as it is captivating

