Social Intimacy:
A Key Element of Sustained Team Performance

Weave a tapestry of insights offered by Bossidy, Charran, Collins, Drucker, Joyce, Lencioni, Pink, Tichy et al., and in addition to having an alphabet of notable authors, you will find both common threads and colorful anecdotes.

The seminal works of these gurus and others will cover the equivalent of an MBA program's curriculum, including the criticality of an organization's mission and value proposition, strategic planning, leadership capability and alignment, strategy execution, talent deployment and development, innovation, motivation, and culture. All of these elements, woven on the business weaver's loom, bring an organization to sustainable levels of success.

Buried within the tapestry is a thread…a central thread…and while it is not often a visible part of the tapestry's image, this thread defines the strength and durability of the weaving itself. It is the thread of social intimacy.

Similar to the customer intimacy known to successful sales and business development professionals, social intimacy always exists within high-functioning leadership and functional teams. It also exists across an organization as a definable aspect of the culture.

Social intimacy is, in large part, the degree of familiarity individuals have with one another. The more people know each other, the greater the chance of finding common ground, shared interests, similar values and experiences, common beliefs, mutual friends, nearly identical experiences…and the list goes on.

What behavioral scientists know, and business gurus seldom give sufficient credit to, is that shared and aligned goals, when build on common thread of social intimacy, are more readily attained and sustained.

Simply put, a business goal that is woven around the central thread of social intimacy among leaders and team members will have a greater chance to be attained.

We should not diminish the value of the threads that define the boundaries of business… the mission, value proposition, vision, and strategic imperatives. Such threads define what must be done.

But attaining and sustaining the desired levels of success will be determined by the social intimacy that defines <u>how</u> success will be accomplished. The degree of social
intimacy senior leaders have with one another determines their commitment to operational alignment in their organization. Isn't it much harder to look a friend in the eye and say, "I didn't execute against the promise I made" than a mere acquaintance? While social intimacy at work doesn't mean that all leaders will be "best buds," it does mean that they have a deeper connection and respect for one another, both personally and professionally.

It is common to observe well-intended and capable leaders align conceptually around a strategy, only to return to their functional areas to lead as they have in the past…without committing to peer leaders to the degree necessary to attain full business potential.

Social intimacy lends strength to an organization and its collective ability to attain and sustain success.