

# Case Study: Bay State Milling Company

## Century Old Manufacturing Company Adapts to New Leadership

### Background

Family owned and operated since 1899, Bay State Milling Company manufactures flour and grain products. The mid-sized company's board of directors brought in an outsider, Pete Levangie, to be President in an attempt to bridge a leadership gap between the fourth and fifth generations. While the company was performing well at the time, a company survey reported that there was a perceived absence of trust and lack of teamwork due to an intense focus on individual performance and a highly centralized management approach. These issues prevented the executive team from engaging in healthy conflict, made decision-making difficult and put the future vitality of the company in question.

Levangie summed-up their issues by stating, "We had unhealthy friction. We were slow, missing market opportunities and failing to execute well on the big ones we did identify. We realized that we needed to look at something besides the strategic side of our business – we needed to evaluate the healthy side."

### Approach: Consulting services and products

Bay State Milling brought in a Table Group Consulting Partner to help with their team dynamics and organizational challenges. Levangie recently stated, "There was plenty of skepticism with many of the people having been with the company for 20 + years and then there were people like me who had just walked in the door. We were very surprised, pleased and exhausted by what we could accomplish at a two-day offsite. We created a common language around team behavior and conflict norms, and we drove home a framework of both 'health' and 'smarts' that we have stayed true to for about two years now."

During that first offsite, the consultant worked on trust by using a variety of exercises including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – which gave the team a greater understanding of each other's innate personalities, work styles and

**Bay State Milling**

*Where change cultivates opportunity.*

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**Pete Lavangie**

President & COO

Bay State Milling



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preferences. They also took the Table Group's Online Team Assessment which provided a baseline for their team's performance against the Dysfunctions model. Furthermore, the team worked on identifying their core purpose, mission, strategy and thematic goal.

The group adopted Lencioni's meeting format (*Death by Meeting*) to keep them focused and engaged around their goals and team-related issues.

The executive team had a follow-up offsite several months later to delve further into strategic planning and revisit their top priorities. For the remainder of the year, they spent considerable time visiting field locations to communicate the newly established organizational clarity. And, to reinforce the companies' culture, direction, and goals, as well as to create a common understanding of its approach to a healthy organization, Levangie had the consulting partner conduct sessions in all its field locations.

## Outcome: In the midst of challenging times and change, the company enjoyed its best year ever

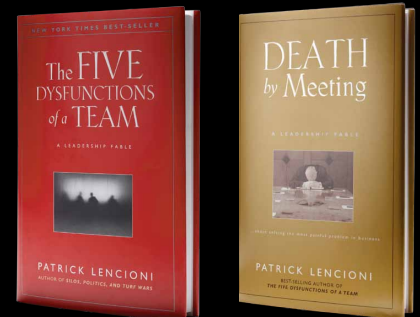
For the first time in the company's history, the executive team worked together around a focused list of common priorities. They were able to identify and call out old, unproductive behaviors and reinforce new team-centered behaviors.

The team now shares a common language and set of behavioral standards that allow them to operate more productively. Their improved team dynamics helped the team to make quicker, more strategic decisions in a volatile grain and commodities market – contributing to their stellar year.

President Pete Levangie stated, "Last year we were in the midst of the most challenging time our market has ever faced. The work we started two years ago around *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* gave us framework for communicating and allowed us to navigate the challenge. We had our best year ever, and we can't imagine having the success we did had we not addressed the health of the business and our leadership team. Our sustained commitment to maintaining a healthy organization also has us positioned to top those results as we move forward."

## Bay State Uses

### The Five Dysfunctions of a Team and Death by Meeting



### The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: Online Team Assessment



### Table Group Consulting Services

