Accidental values: The traits that are evident in an organization, but which have come about unintentionally, and which don’t necessarily serve the good of the organization.

Administrative or daily check-ins: A gathering once a day, for no more than ten minutes, to clear the air about anything administrative that would be helpful to know. There are no agendas and no resolution of issues, just an exchange of information.

Adrenaline addiction: The unwillingness and/or inability of busy people to slow down and review, reflect, assess and discuss their business and their team. An adrenaline addiction is marked by anxiety among people who always have a need to keep moving, keep spinning, even in the midst of obvious confusion and declining productivity.

Advocacy and inquiry: The two types of communication that must exist among a team. Advocacy is the statement of a belief or position. Inquiry is the active and open-minded questioning of a person’s underlying rationale or intent. These concepts were originally developed by Chris Argyris.

Aspirational values: The characteristics that an organization wants to have, wishes it already had, and believes it must develop in order to maximize its success in its current market environment. These are the qualities that an organization is aspiring to adopt, and which it will do its best to manage intentionally into the organization.

Business definition: An unsexy, one sentence description of what an organization actually does. No flowery adjectives or adverbs. Nothing ethereal or abstract.

Buy-in: The achievement of honest, emotional and unwavering emotional support.

Cascading communication: The activity following a meeting in which team members go to their respective departments and report on the agreed-upon decisions and outcomes. Cascading communication should take place in a timely manner following a meeting (one or two days), and occur face-to-face or live on the phone to facilitate the questions and answers.

Collective results: The idea of having goals that are shared by a team, and that transcend departments and/or functional areas.

Commitment: The achievement of clarity and buy-in by a team around a decision, without hidden reservation or hesitation. Even when teams initially disagree about a decision, by engaging in productive conflict, they can eventually agree to a single course of action, confident that no one on the team is quietly harboring doubts.
Commitment clarification: The process that takes place at the end of a meeting during which the team explicitly describes and settles on the agreements and decisions that have been made so that there is no room for ambiguity in what they subsequently do and say.

Conflict continuum: The spectrum depicting the full range of conflict in an organization, from artificial harmony (zero conflict) to aggressive and destructive politics (extreme conflict). At the middle of the continuum is the point where conflict changes from constructive and ideological to destructive and personal.

Conflict norm: Rules of engagement for dealing with conflict within the team. Having clear standards of behavior allows a team to focus on the discussion of issues without having to slow down to think about what is and is not appropriate.

Core purpose: An idealistic description of why an organization exists.

Core values: A set of values (two or three) that is simply inherent in an organization. They lie at the heart of the organization’s identity, do not change over time and must already exist.

Defining objectives: The general categories of activity that are required in order to achieve the thematic goal. Like the thematic goal, defining objectives must be qualitative, temporary and shared by the team.

Disagree and commit: The ability of team members to hold different opinions about an issue or decision and still actively support whatever final decision is made by the leader or the team as a whole.

Enter the danger: The act of stepping squarely into the middle of a difficult issue. Leaders who overcome their need to avoid uncomfortable situations and enter the danger often defuse a potentially harmful issue and achieve quicker resolution.

Fundamental attribution error: The tendency to falsely attribute the negative behaviors of others to their character (an internal attribution), while attributing one’s own negative behaviors to environmental factors (an external attribution). The fundamental attribution error often creates misunderstanding and distrust among team members. By getting to know one another better and understanding personal histories and personality tendencies, team members can often avoid this problem.

Leadership team: A small group of people who are collectively responsible for achieving a common objective for their organization.

Lightning round: The activity at the beginning of a meeting during which team members take thirty seconds to report on their key priorities for the week.

Meeting stew: The idea of combining administrative issues, tactical decisions, creative brainstorming and strategic analysis, and personnel discussions into one meeting.

Mining for conflict: A facilitation skill that requires an individual to extract buried disagreements within a team and bring them to the surface.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI): A widely-used personality inventory. The MBTI® (Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator) instrument provides a picture of people’s personality type specifically addressing how they get energy, collect data, make decisions and organize themselves.

Organizational clarity: The second step for building a healthy organization is ensuring that the members of that leadership team are intellectually aligned around six simple but critical questions. Leaders need to be clear on topics such as why the organization exists to what its most important priority is for the next few months. Leaders must eliminate any gaps that may exist between
Real-time permission: The concept whereby a leader or facilitator interrupts a team member in the midst of healthy debate to reinforce the behavior. Real-time permission is best used when team members are not yet comfortable with conflict, and need to be reminded of its importance so that they can avoid unnecessary feelings of inappropriateness.

Scoreboard: A tool for displaying a team’s areas of focus and evaluation of momentary success.

Self-oriented distractions: Obstacles that prevent an individual from adhering to team goals because of concerns that are not necessarily relevant to the larger team. Self-oriented distractions include ego, money/and career advancement, and budget and departmental needs.

Standard operating objectives: The ongoing and relatively straightforward metrics and areas of responsibility that a leadership team must maintain in order to keep an organization afloat.

Strategic anchors: The primary decisions that provide the filter or the lens through which every other decision must be evaluated.

Strategic meeting: A meeting to dig into the critical issues that can have a long term impact on an organization, or that require significant time and energy to resolve.

Strategy: The collection of intentional decisions an organization makes to give itself the best chance to succeed and differentiate from competitors.

Supporting objectives: The components of a thematic goal, which are collectively owned by the team and often comprise part of its scoreboard.
**Tactical staff meeting:** A weekly meeting to review progress against goals. This meeting is meant to resolve only tactical obstacles and issues.

**Team effectiveness exercise:** A process by which a team gives face-to-face feedback to one another, focusing on a single area of strength and a single area of weakness.

**Team number one:** The concept embodied by the notion that team members must prioritize the team that they are a member of over the team that they lead or manage.

**Teamwork:** The state achieved by a group of people working together who trust one another, engage in healthy conflict, commit to decisions, hold one another accountable and focus on collective results.

**Thematic goal:** The overarching priority of a team during a given period of time. It serves as a rallying cry for the team, and often helps align other parts of the organization.

**Unique identity:** When an organization knows what it does, why it does it and how it behaves in the process. The combination of these three elements will never be the same in one organization to the next.

**Vulnerability-based trust:** The state achieved by a team whose members are comfortable being open with one another, leaving no room for suspicion or fear of retaliation. Team members who achieve vulnerability-based trust are comfortable being exposed to one another around their failures, weaknesses, even fears.