



What kills teams and productivity?

October 24, 2025

Ego

- Ego can silently undermine team dynamics by fostering an environment where individual self-interest overshadows collective goals. When leaders or team members prioritize personal recognition over collaboration, it leads to fractured relationships, reduced trust, and stifled innovation. Teams thrive on humility and shared success, but unchecked ego creates silos, where feedback is dismissed and mistakes are hidden to protect reputations.

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"He (The farmer) was a model for servant leadership, and he taught me that humility is a leadership strength, not a weakness."

[Bryce Hein - From Farm to Tech: Leadership Lessons from a Humble Farmer](#)

- This not only hampers problem-solving but also drains morale, as talented individuals feel undervalued or overshadowed. Ultimately, addressing ego involves cultivating a culture of openness and mutual respect, where contributions are celebrated without inflating personal agendas, ensuring sustained productivity and team cohesion.

Key solutions findings from scientific papers:

- CEO narcissism is linked to lower average top management team role tenure and greater diversity separation in team firm tenure, suggesting narcissistic leaders shape teams to fulfill their own psychological needs rather than organizational goals.

[Sciencedirect.com](https://www.sciencedirect.com)



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Ego - Key solutions findings from scientific papers continued

- Team-level narcissism influences task performance and changes in organizational citizenship behaviors over time, with individual narcissism affecting peer ratings.

[Researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)

- Narcissism in the workplace leads to counterproductive behaviors like aggression and deviance, reducing team morale, productivity, and increasing turnover.

[Safety4sea.com](https://www.safety4sea.com)

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"You don't need to be a rocket scientist. Investing (leadership) is not a game where the person with a 160 IQ beats the person with a 130 IQ. It's like farming: you need patience, discipline, and a focus on what you can control."

Warren Buffett



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Change

- Change, when poorly managed, can disrupt teams by creating uncertainty and resistance that erode focus and efficiency. Employees often face heightened stress during transitions, leading to divided attention and slower adaptation. Effective change requires clear communication and support to align everyone toward new objectives, minimizing friction and harnessing opportunities for growth.
- Without this, teams may experience fragmented workflows, where old habits clash with new processes, ultimately stalling progress. By emphasizing structured approaches to transition, organizations can turn potential pitfalls into pathways for enhanced performance, ensuring teams remain agile and productive amid evolving demands.

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"Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change. To create is to make something that has never existed before. There's nothing more difficult or terrifying than that. Humility allows us to embrace that discomfort, leading with openness rather than armor, so teams can co-create and adapt in the face of uncertainty."

Brené Brown, a renowned researcher, author, and speaker



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Change - continued

Key solutions and findings from scientific papers:

- Comparison of Change Management Models and Suggestions for Top Management

[Journal of Management and Strategy](#)

- Organizational changes like downsizing lead to increased conflict, reduced support, and lower perceptions of fairness, impacting social climate and productivity.

[National Institute of Occupational Health \(STAMI\), Oslo, Norway](#)

- AI's lack of transparency (e.g., "black box" algorithms) and ethical concerns (bias, job loss fears) foster mistrust, reducing collaboration. Change management must use transparent communication and ethical frameworks to build trust and adoption.

[Human Resource Management Review](#)

- In M&A's unfreezing phase, poor communication causes confusion and resistance, with no direct performance impact, but indirect morale erosion. Change management via clear, timely messaging creates urgency and buy-in to stabilize teams.

[NIH](#)



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Burnout

- Burnout exhausts teams by depleting energy and motivation, turning high-performers into disengaged contributors. It manifests as chronic fatigue, cynicism, and reduced efficacy, often stemming from unrelenting demands without adequate recovery. This not only lowers individual output but spreads through teams, creating a cycle of errors, absenteeism, and diminished service quality.
- Preventing burnout requires change management strategies that prioritize well-being through balanced workloads, supportive environments, and clear communication, enabling teams to recharge and sustain peak performance. By addressing early signs and fostering resilience, organizations can safeguard productivity and cultivate a healthier, more sustainable work culture.

Key solutions and findings from scientific papers:

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“Napping for 15 min results in improved awakening and alertness... two short naps may effectively reduce tension and prevent burnout.”

[National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health](#)

- Burnout is associated with lower job satisfaction, absenteeism, reduced professionalism, and commitment in STEMM fields.

[NIH](#)



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Burnout – Key solutions and findings from scientific papers continued

- In a randomized controlled trial (RCT) among healthcare worker(s), stress and burnout were significantly improved after 6-weeks of mind-body interventions comprising of *pranayamas* (regulated breathing) ... and gentle stretching [8] ... for 20 minutes.

[Science Direct](#)

- Remote work during COVID-19 increased burnout, contributing to anxiety and fatigue that lowered employee performance.

[Frontiersin.org](#)

- The use of a stress ball or hand-grip is a known non-pharmacological method to distract attention and to relieve stress and anxiety for medical patients or anyone that sits down for long periods of time.

[National Library of Medicine](#)

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