

## HOW SPORTS LEADERSHIP TRANSLATES TO THE BUSINESS WORLD

Sports and business have a lot in common. It doesn't matter what sport you play; the objective is to win. Similarly, it doesn't matter what kind of business you operate, you want to win. Winning in sports could mean ending with the most points or arriving at a destination faster than the rest. In the business world, winning might be outselling a competitor or having world-class customer service.

Parallels exist at the leadership level in sports and business. A great coach is often synonymous with a great team. Comparably, outstanding businesses are commonly led by exceptional leaders.

### **What Great Leaders Do Differently**

Although some leaders make success appear effortless, businesses don't just become successful by accident. It's the leader's vision that not only puts the game in play, but keeps the momentum going.

Great leaders know how to scout talent. Sure, they may delegate the talent search to a member of their team (i.e., human resources), but they do so with a strong list of criteria they are looking for in each candidate. Leaders are looking to fill roles, but not just any ordinary person will do - - they want the "one."

Even after hiring the right person to fill a role, great leaders aim to fully develop those team members. They aren't satisfied with status quo; they know the success of the team is contingent upon the successful development of individuals.

### **Positioning**

Filling roles is only part of the equation. After finding the right people, great leaders make sure to position their team members in a way that results in the best outcomes.

### **Observing**

Like a coach watching a tactical play, great leaders are always observing the flow of business and keeping an eye out for opportunities for improvement or growth. They recognize areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. They are continuously analyzing whether the best strategy is a complete overhaul of a team or to simply swap out one aspect of the process.

### **Communicating**

It's one thing for a leader to be able to communicate with team members. It's something else entirely to teach team members how to effectively communicate with each other. Clear communication is imperative in sports and business. However, communication doesn't always come naturally. Therefore, great leaders will set expectations for communication by modeling good communication on their end. Great leaders know no one gets anywhere by expecting people to read minds.

## **Motivating**

You'd be hard-pressed to hear a coach telling a team "This game is no big deal," or a business leader saying, "This client doesn't really matter." Coaches and business leaders won't disregard any role as unimportant or irrelevant; they will tell each player the expectation for performance.

Motivation doesn't always need to be a loud, inspirational pep talk. Many great leaders quietly motivate their team. Team members of great leaders know the walk is always more important than the talk.

## **Becoming A Great Leader**

You don't need to be the coach of a championship sports team to be an outstanding leader; you can be a great leader in business. In fact, all you really need is to keep your focus on the fact that great leaders are always surrounded by great teams who look up to them, trust them, and know trust is a two-way street. Great leaders scout talent to fill roles, position and reposition, observe and analyze, communicate, and motivate. Think like a great leader, act like a great leader, and your team will see you as a great leader.