

# May 2007, Winning Leadership Strategies

With the baseball season a little over one month old, the goal of making it to the World Series is still a possibility for most of the 30 major league teams. At the beginning of each season, every team, in theory has an equal shot of winning it. But as 29 of them eventually find out, to win the World Series takes more than talent, skill, and determination. It also requires solid leadership, both on and off the field.

In a recent HR Daily Advisor article, Skip Weisman, a consultant who works with small to medium-sized businesses and a former front office manager for several pro baseball teams details strategies that he has seen help create World Series winners and believes can be of benefit for business leaders.

## **Develop Strong Leadership at the Top**

Championship teams start with strong leadership in the front office and coaching staff. This creates a solid foundation throughout the organization. Leaders must manage by example and be masters of "self-leadership," modeling the behaviors and core values they expect their team members to espouse.

- **Lead with the 'Platinum Rule'**  
Successful coaches know that different people are motivated by different things. They therefore use the "Platinum Rule," which follows the axiom "treat others as they would want to be treated." Get to know your team members and what is most important to them. Help them meet their individual personal and professional goals and everyone wins.
- **Create a Compelling Vision and Purpose**  
One thing all championship teams have in common is the compelling vision of becoming a champion. All team members are focused on that end result. The team and the players' goals are aligned, as your company's goals and the goals of your employees should be.
- **Hire and Inspire the Right Team Members**  
Championship teams recruit players that want to be the best. For your business, this means more just than checking a resume for experience and skills. Evaluate potential employees for their attitude, beliefs, and values. It will cost significantly less to train for new job skills than for attitude.
- **Create a Culture of Accountability**  
Great teams are made up of people who believe the best way to be team players is to hold themselves accountable for their *individual* roles and who look for ways to enhance those roles in supporting the team effort. Members must know that individual productivity, as well as the teams', is being measured. There are no results without accountability, and no accountability without measurement.
- **Create a System of Two-Way Feedback**  
Leaders of championship teams consistently evaluate team members and provide feedback to improve individual and team performance. Full evaluations are made after each season to raise the bar for the next season. Businesses should model

this behavior by doing full performance appraisals for all team members *at the same time* each year. When everyone is on the same schedule, individual and team improvement plans work together for breakthrough results.

- **Create Opportunities to Celebrate & Enjoy the Journey**  
Championship teams have opportunities to celebrate every time they win a game during their season, so they can enjoy the journey. Businesses should also look for ways to celebrate along the way to maintain enthusiasm among team members. Try to celebrate the little wins along with the big ones.