

## ***Lebron's Leadership Lessons***

By helping the Miami Heat win the NBA championship last month, Lebron James completed one of the most thorough and positive transformations in a one-year period as any person or business ever could. According to Victor Lipman, a former Marketing executive and current contributor to Forbes, what he went through to get there from the previous year's disappointing finish where the Heat lost in the finals to the Dallas Mavericks, present four fundamental leadership lessons from that experience

1. **He acknowledged failure and confronted it directly.** By all accounts, last year's failure in the NBA Finals (where Lebron played an uncharacteristically passive, ineffective role) was a devastating personal experience. He had gone from being King James to being the butt of jokes. Following a period of withdrawal and introspection, he acknowledged he had not performed up to his normal standards and resolved to improve.
2. **He recognized change was needed.** Lebron spent a good deal of time in last year's off-season working with Hakeem Olajuwon, now retired but one of the NBA's best low post players ever, to improve that aspect of his game – his ability to play close to, and drive to, the basket. It was a fundamentally different approach to his offensive repertoire, but it made eminent good sense: In addition to being one of the NBA's best ballhandlers, he's also one of the strongest players, almost unstoppable close to the basket.
3. **He developed a sound strategic plan.** As this year's playoffs evolved, it was evident Lebron had a clear plan in place. 1) Attack the basket relentlessly, and 2) Take control when the game is on the line. Put simply, it was the opposite of his more passive approach in last year's finals. This time around he sought and took full responsibility.
4. **He executed that plan with great focus and discipline.** As management guru Tom Peters would say, Lebron did an exceptional job in this year's finals "sticking to his knitting." He stayed with his strengths, executing with discipline, attacking the basket constantly, never being passive, and maintaining control of the action at the most critical fourth-quarter junctures. As anyone who watched these recent finals knows, he executed his plan with single-minded focus and intensity.

As Lipman points out, business leaders should take note: Based on failure, analysis, insight, hard work and willingness to change, Lebron James completed as successful a one-year turnaround as any organization could ever hope for.