

Directions

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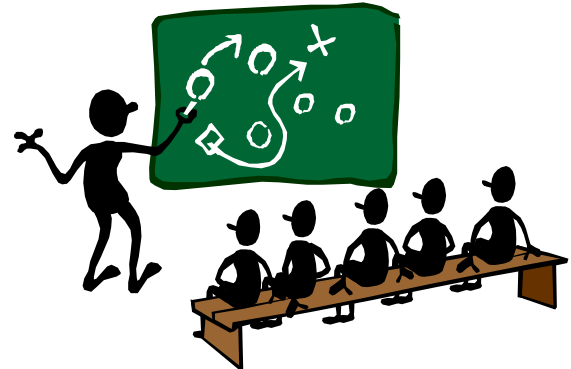
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Team Renewal: Gearing up for Success

by Tommy Davis

As I began writing this article, I had to think of the similarities between coaches getting their teams ready for the new football season and team managers preparing their teams for success. Football coaches spend lots of time on planning, preparing, communicating, executing, and readjusting for success. Do you also have a similar coaching and renewal process? How well are you repositioning your team and yourself for success?



Think about a few questions: Have you assessed how your team is doing? What changes are taking place with the team? How do they look this year as compared to last? Do you have the same competition, requirements, and playing field as last year? Are you losing some of your senior members, adding new members, or repositioning the team? What are your team's goals for success? Is everyone on the team positioned to do his or her best to achieve the goals?

Let me share some tips for a successful renewal process:

- *Hold a team development review to revisit and reestablish the team's beliefs and operating principles.*

The more senior members will benefit from a "refresher," and newer members may never have heard some of this. Don't just read them, but also work to ensure that everyone accepts and agrees to follow them. Discuss behaviors associated with the principles. Here are some examples of team core beliefs and principles:

- Take initiative to make things better.
 - When addressing problems, focus on the behavior and not the person.
 - Seek out root causes, not quick fixes.
 - Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of the team members.
 - Give your best and a little more. Expect the same from others.
 - Maintain and build relationships inside and outside the team. (Grow, improve, and seek out relationships.)
 - Be an example to others and model the expected culture for the team. Make sure your actions match your words.
- *Revisit and renew the team goals and measures.*

Like all good coaches, you will find a lot you need to consider in this area:

Are your current measures working, or do they need to be renewed? Are they getting you the results you want with the resources you have? How does the scoreboard look? Where are you and the team missing the mark? Are there places where you and the team struggle to meet the targets?

Where are your successes? What do you and others see when they walk around your area and attend your meetings? What are you doing to celebrate and learn from your successes?

How are your “stars” performing? What are you doing to bring the “middle of the road” and “weak links” up to higher performance? How are development plans and training working — both technically and interpersonally?

What feedback and suggestions are your customers giving (both upstream and downstream)? What specific feedback are you getting from your boss about your and the team’s performance?

Once you have done your assessment:

- Refresh the measures and how they are posted and discussed. Make sure they are simple and visual. Talk about them every day with encouragement and clarity.
 - Clearly demonstrate to the team that the measures tie back to their team operating principles and core beliefs.
 - Teach the team how to also engage effectively in tracking and problem-solving improvement opportunities to the measures.
 - When the measures are falling short, act on them right away. Waiting will just broaden the gap.
 - Celebrate small wins, and do not forget to say “thank you” often.
- *Finally, learn from your progress and your mistakes.*

Continually evaluate what works; what does not work; what needs to be stopped, started, and modified. Always look for continuous improvement to the team results, for the team itself — and for you, as the very important team coach.