125

Chapter 4

Managing People: The Men Behind Dean Smith and Bobby Knight

The number one reason why one team outperforms another is people.

Red Auerbach, former NBA coach and general manager

The tragedy of our times is that we've got it backwards. We've learned to love techniques and use people.

Herb Kelleher, Southwest Airlines CEO

As the epigraph indicates, former Boston Celtic Head Coach and General Manager, Red Auerbach, equated success and people. Whether selecting players, developing their skills, or placing them together in the right mix, much of his advice about successful management centers on the people factor. Long time NFL coach, Marty Schottenheimer, echoed this conviction during a stint as an ESPN analyst when he repeated a motto he preached and that had been preached to him, "don't just think plays, think players." Within football circles, this bit of wisdom means that schemes and strategies must not overshadow thinking about the talents and limitations of the people playing the game. Whether Schottenheimer consistently remained true to this philosophy as coach of the NFL's San Diego Chargers or former coach of the Washington Redskins, Cleveland Browns, and Kansas City Chiefs. Regardless, it highlights the critical

126

importance of people to success on the playing field.

Even though athletics is highly labor-intensive, the insight about the vital importance of people to success still holds weight even for organizations where machinery and materials play a much bigger role. As General Electric CEO, Jack Welch, put it, "You wouldn't want to field a Super Bowl team that didn't have the best athletes."[1] In his workshops for top-level corporate executives, MIT Sloan Management School economist Shlomo Maital, drives this point home. He goes so far as to pronounce productive people within a firm as the most crucial versus all other resources and as the main source of long-term advantage.[2] This does not mean that all businesses are or should be highly labor-intensive or that use of equipment, location, materials, or technology are not important to the success of a business. The point is, however, that even in business settings where equipment completes many of the tasks, the people operating and maintaining the equipment, those purchasing it, those determining how to arrange it, and those organizing and managing the other people make or break the business. Where location matters, a person must select that location. Where technical processes are vital, a human being must develop those processes or be aware of their existence and see their applicability to the given situation. Where flipping hamburgers is important, then someone has to see that responsible people are hired to do this job if it is to be done right.

As on any athletic team, specific individuals and groups of people in a business do not all impact team outcomes equally. A CEO's contribution to overall company performance for good or bad swamps the influence of the mailroom entry level employee just as the quarterback's does the back-up right guard. Still, throughout an organization, the overall impact of mailroom

127

employees or mid-level managers may be large. Without their effective input, the company will sputter just as a team will if the punter or long-snapper perform poorly. In addition to differing contributions made by specific individuals, as with positions on-the-field, certain jobs have a much larger pool of capable people readily available, making the departure of a given person less onerous to the team. Certain tasks, for example a quarterback in football or a mechanic in industry may require more training or specialized knowledge than others so that workforce problems in these areas create more havoc. The decisions of a pitcher in a baseball game or the CEO of a large corporation may directly influence overall team performance more directly and by a greater magnitude. Regardless of the relative contributions across team members, though, as a unit, highly productive and reliable people provide the backbone of any team and its scarcest resource.

Sports teams provide a clean and accessible picture of the main functions of management of a workforce. First, coaches and general managers must assemble team members, an important job in itself. Second, they must find ways to motivate the players effectively. Third, they must make decisions that are sometimes obvious, but in other cases, are complex and subtle about how best to combine and utilize these team members. The simplicity of enumerating these main duties masks a difficult job. Managing people likely poses the most difficult jobs for any manger. Devising successful strategies to deal with another team or a rival company requires skill and luck. Developing successful plans to market a team or company to consumers takes creativity. Juggling expenses and keeping everything running with budgets takes technical abilities and organizational abilities. Still, equipment does not have family problems. A plant does not become eligible for free agency. Balance sheets do not go into rages. However

complex these or other aspects of management may be, the personal and emotional aspects that go into dealing with human beings can stretch the abilities of even the best coach or manager. People are a resource for an organization, but they are not a resource just like any other one. Unlike land, equipment, buildings, and money people think, feel, and react.

Management in a sports context is almost all about managing people. In fact, the sports-to-business books and seminars by coaches focus almost exclusively on the human relations aspect of their jobs. This myopia on the part of coaches may arise, in part, because the human relations part of coaching most easily finds mileage in business settings. Although coaches employ strategies, they may think these not very transferable beyond the bounds of their sports. Also, because many of the organizational issues are less complex, given the sizes of sports teams and because most coaches do not deal directly with the financial matters of their teams, the human relations aspect takes center stage. Beyond the attention which coaches give to the people side of their jobs, they often deal with them right out front for everyone to see, unlike other organizations where human relation issues, problems, and squabbles are usually handled behind closed doors. Even when the confrontations take place behind closed doors, events and quotes usually leak out due to the intense media coverage given to sports organizations.

GETTING GOOD PEOPLE

The 1976 Indiana Hoosiers accomplished a remarkable feat by winning the NCAA championship with 32 wins and no losses. Their coach, Bob Knight, received credit for his skills and jumped to the status of sports celebrity. While Knight in previous and subsequent years

demonstrated considerable expertise in developing players into a cohesive team, ultimately winning two additional national championships, maybe the most underappreciated factor in the high level of success of his 1976 team was in attracting so many talented players together on the same team. Not widely recognized, the 1976 Indiana team rivals any college team of the past in terms of talent. Writers may neglect this fact because no single player from that team achieved NBA stardom. In spite of having no future NBA superstar, all five starters played at least two years in the NBA with significant minutes, rarely duplicated by the starting five of any other college team, even the great UCLA juggernauts.

Beyond the 1976 Indiana squad, many other coaches probably receive too little credit for their recruitment or acquisition of players relative to the credit they receive for their strategy or development skills. While this imbalance in attention occurs across nearly all sports, no where is it more in evidence than in college basketball. With the revolving door of players, coaches become the main celebrities and garner a lot of attention for their schemes and styles. Yet, no coach – not Wooden, Krzyzewski, or Bob Knight -- has won very many games for very long without great players. In fact, Louisville coach Rick Pitino has commented that they way he assesses his and other teams' chances to reach the Final Four is to estimate the number of future NBA players on their rosters. Table 4.1 drives the point home by listing the number of NBA players on NCAA championship teams and runner-ups from 1964 through 1992. With only one exception, Texas Western in 1966, these teams placed at least two players in the NBA and 48 of the 58 teams contained three or more NBA-caliber players. After the 1960s, four or five future NBA players on a team became common. Knight's 1976 Hoosier team compiled over 2600 total games in the NBA, rivaled only by the 1989 Michigan and 1982 North Carolina team including

Michael Jordan, James Worthy, and Sam Perkins.

Table 4.1 FUTURE NBA GAMES FOR NCAA CHAMPION AND RUNNER-UP, 1964-89

Year	Champ-Runner-up	NBA Players	NBA Games	Median NBA	Max NBA
1964	UCLA-Duke	3-3	2521-1734	724-73	1031-849
1965	UCLA-Michigan	3-3	1843-1082	46-42	1031-817
1966	TX Western-Kentucky	1-4	163-1713	0-224	163-960
1967	UCLA-Dayton	3-2	2284-433	22-0	1560-379
1968	UCLA-UNC	3-4	2284-1380	22-145	1560-747
1969	UCLA-Purdue	3-3	2284-916	22-283	1560-578
1970	UCLA-Jacksonville	5-2	2475-1391	590-0	760-1329
1971	UCLA-Villanova	4-2	2375-505	590-0	760-457
1972	UCLA-Florida St.	4-3	2486-274	515-2	828-263
1973	UCLA-Memphis	4-3	2092-952	468-72	828-752
1974	NC State-Marquette	3-4	1153-1635	115-262	592-855
1975	UCLA-Kentucky	5-5	1432-1561	281-211	691-672
1976	Indiana-Michigan	5-3	2609-1538	536-7	719-946
1977	Marquette-UNC	4-5	966-2059	96-407	679-1033
1978	Kentucky-Duke	3-4	1200-1760	156-259	531-938
1979	Mich St.-Indiana St.	3-2	1787-1053	305-0	906-897
1980	Louisville-UCLA	4-5	2109-2104	408-325	768-648
1981	Indiana-UNC	4-3	1944-2565	261-417	979-1222
1982	UNC-Georgetown	3-2	3078-1996	926-0	1222-1039
1983	NC State-Houston	4-4	1160-2350	36-96	928-1119
1985	Villanova-G’town	3-4	1137-2466	45-599	793-1039
1986	Louisville-Duke	3-3	818-1589	53-325	465-723
1987	Indiana-Syracuse	4-4	490-1989	64-586	255-706
1988	Kansas-Oklahoma	2-4	841-2009	0-438	747-785
1989	Michigan-Seton Hall	7-2	2683-378	638-0	825-352

Table 4.2 uses similar data but looks at specific coaches, the number of Final Four appearances they have made, and the number of Future NBA players they had during their tenures. In addition to the total number of future NBA players, the table also lists the number of players who would go on to log more than 10,000 minutes in the NBA. The table makes clear that the coaches who have made repeated Final Four appearances have been loaded with talent – some more than others but all with significant talent pools. John Wooden and his UCLA teams are some of the most widely recognized as talent-driven because of highly publicized players such as Kareem Abdul Jabbar and Bill Walton. On his ten championship clubs, Wooden had 23 future NBA players including 13 with more than 10,000 minutes, and two of the best players of college players all-time in Abdul Jabbar and Walton. In terms of NBA talent, Dean Smith's teams top the list. He nearly doubled the number of future NBA players of any other coach. All of the coaches appearing in five or more Final Fours had more than 20 future NBA players. Even though he has not had a player of that caliber, Mike Krzyzewski, a coach widely noted for his "teaching" and game management skills, has succeeded with a large number of future NBA caliber players – on the order of 20 NBA players in 23 years of coaching. Bob Knight had nearly 30 future NBA players during his 30 years at Indiana. Another fact regarding Knight that shows the importance of talented players is that almost all of these future NBA players attended IU before the mid 1990s. Once the players of this talent level dried up for Knight, his teams became only very average in their performances over his last seven seasons.

Table 4.2 Final Four Appearances and Number of Future NBA Players of Selected NCAA Coaches

Coach/Years	Final Fours	Seasons	NBA Players	NBA> 10,000 min.
John Wooden	12	28	23	13
Dean Smith	11	36	52	20*
Mike Krzyzewski (Duke)	10	24	19	5*
Denny Crum	6	30	29	5*
Bob Knight	5	30	27	8*
Guy Lewis	5	30	20	8
Lute Olson	5	29	20	5
Jerry Tarkanian	4	19	21	7
Rick Pitino	4	16	12	2*
Jim Boeheim	4	27	17	6*
Nolan Richardson	3	18	8	4*
John Thompson	3	27	18	5*
Dale Brown	2	14	14	3*
Lou Carneseca	2	24	15	1
Al McGuire	2	14	13	2
Eddie Sutton	2	34	15	6
Bobby Cremins	1	16	16	7*
Wimp Sanderson	0	15	15	6*
Norm Stewart	0	32	14	3

Ironically, some coaches are denigrated because of their success in recruiting or acquiring players. Fans and analysts seem to prefer to judge coaches based on what they did given the level of talent they possessed rather than on their overall performance regardless of the particular combination of talent and coaching. This implicitly undervalues evaluation and recruitment or acquisition skills and overvalues "coaching" skills. Few coaches have received more criticism from fans on this basis than Dean Smith. Smith sometimes receives less credit than one of his successful contemporaries such as Bob Knight because Smith successfully recruited so many highly talented players. Over his years as head coach at North Carolina, Smith recruited over 50 future NBA players with whom he won 17 ACC regular season championships, made 11 appearances in the Final Four and won 2 national titles – the number final four appearances far placing him second only to John Wooden and far exceeding Bob Knight's. Yet, the thinking goes, "given equal talent, Knight's or Krzyzewski's teams will beat Smith's." Even if this is true, it ignores the fact that evaluating and recruiting players is part of the overall management job of a coach. Finding and attracting the talented players is not a factor that can genuinely be "held constant."

The tendency to overvalue the strategy and development part of managing or coaching and under-appreciate the player evaluation-acquisition part of coaching extends beyond college basketball to great coaches in other sports and to business managers. One renowned coach whose methods have been received nearly all the credit for his success while his player evaluation-acquisition skills have received little to none is Vince Lombardi. Upon taking the Green Bay job in 1958, he first set up a film room to study old Packer films. As an assistant with

the New York Giants in a different division of the NFL, he had seldom seen the Packers play. In pouring over these films late into the nights, he appraised the veterans, reaching pivotal conclusions that would lay the foundation for Green Bay's dominance in the 1960s. Among them, he recognized the potential in Paul Hornung. Although Hornung had been a college Heisman Trophy winner, he had been seldom used in the pros and had become disillusioned with football. Lombardi saw Hornung as the centerpiece of his power running attack, saying "There's my offense" and "You're my Frank Gifford [the star runner for the Giants]." Between revitalizing veterans like Hornung, bringing in other veterans such as Emmel Tunnel, and seeing the capabilities in future Hall of Famers such as defensive back Willie Wood, Lombardi pieced together a core unit that won 5 NFL titles from 1959 to 1967 as well as two Super Bowls.[3]

Even though the importance of evaluating and acquiring players may be underappreciated by fans and media, it does not escape the attention of most successful coaches and sports teams. College coaches and their assistants expend enormous amounts of time and energy sifting through potential recruits and then trying to lure particular ones to their institutions. Professional sports teams employ scouts, hold individual and group workouts, and spend also spend countless hours evaluating draft prospects. However, such diligence was not always practiced. Teams such as the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL expanded the resources spent to evaluate players. Even now, a few teams still do not seem to get the point, such as the Cincinnati Bengals who do not even employ a full-time scouting network.

As among sports teams, there is considerable diversity among businesses in how seriously they take the getting the right people. Some diligently screen applicants or aggressively recruit workers. This not only includes companies paying top salaries to high-level

executives but also some companies who are careful even when hiring unskilled workers for relatively low paying job. In contrast, other businesses take an amazingly slipshod approach to hiring people, even when the pool of applicants is broad. In effect, they send the message that they view workers as merely interchangeable parts so that it really matters little who gets hired. Even where companies spend resources to initially screen applicants, they may not necessarily put forth much effort to identify the people most likely to help their companies succeed based on more in depth study of their backgrounds and meaningful interviews, pushing almost all of the duties off on the human resources department.

The job of any manager in dealing with people becomes much more doable if the organization attracts the right people in the first place. Attracting and screening the kinds of people suitable for the situation alleviates many future headaches. In contrast, poor hiring practices can make the job of managing next to impossible. It's easy to fall prey to hiring practices that place too much attention on only the most obvious attributes without enough attention given to other personal characteristics that contribute to success. The problem frequently reflects either a type of adverse selection or agency problem or both. Adverse selection is the tendency to make poor purchasing or selection decisions because of false or misinterpreted signals. It surfaces because the person buying the service or product does not have full information as to the nature of service or product offered. Agency problems occur when the agents (employees, players) within an organization pursue objectives that are not in line with the principals (owners, managers) of the organization.

The recent saga of the Portland Trailblazers attests to the potholes into which many managers fall in acquiring their workforce. During the late 1990s, the team loaded up on

players with tremendous raw athletic talent, yet many of the players they acquired top the list of "great athletes" who have not figured out that the objective of a sports team is winning games and championships. For instance, in one of their past moves, the team traded to acquire Isaiah Rider from Minnesota. When he arrived, Rider already had a reputation for erratic work habits, unexplained absences, and petulant behavior, but at times, he could dominate a game with his talents. By the 2000 season, the team had tired of Rider's antics had traded him to Atlanta for "good citizen" Steve Smith. At power forward, they played a budding star in Rasheed Wallace who replaced Rider as team bad boy. Wallace had been drafted in 1996 as a sophomore out of North Carolina. Upon entering the league, he quickly gained a reputation as a superstar in training but also gained a reputation for being temperamental. To the mix, the team also added Scottie Pippen, the second best player from the Chicago Bulls six championships but a player known for his moodiness and sulking. They traded a solid-performing and hardworking forward, Brian Grant, to Miami. Then, for a finishing touch, the team decided to add guard Rod Strickland during the 2001 season Strickland would rival Wallace for the title of best player with the worst attitude, only Strickland has displayed his bad behavior over a much longer time span.

Over these years, the team showed promise, owing to its considerable athletic prowess. Blazer coach, Mike Dunleavy, earned the 1999 NBA Coach of the Year Award for helping the team reach the Western Conference Finals that year. Their player moves had been seemingly so adept that an April 2000 Sport article called it "The Blazers Monopoly" and heaped high praise on general manager Bob Whitsett's moves in skillfully working with owner Paul Allen's millions and dealing with the salary cap.[4] Yet, after a disappointing end to the 2000 season, the team imploded during the 2001 season. Rather than improving on his reputation, Wallace only

worsened. He not only led the league in technical fouls, which he did the year before also, but set a new NBA record. Moreover, he sometimes berated teammates, throwing a towel at center Sabonis in a timeout huddle during a game. Poor performances in the last two months of the regular season placed them facing the Los Angeles Lakers in the first round of the playoffs. The Lakers bounced the Blazers in short order, precipitating a shakedown of the team, including the firing of head coach Mike Dunleavy. Unfortunately, the team had not learned its lesson, filling its roster with players that repeated these episodes during the 2002 and 2003 seasons with the same outcome. Finally, with little prospect for improvement, the team finally traded Wallace to Detroit during the 2003-2004 season.

A general lesson can be learned not just for sports teams but for most any organization. Accurate screening of potential personnel to assess character can be just as important as assessing pure knowledge or skill. References and employment history are not just items to pass over on the job resume but do, in fact, contain important signals. Properly screening these signals become more important as the length of the employment relationship is longer and as the cost of getting out of the relationship is higher. Incredibly, some managers bypass deep searches into references or employment history even when the hiring involves long-term employment relationships or relationships not easily severed.

In fact, a common thread among coaches with long records of success is the ability to strike the right balance of athletic talent with mental skills and character. John Wooden, for one, placed high priority on academic skills in his recruitment of players.[5] Mike Krzyzewski says that he typically looks for players that demonstrate attributes beyond their vertical leap or height. In particular, he looks for players that display a respect for authority. In spite of these examples,

many general managers and coaches become allured by the siren's song of raw athletic talent. A few teams have seemingly institutionalized the kind of player acquisition mentality that goes after athletes of great "potential" but with poor work habits, limited grasp of the mental aspects of the game, or little commitment to team objectives. In the NBA, the Los Angeles Clippers seem to have perfected this formula for finding athletes instead of winners. The point for managers of all types is that getting the right people is crucial, but one must dig below the surface in looking for the qualities that make for enduring, productive workers.

Keeping the right kind of people goes hand-in-hand with attracting the right kind of people. In sports, as with other business, there is going to be turnover – an issue discussed more below. Yet, when possible and productive for the organization, keeping players or employees content requires managerial attention and skill. The era of free agency in sports has been opposed by most of the old guard of sports managers, who liked the idea of getting a player who had no other playing options. Retention of the player was rarely a problem under that kind of system because the player had no other options in sports. The free agency era placed retention of players more on a par with the retention of employees in any business. In spite of some forms of free agency being present in all sports leagues now, some owners and general managers still operate as if they held exclusive rights to all players.

Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks, stands out as person who understands the importance of managing personnel retention so much so that he garnered a front page article in the Wall Street Journal.[6] Cuban has been a whipping boy for the press because of his questionable outbursts against officials during games and active participation with the interests of the team. In spite of this, Cuban has overseen his team with a keen eye toward attracting and

retaining players. He understands that salary matters, and matters a lot. As he said, "Am I crazy to spend [millions] in contracts when I have a chance to get three layers deep into the playoffs. That's dirt cheap. I'll sell more seats, more merchandise."[7] Yet, he also sees other factors in addition to salaries that influence retention. Rather than paying millions to players in payroll and then trying to pinch pennies by skimping on other player-related expenses, Cuban has tried to use non-salary items as compensation also. The team's locker room facilities, for instance, offers players state-of-the-art amenities with personal televisions for players, top-flight equipment for physical therapy, luxury hotels on road trips and other things. In general, he wants his million dollar players to be treated as million dollar players rather than trying to weasel a few thousand back by pushing poor locker room facilities on them. He even lavishes similar treatment on visiting teams under the thinking, "some of those guys may want to play for us some day."

The contrast between the thinking of many owners and general managers in sports versus that of Cuban mirrors what is seen outside of sports. Many business managers suffer from the "pennywise and pound foolish" syndrome. They will pay salaries and wages as the market demands but then skimp on minor and relatively inexpensive details of the work environment that do influence the outlook of employees. Many comedic satires of this kind of activity have cropped up from the Dilbert cartoon series to the Staples television commercials. In contrast, other managers seem to understand, as Cuban does, that beyond basic compensation, other expenditures for employees that may not be very expensive can, in fact, create much goodwill in the workplace.

A leading firm in this respect is SAS, a comprehensive data and software developer and consultant out of Carey, North Carolina and once labeled "the most important company that you

have never heard of." They set a top priority in building a workforce based on establishing long-term relationships with talented employees. To accomplish this goal, SAS provides amenities that are in line with the kind of stable, long-term employees that they seek. They constructed a pleasant lunch facility, on-site health care and schooling, individual offices, relatively short work weeks, and other benefits to employees while at the same time expecting productivity from their workforce. Not all of these perks are cheap and some are not practical for other kinds of businesses. Obviously, a fast food chain such as a Burger King is not going to same kind or level of amenities as a top-end software provider. Yet, even in low-pay, low-skill, high-turnover jobs the workers care about things other than just the paycheck. These may be flexible scheduling, not having to wear silly-looking uniforms, humane treatment, or other things. The point is that whether the example is Mark Cuban or SAS, these mangers are clued in to the fundamental importance of trying to attract and retain productive employees.

USING PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY

Nobody remembers the 1980 Arizona State Basketball team, although it rivaled any college team in history at least as measured by the NBA careers of its members. The team's floor general was Lafayette "Fat" Lever who played nearly 24,000 minutes in the NBA, averaging 6 assists, 6 rebounds, 14 points, appearing in two All-Star games, and making the NBA All-Defensive team once. Byron Scott played in the backcourt with Lever. Scott played over 30,000 minutes in the NBA, averaging over 14 points per gain and winning three titles with the Lakers. At seven feet in height, Alton Lister was the center. He played nearly 19,000

minutes in the NBA. The other two players, 6'11" Kurt Nimphius and 6'8" Sam Williams, were less well known for their NBA careers, but Nimphius played over 11,000 minutes over eight seasons and Williams 4500 minutes over four seasons. In total, team amassed almost 89,000 NBA minutes. By comparisons, most college put no players in the NBA. For better college teams with two or three players of professional caliber, the typical range of NBA minutes would be 20,000 to 40,000 in total.

Not only did the team log many professional minutes, but it possessed a balance of height, quickness, shooting, defense, and rebounding. Yet, it did not advance beyond the second round of the NCAA tournament. A good but not great Ohio State team whose players logged about half as many NBA minutes beat them soundly, 89-75. The next year, the same team except for Nimphius lost to Kansas in the second round 88-71, even though Kansas possessed little NBA talent and probably did not have a single player who could have started for ASU.

Few NCAA teams have underachieved as much as Ned Wulk's 1980 and 1981 squads. Wulk coached Arizona State from 1957 to 1982 and won a whopping 79 percent of the games. Yet, he never could "get over the hump" to win the big matchups. His 1980 and 1981 teams illustrate the fact that while having talented people may be necessary to performing well, it is no guarantee. The way that the manager pieces together the players along with the adjustments to strategy made on an opponent-by-opponent basis can have a big impact on the outcome. In other words, great managers do not win without great players, but great players often fail if not managed properly.

Earl Weaver illustrates the role of a manager who helped his teams reach their potential. He managed the Baltimore Orioles over seventeen season, becoming one of the most successful

managers in baseball history. Because of his occasional antics with umpires, mastery of game tactics, and his intensive use of information, the picture of Earl Weaver as a player-oriented coach is often lost. Moreover, his player skills did not include making them feel warm and fuzzy or always liking Weaver himself. Nevertheless, he excelled in getting the most from his twenty-five man roster. As one baseball analyst put it, "he used everybody and cared about his players."[8] Rather than constantly harping on the deficiencies of his players, he focused most intently on what they could do for his team, leading baseball in the "platooning" of players based on the game or situation. His abilities to draw from the full talents of his roster permitted his Orioles to remain highly competitive even as free agency began to reshuffle many star players away from teams like Baltimore.

Once the right people are on board, the next issue is how to utilize them to their fullest potential. Like Earl Weaver, Mike Krzyzewski, the most successful college basketball coach over the past two decades at Duke University, casts a big presence as a strong willed leader, yet he eschews the fascination that most media analysts, fans, and even other coaches have with "positioning" players. For instance, it is common to refer to the tallest players who mainly play inside as playing at the 5-spot (center) and the smallest, ball-handling guard as playing at the 1-spot (point guard). Krzyzewski sarcastically stated that his team contains "players not numbers." No doubt, Duke has some means of identifying and segmenting roles for players on the court, yet Krzyzewski emphasis on avoiding hemming in his players too much highlights a key ability he displays at using people at or near their highest value to the team, whatever that may be. As he put it, "I try to find some way to integrate everybody, allow them to improve, and have them understand their places."[9]

Krzyzewski's statement is a working example of Marty Schottenheimer's "think players, not plays." Successful leaders must think in terms of utilizing the abilities of their players and not just in terms of plugging players into a set of plays. Managers in all kinds of businesses would do well to learn such ideas. Trying to plug people into slots as if they are robots may work out fine in some instances. If a machine needs an operator, then it needs an operator. If a fork lift needs operating, then someone needs to be plugged in who can operate a fork lift. Yet, at times, a good manager must stop and actually think about how to adjust plans and roles to best utilize the abilities of people and not just how to plug one person into another person's slot.

Even if an organization acquires a talented and motivated workforce, for performance to reach its highest levels, managers must put people in the right places. This fact cuts across managers who oversee businesses or a sports team. Utilizing people effectively requires an emphasis on flexibility. Coaches and other managers must avoid locking people into certain slots when their value may be higher somewhere else within the organization.

Table 4.3 presents data regarding showing some of the most underachieving teams in NCAA history. It lists the team, the team that defeated it in the NCAA tournament, and the number of future NBA games for the players on those teams. The reason for underachievement – poor decisions by the coach, bad luck, poor officiating – are not identified. Still, the point that talent is necessary but not sufficient for success is made clear in the table.

Table 4.3 NCAA TEAMS WITH MOST FUTURE NBA GAMES NOT WINNING CHAMPIONSHIP

Year	Teams	Players	Total Games	Median Games	Maximum Games
1984	North Carolina-Indiana	5-2	4029-404	737-0	1031-235
	National Semifinal: 68-72				
1978	Notre Dame-Duke	7-4	2840-1760	707-259	1068-938
	National Semifinal: 86-90				
1990	North Carolina-Arkansas	5-3	2696-1393	508-445	652-496
	Regional Semi-final: 73-96				
1975	Indiana-Kentucky	6-5	2525-1561	536-156	719-672
	Regional Final: 90-92				
1976	North Carolina-Alabama	5-4	2472-1889	482-438	1033-993
	First Round: 69-74				
1985	Georgetown-Villanova	4-3	2466-1137	599-45	1039-793
	National Final: 64-66				
1983	Arkansas-Louisville	3-6	2464-1600	720-201	965-768
	Regional Semifinal: 63-65				
1982	Houston-North Carolina	4-3	2455-3078	153-926	1119-1222
	National Semifinal: 62-68				
1983	Houston-North Carolina St.	4-4	2350-1160	96-36	1119-928
	National Final: 52-54				
1974	UCLA-North Carolina St.	6-4	2376-1153	468-115	828-592
	National Semifinal: 77-80				

Guy Lewis' 1983 Houston team, often thought to be the biggest bust of a talent-laden team, was stocked with substantial NBA talent but was not close to being the most talented team defeated, especially considering the level of the competition. In fact, Dean Smith's 1984 team that was

defeated in the Sweet 16 by Indiana, featuring Michael Jordan, Sam Perkins, and other future NBA players, easily takes the top spot for biggest upset of a great team. In fact, Smith places 4 teams among the top 10. Certainly a 2 point loss to a team with talented players of its own is no big indictment of a coach. However, the 96-73 drubbing suffered by North Carolina in the Sweet 16 tournament to a team that logged only half of the NBA minutes is surprising. The point here is not to bash Dean Smith. The earlier sections record his achievements. Rather, it is to point out that getting the most out of a talented group is not an easy task. Injuries, intra-team rivalries, a few missed opportunities or poor decisions can sour a team's chances.

While utilizing people effectively is an issue for sports managers and coaches, business managers sometimes face limits not encountered by their coaching counterparts. For example, in some cases work rules negotiated through collective bargaining agreements restrict the options open to managers in moving their workers around. Barring such rules, the situations between sports and typical business settings are very comparable. For example, as organizations grow larger, they tend to hire people to fit particular job descriptions, and usually, this person is not repositioned within the organization unless major restructuring occurs. This is not unlike sports, especially at the professional level, where players drafted at quarterback, running back, or some other positions usually stay at those positions for their entire careers. Occasionally, college players find new positions in the pros, but once repositioned, further changes are rare or are minor changes such as cornerback to safety or a third baseman moving to first base. With such job positioning, the task of the manager in effectively using the human resources on hand, short of a general "reengineering" of the organization, is more one of tailoring and customizing responsibilities than completely altering job tasks.

Coaches with long track records of success also avoid the fascination with fitting square pegs into round holes. When Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) came to the UCLA Bruins, John Wooden scrapped his entire offensive scheme. By his accounting, he spent hundreds of hours talking to other coaches about plays for post players to more fully utilize Alcindor's unique and impressive abilities. Wooden also changed the defensive "rules" for his teams. Previously, one of the team's staple axioms was to never let a player drive toward the bucket along the baseline. With Alcindor in the middle, such drives usually turned into blocked or missed shots, so Wooden discarded the old rule and encouraged his players to force opponents along the baseline.[10]

A model of success in flexibility and adaptation over the longest stretch of time in the NFL is probably Don Shula, who started as head coach of the Baltimore Colts and then moved to the Miami Dolphins in 1969. Shula's teams in Baltimore in the 1960s and Miami in the 1970s were relatively conservative teams, emphasizing running the ball and strong defense. In 1973, the Dolphins finished the season undefeated. By the 1980s, the rules concerning pass defense had changed considerably, making passing more effective. Also, in 1983, the Dolphins drafted Dan Marino out of the University of Pittsburgh. Shula quickly grasped the incredible talent of his young quarterback and adapted the offense to take advantage of the rules and Marino's arm. Although the Dolphins reached the Super Bowl only in 1985, they continued to be successful and could not be described as a team inextricably tied to a particular system.

At the college level, Lou Holtz has made a career out of building football programs or rebuilding programs that had fallen upon hard times. Various attributes of Holtz as a leader might be cited as contributing to his success at these projects, yet Holtz teams have not been

known for their complicated offensive or defensive schemes. Instead, Holtz excels in recognizing talented players, motivating them to play hard, and moving players around so as to extract the most from them. At the University of South Carolina, for instance, he used one of his most talented players, running back Derek Watson, not only as a running back in the offense but as a wide receiver, punt returner, kick returner. He even used Watson as a punt-block specialist on occasions. Few coaches use players so broadly in this era of hyper-specialization. Yet, Holtz recognized that his team's best chance to win came from trying to use Watson in as many valuable ways as he could find.[11]

At times coaches like Holtz, who try to utilize the entire array of a player's abilities, receive criticisms for unduly exposing a valuable running back to injury. Similar comments have cropped up in the 1990s when a stellar defensive back such as Deion Sanders has been used as a kick or punt-returner or in the 1970s when St. Louis defensive back, Roy Green, began to play at wide receiver also. As with any activity, the question must be considered as to whether the additional benefit derived outweighs the additional costs and risks encountered, but a blanket rule of thumb that limits a player to doing only one thing on a team is unlikely to arrive at the best solution. After all, it is not the player's contribution as a defensive back or running back, *per se*, that matters, but his overall contribution to scoring points or holding the other team from scoring. Coaches such as Holtz help to make up for some of their team's athletic deficiencies versus the powerhouses such as Florida or Tennessee by using the talents of his most gifted players more intensively.

To use people most effectively, coaches or managers must avoid the temptation to view people as interchangeable parts in a big machine with the coach twisting the knobs. So often,

managers handcuff the people they have on staff, even when many of these people are capable of making a difference themselves. Nowhere can this be more easily seen than in sports. Coaches fall in love with their systems and schemes. An example of this kind of thinking occurred with the University of Houston football program in the early late 1980s and early 1990s. During the 1980s under head coach Jack Pardee, the team installed an offensive scheme known as the "run and shoot" – a system that Pardee had run adopted as coach of the USFL Houston Gamblers. The offense spread four wide receivers all over the field, emphasized no-huddle play calling, and racked up points left and right. In spite of NCAA probationary status with restricted scholarships and no television appearances, the Cougars were becoming a novelty. Andre Ware, the team's quarterback, won the Heisman trophy in 1989, passing for over 4600 yards and 46 touchdowns in one season and leading the team to a 9-2 mark. After Ware graduated, David Klingler inherited the quarterbacking responsibilities and experienced even greater statistical success, passing for over 5100 yards and 54 touchdowns.

Pardee departed to become coach of the NFL's Houston Oilers. Offensive assistant coach and mastermind of the run and shoot scheme, John Jenkins, took over as coach. Jenkins was completely enamoured of his offensive schemes. He flatly stated that he did not think anybody could stop the offense. What Jenkins failed to realize, though, was that other factors had contributed to the Cougar's success. The Houston defense had played well, and the players, including the offensive line doing the blocking, had been well suited to the offense. Soon, opposing defenses devised effective counter-strategies, and the Cougars did not have the compliment of players needed to defend the quarterback or the receivers to make it work as well. By the 1992 season, Houston took several sound beatings. Shortly, Jenkins and his unstoppable

schemes vanished – a victim of managing solely in terms of plays and not players.

DEVELOPMENT & TURNOVER

Nurturing and developing inexperienced talent defines another part of the role of a manager in being able to utilize the resources of the people around him. In sports, few leaders accomplished this better than Walter Alston of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Alston experienced an incredibly long and successful run with Dodgers, managing them from 1954-1976. His unprecedented longevity, in large part, owed itself to his ability to recognize raw skills of younger players and inspire confidence in them. Over Alston's tenure, players such as Don Drysdale, Sandy Koufax, Maury Wills, John Roseboro, Ron Perranoski, Frank Howard, Willie Davis, Tommie Davis, Steve Garvey, Davey Lopes, Bill Russell, and Ron Cey – all household names during their playing era – broke into the majors with the Dodgers and flourished. Koufax, recognized as one of the great pitchers of any era, especially benefited from Alston's patience. As one writer put it, Alston waited six and one-half years for Koufax to find home plate.[12] Alston acquired some of these skills as a protege' himself of Branch Rickey, a seminal figure in the player development system that has come to dominate professional baseball. Certainly, some sports coaches and managers such as George Allen with the Los Angeles Rams and Washington Redskins have flourished by using predominantly older players. Yet, the tenure of these coaches is often cut short because of their aversion to younger players. When the string runs out with the veterans, there is no supply of younger talent ready to carry on. The longevity of a Walter Alston is really

only possible if younger players are infused among the older players.

Integrating younger players and handling the turnover or reassignment of team members is one of the most complex jobs faced by any manager and fraught with land mines. In athletics, players go through productivity life cycles. For players who remain in professional sports for sizable stretches of time, performance usually increase over a few years, reaches a plateau at which productivity may hold for several years, and then output begins to decline, ultimately leading to either retirement or release. While these facts are well known, making decisions with regard to individual players can be quite difficult because of the uncertainties of future performance as well as loyalty issues. How quickly should young players be integrated? How long should veteran players be kept on? Maybe the most commonly cited gaffe in recent years was the Boston Red Sox cutting loose Roger Clemens after the 1997 season only to see him win over 100 games the next six seasons, including three American League Cy Young Award. Yet, only hindsight makes this decision a "no-brainer." Clemens had already played 13 seasons and his earned run average in three of his prior four years had been one run or more per game higher than his career averages. Looking at these numbers as well as observing Clemens pitch, one could have easily concluded that he had dropped off of the plateau and was going downhill, as almost all athletes do who play long careers.

The coaches and general managers who handle these questions the best are those who handle the situation incrementally – striking a balance between integrating young players and utilizing older players. Coaches and general managers whose decisions lead to bad outcomes usually lean toward an all-or-nothing approach. One of the best cases of successful balancing of veteran and younger players comes from the NHL's Colorado Avalanche. The

team moved from Quebec in 1995 and won the Stanley Cup in their first full year in Colorado, 1995-96. In 1998, Bob Hartley took over as coach andguided the team to appearances in the Western Conference Championship and another Stanley Cup in 2001. On integrating younger players, an ESPN announcer transmitted Hartley's philosophy, "old players get older; young players get better." On his teams, rookie and second year players received considerable playing time, even during the playoffs. Yet, Hartley's statement does not imply that he steers entirely toward the use of younger versus older players. In a highly publicized move, the team traded for 20-year veteran defenseman Ray Borque from the Boston Bruins late in the 2000 season. Then, during the 2001 season, the team acquired 10-year veteran defenseman Rob Blake from the Los Angeles Kings. In both cases, the Avs gave up younger talent in favor of the veteran players, and Hartley utilized both extensively.[13]

In contrast to this incremental mixing of old and new, one of the downfalls of Rick Pitino as coach of the Boston Celtics was his inability or unwillingness to see the importance of veteran players and the stability they bring. When he took over, he took an extreme approach to integrating new players. As one article put it, "when it comes to personnel matters, [Pitino] acquires and discards players the way a stock trader does."[14] A former Celtic player noted, "He didn't want veteran players when he got there. Now he realizes that wasn't right."[15] As an opposing example, The New York Yankees under Joe Torre have expertly balanced the integration of older and younger players. Torre has been very willing to utilize young players and rookies extensively including Derek Jeter, Bernie Williams, Jorge Posada, Mariano Rivera, and Alfonso Soriano. Further, he has been willing to do it at what are thought to be the most critical defensive positions of shortstop (Jeter), catcher (Posada), and centerfield (Williams)

where many managers reluctantly place young players. At the same time, though, he has used veterans to balance these young stars.

On the other side of the coin, it is very easy to be too slow in integrating fresh people within an organization, even for good managers. The Pittsburgh Steelers languished at the bottom of the NFL until coach Chuck Knoll arrived, and the team drafted several key players during the late 1960s and early to 1970s including Terry Bradshaw, Joe Greene, Franco Harris, L.C. Greenwood, Lynn Swann, Jack Lambert, and others. The Steelers built a dynasty, winning Super Bowls in 1974, 1976, and 1980. Injuries and retirements of the 1970s veteran core began in waves and soured the Steeler's fortunes during the 1980s. First, the team dropped to being just average. Then, from the mid 1980s on, they lost many more games than they won. The other dominant team of the 1970s, the Dallas Cowboys, closely marked the fate of the Steelers. The Cowboys had built a solid team from the mid 1960s into a 1971 Super Bowl winner. Then, in 1975 they experienced an exceptionally good draft and excelled through the 1970s and early 1980s. By the mid 1980s, however, this core of players began to drop and the team's winning percentage slid. By Tom Landry's last year, they were one of the worst teams in the league at 3 wins and 13 losses.

Based on their dominance and Super Bowl victories, one might easily argue that riding the veteran core of the teams paid off. However, the other side could be argued also. At some point during the late 1970s or early 1980s, had the teams begun to more rapidly integrate younger players, they likely would have avoided the downfalls of the late 1980s. Such a strategy may have led to fewer wins in the early 1980s, but greater success over the long term. Ironically, the Cowboys had pursued such a strategy through the mid 1970s. They made room and gave

playing time to the players in their 1975 draft into an already successful team.

MOTIVATION – BEYOND THE BASICS

Bo Schembechler coached the Michigan Wolverines from the 1960s to the early 1990s. As a disciple of Ohio State legend Woody Hayes, Schembechler's team won games by athletic talent and brute force. There was seldom anything tricky or subtle about their strategy – run the ball a lot and throw once in a while. The Wolverines under Schembechler were not pretty but highly successful. Schembechler excelled in his ability to obtain maximum effort from players. While all coaches emphasize effort, Schembechler did it in a way that translated obviously into game situations. Although it might seem that player's sloughing off might be a problem only in practice, slight declines in effort occur frequently in games. Players fatigue and back off a bit. The play runs long, and a player backs off a bit. The main focus of a play moves away from a particular player, and he may ease back. Anyone who watched a Schembechler coached team in person could see that the Michigan coaches instilled a culture where the players went at full speed from the beginning of the play until the whistle blew to stop the play – even to the point of continuing a second or two beyond the whistle in many cases. Defensive backs ran hard even when the ball was completely across the field. Offensive tackles completed their downfield blocks whether the play was nearing an end or not.

These seemingly minor differences in effort have huge differences on outcomes over the course of an entire game or season. The defensive back who thinks his teammates are sure to tackle a runner and slows up by only 10 percent will likely be correct in most situations and his

team will suffer no ill effects of his slightly diminished effort and his coaches will likely not even notice. In fact, as he becomes accustomed to doing this, the player not even be aware of his slightly reduced effort. However, in a game or over a series of games, the 10 percent reduction in effort may be the difference in a 20 yard gain and a touchdown in the one or two times that the runner breaks through the seemingly sure tackle of the teammates. Likewise, in business, a 10 percent reduction in effort compounded over weeks, months, and years makes a large difference in overall productivity that may seem trivial at any given moment in time.

In work settings ranging from construction labor requiring exhaustive physical labor to office labor requiring mental effort, lost productivity due to diminished effort may be the most common problem plaguing businesses. As the quote from Pete Carill indicated in Chapter 2, people, in general, would rather do something less difficult than something difficult. This is not to indicate that "optimal" effort is always at break-neck speed. In a game played in short bursts, such as football, all-out effort may be optimal. In games with continuous action or long seasons such as basketball or hockey, some amount of "pacing" is necessary just as in a long distance run. Likely, business settings more closely approximate these kinds of endurance events than they do football. Yet, even in these situations where an all-out-sprint is not in order, consistently strong effort will pay dividends over the long haul.

The question is, how does a coach or manager motivate people to provide strong effort levels to provide effort that works toward company objectives rather than personal objectives?[16] Chapter 2 covered a few of the basics regarding motivation of people. The theme of that chapter was that effective coaches and managers recognize the divergence of individual and team objectives. With only a paycheck, some players or workers will fully integrate their objectives

with those of the team or company. Others will pursue the team or company objectives with a bit of personal pursuit, while others will seek their own objectives to the fullest extent possible. Astute leaders are aware of and seek to find ways to meet the need for individuals to subjugate themselves to the needs of the team while continuing to recognize the importance of individual. In Chapter 2, Vince Lombardi's practice of handing out five and ten dollar bills at weekly meetings to call attention to excellent performance became a ritualistic practices that surprised Packer Gary Knofelc in "how prideful you would become" in receiving such small rewards.[17] Lombardi understood player motivation in terms of "the player produces for himself and the team as an extension of himself."[18]

Finding ways to address this divergence between team goals and personal objectives presents an ongoing challenge for coaches and managers, and many methods have been utilized to deal with it. Most coaches rely, to a some extent, on verbal harassment. In some cases, this becomes almost the sole means used usually to their detriment. Although a coach as successful as Lombardi used this method a lot, he is frequently misunderstood to have leaned on it solely. In reality, he factored in the personal goals and satisfaction of his players. Other coaches and business leaders attack the motivational issue by attempting to build a culture of group-think that mimics some aspects of family culture. In some instances, this method amounts to little more than sloganeering with more of a perceived than real effect. Although Lou Holtz is a big proponent of developing a positive, goal-oriented outlook, he forcefully notes, "talking ain't doing." In his view, neither pep talks or attempts to inspire a false sense of confidence improves performance, and the latter may actually reduce it as reality takes hold.[19]

Those who study management or lead in business or athletics sometimes embrace an

overly simplistic in their view on motivation and incentives. The mention of "incentives" may cause some to fixate only on cash bonuses. Simply put, an incentive includes any benefit that rewards players for good performances or punishes them for bad performances, whether it involves the exchange of money or not. In this light, incentives include contractual performance targets, prizes or awards for exemplary performance, promotions, titles, preferred treatment, special honors, embarrassment, undesirable duties, additional training, and just about anything that a coach can dream up that is legal. The key to effective use of incentives of whatever stripe is that they are closely linked to the desired or undesired behavior and are of sufficient size to illicit the desired response without going far beyond that point. Lombardi's weekly awards ceremony struck this balance. A manager or coach who hands out too many awards quickly diminishes the value of them and their effectiveness. Players or employees must find them meaningful.

Beyond the mere recognition of the need to motivate players or employees, one of the most difficult questions is how much should a leader attempt to customize motivational policies? Should all players be treated alike or should policies be tailored to fit individuals and particular circumstances? The difficulty of this question is seen by the diversity of approaches adopted even by very successful coaches. On the one hand, nearly all coaches who have written or spoken on this matter espouse some form of consistency in their policies. In practice, though, what they mean by consistent or fair policies across players differs widely. Individualizing of rules and incentives is needed while recognizing that limits to individualization must exist. As good managers realize, people are not like a bunch of homogeneous nuts and bolts. In terms of external motivation, some people require little in the way of pushing or enticing once they sign

on. They can be counted on to put their best effort forward, and may, in fact, bristle at paternalistic oversight. At the other extreme, some people will take any opportunity that the boss turns his head to goof-off even when given incentives otherwise.

At the one end of the spectrum is the approach taken by Marty Schottenheimer, when he took over the reins of the Washington Redskins in the fall of 2001. For instance, he required every player to participate in a notorious practice exercise called the "Oklahoma Drill" where runners and tacklers face off in one-on-one situations. Even 40-year old veteran players such as Bruce Smith and Darrell Green were not exempted from the drill. As Smith later noted, "I don't think I've ever done the Oklahoma drill, maybe in high school." However, this kind of extreme is not very common among successful coaches. It may not even be typical policy for Schottenheimer. There may be reasons beyond the immediate moment why he chooses to make all players engage in a particularly challenging drill. In taking over a team that he believes underachieved or was lacking in discipline, he may think that the importance of establishing a culture of hard work and discipline is greater than individualizing his policies for the time being. If in the same job after two or three successful season, he might not make the same one-size-fits-all decision.

Even a coach such as Vince Lombardi, known for being tough on every player, individualized his approach. He stopped yelling at quarterback Bart Starr in front of the team after a conversation with Starr where the quarterback said such criticism undermined his on-the-field leadership. Wide receiver Max McGee referred to him as "the greatest psychologist" in knowing how to tailor his approach to different players. David Maraniss notes that because of Paul Hornung's ability to shrug off criticism, Lombardi often used him as a whipping boy. Marv

Fleming needed constant riding. Willie Davis was so self-motivated that he received very little reproach. Lombardi even cut McGee slack on some of his curfew breaking that he would not have tolerated from just any player.[20] Another NFL coach often noted for his inflexibility with regard to players, Tom Landry, customized his policies to some extent. Former fullback Walt Garrison said that Landry permitted defensive standout Bob Lilly to just jog around in shorts for the first few weeks of training camp.

UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, was also known for his consistency and fairness across players. In regard to his handling of racial differences at a time when racial issues sparked great controversy, one of his black players, Curtis Rowe, said, "Coach Wooden doesn't' see colors. He sees players."[21] In spite of this even-handed culture, Wooden openly criticized the idea that treating all the players alike made sense. He flatly stated, "they knew I never treated them all alike in every respect, and I never professed I would."[22] For instance, because of Lew Alcindor's height, race, and abilities, he viewed Alcindor as facing pressures unlike those faced by the other players on the team, so he adjusted some of his policies accordingly. In spite of his rationale and candor on this matter, Wooden recognized that his differential policies sometimes stirred negative feelings among other players.

While it may be surprising, some of the greatest coaches of all time are at the extreme end of the spectrum when it comes to individualizing team policies. The most glaring example may be Red Auerbach as coach of the Boston Celtics. Auerbach made no secret of his special treatment of star player Bill Russell. He felt that Russell was so valuable to the team and played so hard during games, that he often permitted Russell to sit out practice drills or to go at less than full speed to conserve himself for games. For many athletes, the long-standing coaching

maxim, "you play like you practice" is true. Yet for some, it is not true. Bill Russell often played nothing like he practiced.

The optimal degree of individualization of policies by a manager depends on the situation. For instance, greater individualization is likely more critical in a sport such as basketball than in one such as football. A football coach has to interact with fifty players, where a half dozen may be considered stars. In contrast, an NBA coach has a much smaller set of players, a twelve-man roster, to oversee with maybe one or two star players. Further, the impact of a single player such as a Bill Russell is considerably greater than any one player on a football, also giving the basketball coach a greater incentive to make adjustments. On the other hand, the degree of individualization needed may change over-time create difficulties for a coach. As coach of the Phoenix Suns, Paul Westphal took Auerbach's tack and treated veteran players such as Charles Barkley and Danny Ainge differently than many other players. The policy worked fine until Barkley's skills diminished, creating a situation where players who had resented some of the differential treatment became more important. Westphal ultimately lost his job as this shift in power took place.

COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT

Bill Parcells identifies the idea that "confrontation is healthy" as his "Rule Number Two" in turning a team around. He goes so far as to say, "If you want to get the most out of people, you have to apply pressure – that's the only thing that any of us really responds to ... Creating pressure in an organization requires confrontation, and it can get very intense, very emotional.

I've seen coaches avoid confrontations with their players because they don't like conflict, and I assume the same thing is true among the leaders of business teams...Without confrontation, you're not going to change the way they think and act." He goes on to praise directness in communication because it is much more valuable to people and the organization to have a leader who is extremely clear and open than one who vaguely talks around subjects.[23] For Parcells, communication and confrontation may not be one and the same, but they are first cousins. Mike Krzyzewski supplies a similar outlook, "Confrontation simply means meeting the truth head on."[24]

No doubt, for a team to succeed, people must know what it is that they need to do. In one way or another, nearly every successful coach emphasizes the importance of "communication." However, what this means can vary widely across coaches. One thing is for certain, most coaches do not refrain from direct confrontation. The clarity and direct communication embraced by a Bill Parcells or a Mike Krzyzewski have been an important component in their success as team builders. Many organizations, in fact, flounder because their leaders avoid clear-cut statements. This kind of avoidance may stem from a personal distaste for conflict, or it may merely reflect a leader who is pursuing personal agendas and playing political games at the expense of the organization.

However, Parcells, Lombardi, and other coaches who lean to the blistering end of the spectrum may superimpose their own personalities on the subject of clear communication by leaders. In examining the edges of Parcells comments or in observing the behavior of coaches such as Parcells, Krzyzewski or others, they fail to distinguish between direct communication and acerbic put downs. At times, they equate caustic with clear. Parcells is well known as not

only making things clear to players but belittling them. Of course, in Parcells' view of the importance of applying "pressure," such humiliation may be intimately linked to directness. That is addressed in the preceding section. Here, the point is that they may succeed in spite of their harshness and not because of it.

Clear, direct communication may be a key component of successful management, but scathing tirades or biting shots are not integral part of clear communication. Joe Torre, for instance, lists straight communication as his "third ground rule" for success. However, he also places the treatment of players with respect as a key factor. As a general rule, he does not humiliate players or criticize them in front of other players, choosing rather to handle matters plainly but in private.[25] John Wooden is another example of a highly successful coach who used plain language with his players but avoided biting remarks. Wooden openly discussed the importance of discipline and communication, even noting the case of a specific coach he knew who had good talent and good knowledge but communicated very poorly to his players.[26] Yet, Wooden accomplished his objectives without the vitriolic verbiage. The examples of Torre, Wooden, and others who succeeded without the harsh communication, does not show that their style was superior. Instead, it suggests that, indeed, the Parcells and Lombardis of the coaching world, in spite of their success, may have overestimated the importance of their particular brand of direct communication.

The importance of and role of coaches and managers in being able to interact with people has increased over the last few decades, especially in sports such as basketball and baseball. For a long time, coaches could subscribe to the "X" style of management – management by authoritarian decrees, intimidation, bullying, and so on. In bygone eras, many coaches have

certainly won with this style whether Woody Hayes at Ohio State, Bo Schembechler at Michigan, Bob Knight at Indiana, and others. As professional players have become more mobile in recent years and pay for players has made them millionaires, this style of management has been eroded. More commonly now, successful coaches have to be able to sit down and talk to players and resolve disputes between themselves and players or between players, probably more so in sports with smaller rosters than in sports such as football with larger rosters.

Nobody exemplifies success at human relations better than Phil Jackson in his tenure with the Los Angeles Lakers and the Chicago Bulls.[27] Over a decade, he has coached teams to eight NBA championships. No doubt, it helps to have some of the best players in the league, or ever, in Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neil, Kobe Bryant, and Scottie Pippen. Still, Jackson has been able to mesh strong and often volatile personalities and egos into champions. In Chicago, he slowly convinced Jordan that developing offensive systems that integrated other players more would make them a better team over the long haul than just giving the ball to Jordan every time down the court. He prodded excellence out of a petulant player such as Scottie Pippen. He even folded the eccentric Dennis Rodman into the mix. In Los Angeles, he helped O'Neill make the transition from just an offensive force into an excellent defender, rebounder, and passer, and kept the childish outbursts of Bryant from derailing a run toward a second championship.

In accomplishing this, Jackson displayed the kinds of skills necessary to deal with people. He was not just a uni-dimensional figure all about "touchy-feely" talks and Zen philosophy. He displayed toughness, candor along with patience and restraint. He emphasized key basketball goals but made clear that life beyond the organization did exist. He demanded attention and effort but did not try to dominate players' lives.

The debate over the best means of communicating with players is really a subset of a broader debate concerning motivational methods and organizational discipline. A 2001 Sports Illustrated article entitled "Lords of Discipline" featured several college coaches espousing hard-line, retro ideas on discipline.[28] For instance, when taking over the helm of the University of Alabama football program in 2001, Dennis Franchione issued a 185-page policy manual to players and installed a nightly curfew for players not performing well academically even during the offseason. University of Missouri head coach, Gary Pinkel, banned earrings and hats worn indoors along with many other measures with the intent of instilling discipline. Northwestern coach Randy Walker, noted "Lombardi talked about man's innate need for discipline. It gives people ease, because life is puzzling." He openly speaks of his admiration for former Ohio State coach Woody Hayes, legendary for his drill sergeant ways.

Throughout much of its history, team-based athletic training and discipline has modeled itself after military training from the junior high school level through the professional ranks. Winning and losing presented clear and unavoidable alternatives, portrayed akin to living and dying. The tenure of coaches and the careers of players depended on them. Winning, and therefore survival, depended on pushing individuals to the limits of their physical abilities and developing unwavering commitment to the team. In training and preparation for these objectives, coaches played the role of the drill sergeants with nearly absolute authority over the player's life. Practically anything short of death was acceptable. Screaming and verbal humiliation not only coincided with pushing players to the limits of dehydration, exhaustion, and pain but were thought by some to be indispensable toward reaching these ends. All of these tools were thought to develop not only physical skills but also built teamwork and character. Aside

from maybe one or a few star players, the athletes represented little more than pieces of equipment at the disposal of coaches and general managers.

Countless anecdotes could be included from players from bygone eras at various levels about their experiences with this kind of treatment. For example, in 1954 Paul "Bear" Bryant left a successful football program at the University of Kentucky to take over a floundering program at Texas A&M. In his first year, he took the team an infamous 200 mile bus trip to a small "adjunct" facility of the university near the West Texas town of Junction. The episode has been documented in several written accounts and replayed in a film by the name "Junction Boys." Out of 90 to 105 players that left on the trip (the exact number is not known), only 29 returned with the team to College Station for the season ten days later. During their stay in Junction, the team endured deprivation more akin to that imposed on military "Special Operations" recruits than the training of college players. The players slept eight men to a concrete-floored, tin-roof barrack and practiced for three hours at dawn and in the afternoon on a field of sand, rocks, and grass burrs. They received little or no water during practice and minimal medical attention, while being subjected to verbal and, according to some players, physical abuse. Bryant intended the experience to cull out the poorly motivated players, but even he was surprised at the size of the defections. Even those who defected feared Bryant to the point that most chose to hitch hike to town during the night and pay their own bus fare rather than have to quit to Bryant's face.[29]

Even though such over-the-top methods are more common at the college level, they have not entirely vanished from professional sports. When Tom Coughlin took over as head coach of the expansion Jacksonville Jaguars of the NFL in 1995, he immediately set out to develop an

entire culture around the team to his liking. Beyond the usual – demanding effort and attention – he instituted several rules with which he intended to create discipline over the long term and attention to detail. These included such minute things as prohibitions on the wearing of baseball caps or sunglasses on the practice field and crossing of legs during team meetings. Nine-year veteran receiver, Darnay Scott, who jumped from the Bengals to the Jaguars during the 2002 offseason described Coughlin as a "mean guy" and "that military-type person."[30] The same kinds of complaints have surfaced when Coughlin took over the New York Giants for the 2004 season.

Although few if any coaches or former coaches will publicly criticize another coach for such tactics, some do voice more general disagreement with this view of discipline. CBS football analyst and former Oakland Raider coach John Madden recounts a very different approach toward team culture during his years with the Raiders, taking issue with the "yes sir – no sir" view of discipline. For him, discipline meant doing the right things on the field. He explained, "If a guy wears a tie and a sport coat, if he has a nice haircut, if he likes milk and apple pie, that's nice. But if he jumps offside, he's an undisciplined football player ... The guy who says "yeah" can be a disciplined player while a guy who says "yes sir" may jump offside. He demanded just two things of players – that they listen to the coaches and go as hard as they could go. Otherwise, the Raiders' players faced few restrictions from their coaches. Raider players worked hard in practice, played hard in games, and paid attention in film sessions.[31] Yet, they did not look or act like Boy Scouts. While different in many ways from Madden, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski defines discipline in much the same way, saying it is "doing what you are suppose to do, in the best possible manner, at the time you are suppose to do it."[32] He gives

the players a generic rule, “don’t do anything detrimental to yourself.” While this obviously covers a wide array of specific behavior, Krzyzewski consciously avoids assessing too many rules, even though he is very much a demanding and “in-control” kind of coach. In his view, “people set rules to keep from making decisions.”

Pressures from society along with increased financial clout of players and free agency has influenced the militaristic culture, softening it a bit or limiting its extent over the last three decades. In some of these cases, the change in culture came about through externally imposed changes rather than changes in existing coaches. For instance, in the early 1990s, University of California basketball players successfully ousted coach Lou Campenelli for alleged verbal abuse of players. The widely publicized firing of Bob Knight as head coach of the Indiana University basketball program involved, in part, his brutal treatment of players, especially in the instance where his behavior was caught on a publicly-aired video tape. In a bit of irony, Knight was one of the most vocal defenders of Campenelli and biggest critics of the University of California administration.

However, the trend away from the militaristic coaching style has been initiated by coaches themselves without pressures from external bodies and sometimes without the support of their colleagues. Bill Walsh became head coach of the San Francisco 49ers in the late 1970s after serving as an offensive coach for Cincinnati in the prior years. While at San Francisco, Walsh compiled a regular season record of 92 wins and 59 losses, winning four Super Bowl titles. Although Walsh could be acerbic with his comments and demanded exacting attention to detail, he prided himself on the team’s ability to succeed without creating an atmosphere of physical intimidation.

Even before widespread departures from the paramilitary culture in sports coaching became more common, some very successful coaches eschewed those kinds of methods. John Wooden, as coach of the UCLA Bruins won 10 NCAA basketball titles from 1964 through 1975, demanded attention and effort. His former players viewed him as a disciplinarian. Yet, he achieved the necessary amounts of effort and attention while steering away from verbal abuse or explicit intimidation. In his own words, Wooden viewed "the bench as a great teacher." Players failing to give expected effort or failing to follow instructions found themselves on the bench rather than being exposed to expletive-laden rages by their coaches. Even farther back in sports history, Bud Wilkinson, head football coach at the University of Oklahoma from 1947 to 1963, compiled an 81 percent winning percentage along with 3 national championships and winning streaks of 47 and 31 games. Like Wooden, Wilkinson placed high expectations on his players but was noted for his lack of temperamental outbursts. No doubt, both Wooden and Wilkinson could play more subtle games with players. Wilkinson was noted for treating injured players as outcasts, seemingly as incentive for them to return to action as soon as possible. Still, in contrast to the blustery, temperamental, drill sergeant tactics of most coaches, Wooden and Wilkinson behaved much more like contemplative business managers or teachers.

In addition to the ethical and philosophical issues surrounding debates over disciplinary methods, a key for managers or coaches is not whether discipline or managerial control is important, but how much control really helps the team or organization. Due to societal norms, the degree of control attainable in the sometimes para-military world of sports is frequently not usually possible in business settings. Although the leeway for managers to dominate the lives of employees was and is less, the domineering-militaristic managerial style so common in sports

also has been present in other kinds of workplaces. Do these relatively extreme efforts to dictate behavior at a very minute level improve performance, or do they reflect more about compulsions and obsessions of the coach than meaningful policies for the team? What is discipline and to what extent is it really useful?

Coughlin and Madden represent coaches at the polar extremes in terms of the strictness or looseness of team culture. Which coaching style generated more success? Madden's teams regularly appeared in the playoffs, capturing a Super Bowl victory in 1975. Coughlin's Jaguars reached the playoffs in only their second season, made them the next two seasons, and reached the AFC Championship game in at the end of 1999 season. Based on those records, it would be difficult to pick one style over the other. Yet, Coughlin's star faded from 2000-2002 with losing seasons each year, resulting in his firing at the end of the 2002 season. In the end, his missteps in the general manager role may have cost him as much or more as his coaching or maybe his attempts to do both were the problem – an issue raised in Chapter 8. Still, even in comparing their successful years, their success in spite of these vast differences in style might suggest that the particulars of the coaching style were irrelevant in one and maybe both cases. Instead, these and other coaches shared other traits making helping them toward their success.

Among the college football coaches listed in the "Lords of Discipline" Sports Illustrated article, Ralph Friedgen, rookie coach at Maryland, had a banner year. Under his guidance, the Terps won the ACC for the first time in over 20 years and secured a birth in the Orange Bowl. He followed up with highly successful season in 2002 and 2004 including major bowl appearances. However, the success of the others was more limited. Franchione's Alabama team finished at 6-5 up from 4-7 by his predecessor. In 2002 the Crimson Tide went 9-3 under his

leadership – a solid but not outstanding year by Alabama standards. In 2003 he jumped shipped for Texas A&M, where his initial campaign was disappointing. Missouri finished the 2001 2002, and 2003 seasons without enough wins to qualify for Bowl eligibility – not a very high standard. Northwestern finished 2001 and 2002 years abysmally, looking more like the doormat of the 1980s than the Big Ten Champion of the 1990s. Obviously, judging success based on just a few years has its limitations. Still, it is far from obvious that such narrow ideas about discipline are nearly as important as the caliber of the players and the offensive and defensive strategies employed. Coaches and observers alike can become overly enchanted with a particular personal style of coaching, and the culture the coach develops on the team. One thing is for certain – coaches with a variety of personalities and imposing diverse cultures on their teams have been successful. On the flip side, all kinds of coaching personalities have failed to find success. This is not too suggest that some aspects of the managerial style of a coach, and the culture he or she fosters do not make a difference. Increasingly, a big part of the job of professional and even college coaches is the ability to go beyond the technical strategies and to be able to deal with players. Coaches who are not very good in their ability to deal effectively with players slowly seem to be waning.

Beyond the managerial style of coaches, sports commentators love to refer to the importance of team "chemistry," but does it really matter? The answer would seem to be yes, no, and maybe. The degree of interaction and integration necessary to complete required tasks is a critical factor in determining just how important chemistry is for organizations. For example, baseball has been called an individual sport for which a team score is kept. This may overstate the lack of interaction between players but it does highlight the fact that the degree of

team coordination is low relative to other sports. A few positions such as pitcher and catcher or shortstop and second base demand close cooperation, but the left-fielder and the first baseman or the third baseman and the right fielder hardly interact. When hitting, players need to respond to situations and coaching directions, but each batter faces the pitcher alone. The relative isolation and independence of baseball players in their productive capacities means that chemistry should not be a key influence on team performance.

Maybe MLB team illustrates the unimportance of chemistry better than the Oakland Athletics dynasty of the early to mid 1970s. The team won 101 games in 1971, 93 in 1972, 94 in 1973, 90 in 1974, and 98 in 1975. They advanced the American League Championship series in each of these season and won the World Series in 1972-74, defeating a powerhouse Cincinnati team from the National League in 1972 and very strong Baltimore teams from the own league in 1973 and 1974 to do so. In addition, the team finished second in their division in 1969, 1970, and 1976. The team achieved these heights in spite of tumultuous internal battles between manager and players, owner and players, owner and manager, and the players themselves. For example, in spite of winning two World Championships, the tension between owner Charlie Finley and manager Dick Williams grew to the point that Williams was replaced with Alvin Dark for the 1974 season.

In baseball, an obvious recent case of the lack of importance of team chemistry is the San Francisco Giants. They advanced to the World Series in 2002 and came within a few outs of capturing the title. They achieved this success in spite of their two best players, Barry Bonds and Jeff Kent, disliking each other to the point of getting into a shoving match in the dugout during a regular season game. Both in Pittsburgh and in San Francisco, Bonds has been seen by some

other players as a selfish and moody player, given to defensive lapses due to his indifference. Yet, over the last several years, he hit the baseball with power and batting average on a level or even surpassing greats such as Ruth, Mays, and Aaron. Kent, as the next best player on the team and representative of some of the other players' attitudes, took exception to Bond's effort. In spite of these tensions boiling into open hostility at times, baseball is a game where a player such as Bonds could play his position in left field decently and then step up to the plate and perform in a way that helped his team. As maddening as some of his attitudes may have been to Kent or others, they could largely do their jobs independent of Bonds.

In other sports, where the explicit cooperation between players is much greater, team chemistry likely plays a bigger role. For instance, in football, a player such as wide receiver Randy Moss of the Minnesota Vikings creates a dilemma for his team. His speed, quickness, height, and eye-hand coordination make him one of the most dangerous receivers of all time. Yet, by his own admission, he does not play hard on every play. He also throws childish tantrums directed at his quarterback not throwing him the ball enough. As talented as Moss is, he is only one of eleven offensive players on the field at a time and one of about 40 players who contribute during a game. While his contributions may be spectacular, he may only have the ball in his hand 5 to 8 times in a game, and several of those contributions could be substituted by most any professional wide receiver. So, when Moss creates friction on the teams through his on-field or off-field antics, it can have a seriously detrimental effect on team morale and performance. One cannot be certain of the size of Moss' negative effects, but the poor performance of the team during the 2002 season were not helped by them.

The main thing that a manager must assess is how important is harmony among the labor

force to the overall performance of the team or company. If people do their jobs largely independent of each other, a less than pleasant relationship between co-workers may bring about tension but affect productivity little. On the other hand, where cooperation is important, chemistry between workers is more than just a nicety.

REPLAY

1. People provide the foundation to long term success for any team or organization. People are a key if not the key resource for a firm. This point is obvious in athletics, but it is true for businesses even in an era of rapid technological use and innovation because people are always the decision makers.

2. Attracting and keeping the right people is an undervalued but critically important skill. Ironically, the success of coaches such as Dean Smith have sometimes been denigrated because of their skill in getting good people. Such thinking is backward and tends to overvalue manipulation of people and other resources over getting good people.

3. Incredibly, some managers appear to place a low priority on attracting and retaining their work force, instead viewing them as interchangeable parts. At times, some pro sports franchises have skimped on scouting budgets just as some business executives pawn off hiring chores as a nuisance.

4. Motivating people requires thoughtful consideration of a wide array of incentives rather than a narrow, one-size fits all view. People, even highly paid professional athletes or mangers, are not robots. A mix of rewards, recognition, and other incentives are required.

5. Plain communication is essential to effective managing – practically all great coaches possess and develop this ability. However, the harsh or para-military methods employed by some coaches are not contributors to success.

Notes

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1. Robert Slater, *Jack Welch and the GE Way* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999), p. 96.

2. See Shlomo Maital, *Executive Economics: Ten Essential Tools For Managers* (New York: Free Press, 1994), Chapter 5.

3. Rick Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), p. 209-211, provides these and other details on Lombardi's early days with the Packers.

4. See Darryl Howerton, "The Blazers Monopoly", *Sport*, 91 (April 2000), p. 36.

5. John Wooden (with Jack Tobin), *They Call Me Coach* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1988), p. 220.

6. See George Anders, "After Hitting It Big on Web, Mr. Cuban is Scoring in the NBA." *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2003.

7. Marty Burns, "Starting at the Top," available from sports.yahoo.com/nba/news/cnnsi, March 14, 2003.

8. See Bill James, *The Bill James Guide to Baseball Managers* (New York: Scribner, 1997), p. 242.

9. See Mike Krzyzewski (with Greg Doyel) *Building the Duke* Dynasty (Lenexa, KS: Addax Publishing), p. 37.

10. Wooden, *They Call Me Coach*, p. 141.

11. See Lou Holtz, *Winning Everyday: The Gameplan for Success* (New York: Harperbusiness, 1998), especially Chapter 5 for Holtz's views on adapting.

12. James, *Guide to Baseball Managers*, p. 212.

13. In spite of these successes, Hartley was fired during the 2002-03 season as his highly talented team sputtered during the first half of the season.

14. See J. MacMullan, "Slogging Through His Own Mess," *Sports Illustrated*, 92 (March 13, 2000), p. 98.

15. See I.. Thomsen, "My Way or the Highway," *Sports Illustrated*, 93 (December 11, 2000), p. 58.

16. Labor economics provides an extensive literature on this subject. An example specifically related to sports are Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert Smith, "Do Tournaments Have Incentive Effects?," *Journal of Political Economy*, 98 (December 1990), pp. 1307-24. Many other examples could be cited.

17. Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered*, p. 376.

18. Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered*, p. 377.

19. Holtz, *Winning Everyday*, p. 98-99 and 127-128.

20. Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered*, p. 327.

21. Jim Savage, *The Encyclopedia of the NCAA Basketball Tournament* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1990), p. 709.

22. Wooden, *They Call Me Coach*, p. 141.

23. These quotes are from Bill Parcells, "The Tough Work of Turning Around a Team," *Harvard Business Review* 78 (November 2000), pp. 180-181.

24. See Mike Krzyzewski (with Donald Phillips), *Leading with the Heart, Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life* (New York: Warner Books, 2000), p. 68.

25. See Joe Torre (with Henry Dreher), *Joe Torre's Ground Rules for Winning: 12 Keys to Managing Team Players, Tough Bosses, Setbacks, and Success* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), p. 37.

26. Wooden, *They Call Me Coach*, p. 235.

27. For a more detailed perspective on Jackson and his methods, see Sam Smith, *The Jordan Rules* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), M. Rowland, "Guru," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 45 January 2000, 60-67, and C.J. Farley, "The Philosopher Coach," *Time*, March 20, 2000, 61-62.

28. S.L. Price. "Lords of Discipline." *Sports Illustrated*, 95 (October 22, 2001), pp. 78-82.

29. Details are provided in Keith Dunnavant, *Coach: The Life of Paul Bear Bryant* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 19960, pp. 99ff.

30. From a *Florida Times-Union* online story August 28, 2002 at http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories.

31. See John Madden (with Dave Anderson), *One Knee Equals Two Feet* (New York: Jove Publications, 1987), p. 195.

32. Krzyzewski, *Leading with the Heart*, p. 36.