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RiseZine

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Welcome to ***RISEZINE***, my electronic magazine (ezine) that can help you solve problems or inspire you in your business and your life. I share with you my life experiences and those I gained from the twenty years I spent as a Judge of the Denver, Colorado County Court participating in the transformation of lives. The lessons I learned from those experiences will heighten your knowledge of, sensitivity to and outlook on the issues you face in your work and your life. I am honored to share your precious time with you.

Have you ever been promoted, transferred or “downsized” in your job and realized you needed new skills? Or, you were in an organization where you had to assume leadership duties and you felt you were not prepared? That’s the way I felt when my youngest son wanted to play recreational soccer and the only way he would be added to the roster was if I agreed to become a “helping parent” with the team and assist with the coaching duties. I had never seen a soccer game, much less played the game. Now I was an Assistant Coach. Well, two weeks into the season, the coach took a job in another state and I became, HEAD COACH. In the spring of 1985 I began coaching an Under 9 Boys Recreational Soccer Team in the Montbello Soccer Association, Denver, Colorado. [Hurricanes photo; Son Rob #7 in front of me]



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So, what did you do when you were thrust into a position where you had no experience? You did what I did. You went to the library and immersed yourself in the subject. I checked out books, videotapes, called everyone I knew who had ever mentioned the work “soccer” and registered for a coaching class. Within a few weeks I had attended a few practices, watched games on television and talked to a neighbor who had played soccer for the Nigerian National Team. I played basketball for thirty years and when I learned that the skills necessary to a successful soccer team were the same skills necessary to a successful basketball team [HOORAY]; passing, dribbling, shooting and defense. Except, **YOU CAN’T USE YOUR HANDS!** “UH OH”, I was deficient in the first important element necessary to building a successful team, **TRAINING.**

Today’s article is about my **4** elements to building a successful **TEAM.** Training is the first element because it is fundamental to building a team. When my first season began, I was attending coaching classes and trying to impart the techniques that I learned in the classes to the soccer field. It was a steep learning curve and our team paid the price because my coaching skills, though improving, were insufficient. We had an “unremarkable” season. What results do you see when you first take on new learning? First, don’t let the big hole in your knowledge swallow you. With more experience and practice, you attain a margin of comfort with the new skills. I took more classes between the seasons and had better techniques going into the next season. Our practices were more effective and that elevated our team’s skill level. What had changed? We became better at the second element to building a successful team, **EXECUTION.**

With more game experience, effective practice and grasping the skills necessary to the game of soccer, we were able to apply those skills in matches. How many times in your work life have you taken a class or received a learning tool but you couldn’t implement it effectively until you understood how all the parts were integrated? You were able to apply the new learning when you understood the role you played and how and where to execute those skills in the context of the team. Our soccer team’s record improved and we had a successful season when we were able to execute the new learning. The Hurricanes qualified for the Fall Recreational Championship Series. They won the Sportsmanship Trophy and accepted the award on local television. We were successful because we were better at execution.

The third element of a successful team is the **ATMOSPHERE** that surrounds it. You must create an attitude that higher level performance is expected and attainable. Once the Hurricanes experienced more success, an atmosphere of success surrounded them and they demanded more of themselves and their teammates. An organization can experience “growing pains” when they are creating a new atmosphere for success. How will your organization respond to these ‘growing pains,’ the disparity in the skills of the members and the necessary division of labor that accompanies it? Our soccer team’s growing pains manifested itself in

disruptive behavior, cockiness, lack of responsibility that led to disciplinary issues. To address this problem, I took the Hurricanes (with parental consent and participation) to Saturday morning Arraignment Court where I presided over the bail hearings for all the persons arrested the night before in Denver County for charges of alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, prostitution, burglary, theft and murder. Our team saw first-hand what misbehavior brings and they learned that they are responsible for their actions. As an aside, they heightened their sense of respect for authority. You don't need the power of the court, or to wield a gavel or wear a robe to create a positive attitude, an atmosphere of order and responsibility for your actions and those of your team-members. Whatever you do, create an atmosphere filled with energy, enthusiasm and a positive attitude and you build another element of a successful team.

The final element necessary to a successful team is **MISSION**. "Good morning, Mr. Phelps, Your mission, should you choose to accept it..." We remember those opening lines to the television and movie series Mission Impossible. I was drafted into coaching the Hurricanes, but I was on a mission to successfully conduct the business with which I was charged. That's the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary definition of mission. We entered the spring season in 1986 with a goal to be undefeated. Any organization that wants to be successful must set the goals high and communicate in clear, unambiguous language the roadmap to the goal. Have you communicated your mission to all the members of your team in a way that creates an unwavering desire to achieve it? The Hurricanes were undefeated in that spring season and were invited to play in the International Friendship Cup that summer. It was the highest honor our soccer association had ever received. **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!**

We won the first two Friendship Cup games against the teams from Lakewood and Taiwan. Our semi-final game was against the team from Argentina. Our team was well aware that the Argentina National team had just won the 1986 World Cup. As we warmed up before that game, we watched across the pitch as the Argentine's warmed up. They were fast, agile and strong. They looked like miniature versions of the World Cup Champions. I could have sworn Diego Maradona was suited up that day. I saw the look on the faces of my team and wondered what was I going to say to inspire them? "I am proud of how well you have played so far; you have the talent, knowledge and skill to win this game." By the first minute into the second half of the game, we were down three goals and the Argentine's were set to score again. I moved all our fastest and strongest players to the defensive half of the pitch and we began to swarm their attacking players. It worked; we held them scoreless in the second half and we lost by only three goals. We were awarded the International Friendship Medal for Sportsmanship. Our kids were proud they had made such an impression on the judges and exchanged jerseys with the Argentine team. The Hurricanes were successful because they practiced the elements of a successful team. They molded their skills through

training, they **executed**, operated in an **atmosphere** of success with a clear **mission**.

The four letters of the word team **T – E – A – M** provide a mnemonic to remind your team how to succeed:

T for Training;

E for Execution;

A for Atmosphere; and,

M for Mission

Your team can be successful, too if you follow these elements. Let me deliver my patented “Team-building Tips” workshop to your association, organization or group. I will demonstrate how your team can thrive during these challenging times with tools and techniques that will propel your team to greater productivity with fewer resources and achieve your organization’s goals. Gain insight and wisdom from the man who spent thirty years in the courtroom and maximize my experience to your benefit and help your team **RISE**. Contact me at Beau@Pleaserise.com or through my website, www.PleaseRise.com.

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