

Build Your DREAM Team



Develop, retain, engage and mentor

By Beverly Crowell & Beverly Kaye

“*Citius, Altius, Fortius*” which is Latin for “Faster, Higher, Stronger” is the motto of the Olympic games. In February, the world watched while athletes from around the world gathered in Sochi for the Winter Olympic Games with the quest of being faster, higher and stronger. It was the same challenge taken up in 1992 when the United States men’s Olympic basketball team, nicknamed the “Dream Team”, was the first American Olympic team to feature active NBA players. At that time, the team was described by journalists as the “greatest sports team ever assembled.”

Inside organizations, leaders strive to build the “greatest team ever assembled” as well. It’s the stuff that dreams are made of and dreams really can come true – in Sochi or at work. While its true most leaders won’t have access to the NBA to build their own “Dream Team,” they do have access to four simple truths that can create an environment where employees can go faster, soar higher and grow stronger. It takes a game plan and it takes a DREAM.



GAME PLAN

Webster’s Dictionary describes a game plan as a “plan for achieving something.” Inside organizations, achievement is measured by business results. These results are delivered by people – people who are either engaged and motivated or disengaged and unproductive. To harness and optimize the talents of every player on their team, leaders at all levels need a game plan that executes on four major points:

1. **DEVELOP** – According to research by Career Systems International (CSI), one of the top five reasons employees stay engaged at work is the opportunity for career growth, learning and development.
2. **RETAIN** – The cost of replacing talented employees can average as much as two-three times that employee’s annual salary.
3. **ENGAGE** – Ongoing research by Gallup indicates that actively disengaged employees cost the United States over \$300 billion a year on lost productivity.
4. **MENTOR** – People with mentors are twice as likely to stay inside an organization – stay longer and produce more.

A well-executed game plan can help leaders inside any organization optimize the talents of every player on their team. And, any good game plan will have strategies for setting the right game tempo, capitalizing on what your team does best, and practicing daily to draw out the best effort of all players. Coaches of sport teams will tell you most games are won and lost by your players executing the fundamentals and plays that you have taught them in practice. Forget the fundamentals and forget to practice – you lose.

WINNING FORMULA

Successful leaders and organizations build their winning teams around the DREAM by **D**eveloping, **R**etaining, **E**ngaging and **M**entoring their employees. “DREAM” is the fundamentals of a talent management game plan where teams must practice and execute daily to deliver business results with the highest levels of quality, productivity and safety.

Executing on the winning formula doesn't have to be complicated. Keep it simple and focus on the fundamentals for each of your players. Following is a sample game plan with strategies for how to execute on each. Involve your team, make notes, scout out the environment, and learn to change the style of play when what you've been doing isn't working.

Player: _____ **Position:** _____

DEVELOP	RETAIN	ENGAGE	MENTOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know their talents by asking “what makes you unique in the organization?” • Offer your perspective by helping players reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. • Discuss trends and look for game changing opportunities to try something new. • Discover multiple options and leverage their talents to do more exciting and challenging work. • Co-design an action plan by agreeing on a plan of action to help them develop, learn and grow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask “What can I do to keep you” and “What might make you leave?” • Calculate the cost of losing one of your talented players. • Understand why top players have left your team and update the game plan to create an environment where players want to stay. • Ask yourself and others, “What am I doing that is not working? What do I need to do more of? Less of?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't wait for the Exit Interview. Institute regular Stay Interviews with all your players. • Ask “What makes for a great day? What can we do to make your job more satisfying? What do you want to learn this year? Do you get enough recognition and playing time?” • What do you love most about your position and what might you change?” • Customize your efforts to the unique qualities of each player to optimize their talents and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of what you are modeling. Is it what you hope to see them doing? • Set your players up with role models who are good at what they are trying to learn. • Listen to your players ideas with an open mind. Think “what if” before “no.” • Cheer them on – give regular positive and encourage them to build relationships with other people in the organization.

LATE GAME STRATEGY

Building a DREAM team is not a one and done. It requires a sustained commitment. For some leaders, it may be a new commitment to a new way of thinking. And just because it may be late in the game, it doesn't mean it's not too late to change the plan. Create your “To Do” list with stay interviews with everyone on your team at the top of your list. Agree to a plan of action and then execute. Get feedback on how you are doing as the coach – go public with your plan and tell your players how what you are doing to build a winning team. Finally, realize you don't have to go alone. Enlist your players, fellow coaches and the organization to put the fundamentals in place.



The time is right to build a game plan and create a work environment that is “faster, higher and stronger.” And, if you already have “greatest team ever assembled,” use your game plan to keep the DREAM alive. Go back to the fundamentals, practice daily, and “achieve your something.” **LE**



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