

LEADERS & SUCCESS

Pour On People Skills For Top Performance, Team Respect



SONJA CARBERRY | 5/16/2013



Individual effort pales vs. team impact. How to get everyone pulling together:

- **Instill ideals.** In 2011, the Butler Bulldogs were the first basketball team to reach a second straight NCAA title game without being seeded No. 1 or 2. The college squad from Indianapolis almost toppled Duke in 2010, then lost decisively to another heavyweight, Connecticut, the next year. How did Butler rise?

"Lead Like Butler" co-author Kent Millard credits Butler coach Brad Stevens' emphasis on humility and accountability. "It's not about star players at Butler. They have good players who play well together," Millard told IBD.

- **Encourage.** Stevens used wind sprints to teach a lesson in selflessness. After everyone was done, he threw the stat sheets on the gym floor. It didn't matter who was quickest.

Capture short term gains with SwingTrader! Try us
free for 14 days.

That only two of his athletes cheered on the other runners bothered Stevens. His message: Players should boost each other, regardless of personal performance.

"That's what it means to be a team," Millard said.

- **Think forward.** John Miller's book, "QBQ! The Question Behind the Question," is required reading with Butler's basketball team.

The point?

Instead of complaining or blaming, players should consider the book's key query: What can I do to make the situation better?

How the idea looks in action:

During a game last January against Gonzaga University, Butler was down one point with a handful of seconds to go. A traveling call on Butler turned the ball over.

With 3.5 seconds left, one of the Butler players intercepted the ball, then put up a driving floater.

It went in for a stunning, 64-63 victory.

"If that player had spent just a second blaming that other player (who'd traveled), they would have lost," Millard said.

- **Bring everyone up.** Fans marvel at Michael Jordan's hoop prowess. Especially with his six National Basketball Association titles.

The Chicago Bulls' captain knew how to encourage each player's strength: the rebounding of Dennis Rodman, the defensive agility of Scottie Pippen. "This is part of what Michael Jordan did so well—he made everyone else look better," said Bruce Piasecki, author of "Doing More With Teams."

- **Broaden support.** In great groups, individuals feel backed by what Piasecki calls shoulder strength: "In that time of action, you know you're not alone."

- **Beware the star.** Piasecki made this observation about bicyclist Lance Armstrong: Fierce individualism has no place on teams.

Leaders shouldn't let MVP syndrome take over a collective effort. In Armstrong's case, his success-at-any-cost attitude overrode reverence for those around him.

"In retrospect, respect becomes a valuable variable in the equation," Piasecki said of the bicyclist whose seven Tour de France titles were stripped for doping.

- **Assess intellectual assets.** "We've all seen how teams can unravel," said Ann Herrmann-Nehdi, CEO of Herrmann International.

In the workplace, it's most often due to interpersonal friction.

Her firm helps clients — **IBM** (IBM), **General Electric** (GE) and **3M** (MMM) are a few — assess each worker's style and put a structure in place to help them perform optimally.

It's not to pigeonhole people as the types — analytical, organized, interactive or visionary — but to establish comfort zones and expertise. Say a cohort thinks through things by asking tons of questions. Knowing that analytical approach, "I'll give them information in advance, and not get irritated over it," Herrmann said.