



## LEADERSHIP: SPORTS STRATEGY IN THE BOARDROOM

My involvement in high-level (and not-so-high-level) team sports has influenced my leadership style.

As a result, I bring much of my sporting experience to the boardroom.

With over 20 years in business, and with most of that time in the legal profession as a Director and owner of a growing law firm, I have recently been reflecting on my approach to motivating, guiding and leading others.

Here are my observations and insights so far:

1. Adapt your leadership style to the situation. Sometimes encouragement is needed, daily consultation is needed, and often the leader needs to just take control, draw on their experience, make quick decisions, and be responsible for the consequences. Different situations call for different approaches.
2. Acknowledge that you aren't the strongest at every aspect of the game. More importantly, acknowledge that you don't need to be. Form a team that contains the requisite blend of skills and strengths. Be willing to pass the ball to the right person with the right skill set at the right time. Allow and encourage. Empower team members to play their respective roles. A team does not consist entirely of goal kickers, but all roles are equally as important for the *team* to win.
3. Acknowledge that credit belongs to the team, and blame belongs to the leader. Listen to a post-game interview with a match captain (or any star player). True team players deflect the question to speak of the team's efforts. My favourite quote rings true:  

*"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit"*

- Harry S. Truman
4. Communicate strategy to the team. Team members must understand the strategy if they are to execute it. Each team member needs to know the contribution their role makes, if they are to make smaller decisions during game-play aligned with that strategy. When strategy changes, communicate that to the team. Success will only come when all aspects of the business (i.e. all team members) are on the same page.



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5. Be patient and persistent. A leader needs to acknowledge that not every decision can result in a goal; you can't shoot at goal from every point on the field. Some decisions are stepping stones to other decisions, to best position you for a future goal opportunity.

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