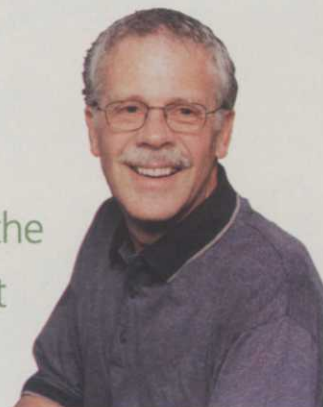


"Keep in mind that no team ever won all the marbles with 'stars' alone. It's the bull pen that usually makes the difference." —BH



## Where are the 'good' ones?

**T**ime and experience have taught me a lot about solving tough people problems — I don't have all the answers. I do know that no single formula works consistently in all situations, and I have had some experiences (successful and unsuccessful) that lead me to conclude there are specific, positive things that you can do to make success through people possible, or even probable.

### Woody & Bear knew the trick

I'll admit there are times when building a team seems fairly simple. As an Ohio State Buckeye fan, I recall the way Woody Hayes said it: "You win with people." It was that simple. Find the right people, teach them what they need to know, hold out a "carrot" like a Rose Bowl trip and get out of the way. Paul "Bear" Bryant, legendary coach at the University of Alabama, felt the same: "Find some talent, show them how to make the first touchdown and back off — the rest is simple."

Is it really the same for us? As a manager and management trainer for many years, I've come to realize that, while Woody's and Bear's level of competition was higher and more intense, and while winning or losing was determined in an afternoon, the principal determinants of success in sports apply equally to other endeavors like business.

But what is it specifically that leads to success? We've told ourselves for years that when the "right" people are trained to proficiency and well directed, given encouragement and positive feedback that miraculous things begin to happen. This is even truer when an incentive (pot of gold) is placed at the end of the rainbow (task completion)—sometimes.

Do we clearly understand why more landscape and lawn care industry managers and leaders (and even coaches) don't win consistently? Do we know why some teams just can't lose — even in the face of tough competition? Is the answer really just "great talent?"

Ask George Steinbrenner if buying great players is enough to win. The answer is NO. Great players, like great employees, make it easier. But in today's service industry world, staffing with 100% champs isn't realistic.

### How we can win

Winning through people requires a clear, two-part, approach. We must:

## bill's 'magnificent seven'

### 7 WAYS TO BUILD A POWERHOUSE ORGANIZATION

These basic requirements can make your job as manager, leader or owner much easier:

1. Make a clear definition of your business identity, goals and values.
2. Develop a practical philosophy of leadership.
3. Identify the "leadership style" that will work best for you.
4. Commit yourself to balancing people/task relationships.
5. Develop a comprehensive human resource strategy.
6. Make an accurate assessment of the positive and negative elements of your employees' working environment.
7. Use your management power sources intelligently.

► Discover more potential winners more effectively, and

► Make each work day a more positive and productive experience for our "starters" and "bench warmers" alike.

Keep in mind that no team ever won all the marbles with "stars" alone. It's the bull pen that usually makes the difference.

As a landscape or lawn care manager, you must work both sides of the street simultaneously. Don't let up in your efforts to upgrade staff where necessary, while also doing your best with the people you can get or currently have on staff. Both are critical parts of an effective people plan.

### 'Good' people are gone?

Having said all that, our commonly accepted reason for failing with people remains: "There just aren't enough good people these days." The implication is: Good people (the kind we want and need to win) were there, but no more. We're left to conclude that "good people" have vanished from the scene. They are gone! I hear it daily. And to complicate things, we've talked ourselves into believing

that we cannot win the game or reach our objectives with anything less than perfect employees.

That's silly. We succeed all the time with less talent and the right attitude. So seek out and learn to attract the very best people you can, but under no circumstances should you ever give up because recruiting suffers.

If you accept my premise, the solution to some of our people problems lies in rebuilding our industry image. In a later column, I'll talk about how to win with the people you can attract, because winning with imperfect or less than totally desirable employees is a critical part of any strategy that succeeds consistently.

But for now, consider what I call the "magnificent seven" in the sidebar on the preceding page.

*The author is a seasoned trainer with broad experience in industrial/retail sales and technical training, as well as more than 14 years developing people in the lawn care service business. He is director of training and development for Scotts Lawn Service in Marysville, OH.*

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