



Who knew? Winning is fun!

It finally happened! It took two decades, but I eventually won the outlaws' (in-laws') McNamara Fantasy Football League this year! Strike that. Actually, *we* won it — “we” being our oldest son, Mickey (17), me (the clueless Old Man helping run the front office) and the talented team we drafted, refined and fielded on a weekly basis.

A perennial bench warmer for the voracious St. Mark Lions in grade school, this nerd is obsessed with fantasy football.

Admittedly, part of my love of this fantasy game stems from unfulfilled childhood dreams. But the main reason I can't wait for fantasy football to begin each summer is it enables me to hone and measure my leadership skills without having to bear the risks and sleepless nights that typically accompany such a role.

Fantasy football teaches me “The Big 5” building blocks most winning business leaders excel at:

1 Recruiting — Only the best make the cut. If you don't want to watch the competition take home the prize, then hire and develop the best and brightest.

I've been playing fantasy football for 20 years. The first year, we picked our players out of a hat because so few of us knew how to separate the wheat from the chaff. Some in our league would argue that's still the case for me.

How is your recruiting? Is it hit or miss, or are you consistently attracting today's top talent?

A few notes to keep in mind:

▶ Unlike fantasy football, in the real world rarely do we get a clean hiring slate every year.

▶ No staff is set for life. Players move from team to team, up and down depth charts and on and off the waiver wire.

▶ Attracting all stars is a great start, but it's just Step 1.

2 Uniting — If you assemble the best players available and they don't gel into a true team, it means nothing. Case in point: Last year's Miami Heat. “The Dream Team” of Dwyane Wade, LeBron James and Chris Bosh were the talk of the NBA, but when the final shot clock registered 0, the trio had earned the same number of championships together.

3 Coaching — Spin gold from straw: Develop and direct each individual within your organization in such a way that he or she consistently performs to his/her full potential. And then do the same for your team as a whole.

4 Planning — No coach was ever criticized for being too prepared. Know your team's and your competitor's strengths and weaknesses — and devise plans to capitalize on them.

5 Execution — As the first head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, John McKay suffered through a 26-game losing streak — an NFL record that still stands 35 years later! After one of those losses, when a reporter asked McKay how he felt about his team's execution, he quipped, “I'm in favor of it.”



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