

Leadership & Management Skills in Professional Sports

A study of successful sports managers

Executive Summary

1 Purpose

This project will analyze the leadership strategies utilized by highly successful managers in a variety of sports, with the aim of identifying any common characteristics that may be applied to other types of organizations. Each manager will provide a case study of a leader who has maintained success over a long period of time. All managers will be compared and analyzed for common leadership characteristics which business leaders can implement in running their organizations.

2 Scope

The project scope will include:

- The influence and impact of coaches in their sports organizations.
- Coaches that showed leadership and changed the organization they were part of.
- Coaches who maintained a high level of success over a long period of time
- Scope will be focused on 4 main sport figures:
 1. Alex Ferguson – Manchester United F.C.
 2. Phil Jackson – Chicago Bulls and L.A. Lakers
 3. Vince Lombardi – Green Bay Packers
 4. John Buchanan – Australia's national cricket teams

3 Team Objectives

- Analyze each of the coaches up bring, characteristics and professional career history.
- Analyze how these coaches impacted their respective teams and organization.
- Investigate relationship between coaches, players, and other relevant staff members.
- Find and compare common leadership and management elements between coaches.
- Highlight lessons learned.
- Relate findings with organization design principles.
- Propose implementation of findings in alternative organizations.

4 Findings and Conclusions

These coaches led by example, setting a strong, clear and straightforward vision for the team to allow them to operate on their own. Meanwhile, the coaches were able to focus on strategic approaches giving them the freedom to make non-programmable, long-term decisions. By combining all of these leadership skills and management elements, which are very much aligned with modern organizational design theory, the managers were able to sustain a high degree of success over long periods of time compared to other teams. It was evident when other coaches took charge of the teams and did not hold on to these principles teams declined and did not achieve such degree of success.