

# Play-by-Play Success Secrets

**A**s we conclude another college football season, I am admittedly disappointed in Alabama's less-than-stellar record. Indeed, I find myself wishing for the return of football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. That said, my goal is not to reminisce about a talented football coach; it is much more productive to review his philosophy, which I have compiled in a list that I call "Coach Bryant's Six Principles of Success."

**1. Destroy the old culture.** Old habits die hard, so the new year is an excellent time to evaluate your



business methods and practices. Get up to date on the latest business trends and clear your playing field of old, ineffective materials and behaviors.

**2. Possess authority.** When Coach Bryant wore his houndstooth hat on game day, everyone knew who was in charge. Make sure that you are using your power and confidence to gen-

erate activities that will increase your income. You know your playbook; you designed it. Know when to let your players call their own plays and know when to dictate them.

**3. Hire the best people.** Employees are assets, so never stop assessing their performance. After all, you are only as good as the weakest person on your team. Work closely with your team to identify strengths and weaknesses and place individuals in roles that effectively use their talents.

## THE NEW YEAR IS AN EXCELLENT TIME TO EVALUATE YOUR BUSINESS METHODS

**4. Create a system of rewards and punishments.**

Develop and implement a system of checks and balances. Determine a timeframe for monitoring performance and an equitable method of doling out rewards or penalties. Reward employees when they reach short-term goals, but view punishments as reverse rewards that can motivate employees to achieve a predetermined performance level.

**5. Have a plan for every situation.** Always be prepared for the competition's trick play. Remember that every plan doesn't follow the playbook. In fact, your primary strategy will only succeed 50 percent of the time, so use the "if...then" algorithm to help determine alternative actions. You may have to drop back and punt, so having a plan B will keep you from faltering.

**6. Make the tough decisions.** The 25-second play clock ensures quick and decisive actions. However, decisions can only be accepted if you have both the responsibility and the authority to make them. Establish a decision-making process and put it into practice. Don't hesitate. Always keep in mind that the worst decision is no decision at all.

In business, we can get trapped in struggles similar to those of our favorite football team. Perhaps we find it hard to change ongoing processes or to transform ourselves for growth. So as you begin the new year, apply my version of Coach Bryant's six principles to your business and then chart how they work to broaden your business horizons.

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