



TIPS FOR DEVELOPING MORE
SERIAL
WINNERS
ON YOUR TEAM



COACH FOR THE 5 ACTIONS OF HIGH PERFORMERS



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COACHING FOR THE 5 ACTIONS OF SERIAL WINNERS

To do big things, you need a team. It might start with you—your goals, your vision, your commitment and drive—but it expands from there. Big goals need big support, but that also means they can have a big, positive impact on a lot of people.

*Positive results come when you build a good team.
Exciting results happen when you build a great team.*

All good teams have at least a few stars—the serial winners. Great teams have a lot of them. They are the people who produce big results reliably and consistently. When things get tough, they keep their heads and they respond immediately to the challenges. They lead and inspire others to stay on track and perform better.

There's just one problem: How do you find these special people? I've spent decades talking to leaders about how to build strong, productive, capable teams and they all struggle. I've never heard a leader say, "One day, all of these amazing people showed up at my door. I hired them and it's just been easy ever since. One success after another." No. It's never that easy.

If you want winners on your team, you have to develop them.

Building a great team is a process of constant and specific coaching designed to elevate as many people to winning performance as possible. The first and most important system for a leader to put in place is a specific program that trains people in the fundamentals of the business but also helps them develop the skills and behaviors to do great things—to become serial winners. Just like every other important thing in life, you have to plan and prepare to make it happen.

As you develop your lineup of serial winners, the productivity and performance of your team and company will grow as well. One *does not* happen without the other. The people on your team will be excited because they are growing and improving. That excitement will help the company grow and improve. It's the best way to prevent stagnation and decline. As the people go, so goes the company.

Any program or process has to start with hiring quality candidates and spotting the potential in each through their effort and results early on. Then you have to coach for the right behaviors, the right actions—the same five actions serial winners use to win again and again:



These actions involve skills and responses that allow your people to minimize problems and maximize successes. You are teaching them how to move ahead, no matter what happens. The more the people on your team do these five things, the more the team will win and the more the leaders will reveal themselves. *Over time, they gradually learn how to self-manage.* The more specific you are, the better your results will be.

The best way to develop your people is to turn every project into a coaching opportunity.

It's just smart leadership: get done what you need to get done and help your team improve at the same time. In the following pages, I'll offered coaching tips to help you focus your coaching system and start growing more serial winners on your team, project by project.



DON'T HESITATE, DECIDE

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."

—Muhammad Ali

Serial winners make the decision to go for it—whatever “it” is—and they keep making that decision every day in their choices about where to spend their time and energy. They commit to achieving the things they want in life. If you can help your team—as a group and as individuals—overcome doubt and commit to their big goals *and yours*, you’ll be speeding forward.

- 1. Be the example** by communicating a definitive vision for where the team is heading. Commit to important goals with benchmarks and time frames. Don’t be vague and don’t be wishy-washy. Your team will have a hard time following you if you are. To deliver their best performance, people need to feel that they are contributing to something big, so give them something specific to get excited about.
- 2. Take the time to talk to people about their big goals.** Find their “why.” Just asking them about it might help them discover it, if they haven’t already. And it’s critical for you to know what things matter to them most so that you can show your support. You might not be able to help much with personal goals, but you can help them clarify and pursue their career goals. That work will help you align what they really want with your vision—what you really want or the company needs. When their goals, your goals, and the company’s goals are in sync, you’ll achieve peak performance and everyone wins.
- 3. Help them overcome doubt by telling success stories.** Paint a picture of what’s possible by talking about past team successes, by highlighting big wins by individual team members (or getting those people to talk about what they did to win), and by involving the team in solving problems. People hold onto all sorts of limiting beliefs, or they hear about all of the things that are going wrong right now from other people in the company. Override doubt with positives that help build belief and commitment.



DON'T JUST DO IT, OVERDO IT

"The way to get things others don't have is to do things others won't do."

—Virginia Carter

Serial winners aren't afraid to give everything they've got to reach a goal or make a project successful. They know that "just do it" isn't good enough. Grunt work leads to greatness. To get the most from your team, help them understand this truth. And then help them discover the best ways to overdo it to build momentum.

- 1. Explain the difference between the good, better, and best activity.** Use your experience to show members of your team what kinds of effort, and where or when, will deliver the biggest payoff. Start by answering this question for your team: Where have you seen people most often underestimate the effort or resources required for projects like the one you're working on right now?
- 2. Start them off with short-term, achievable-but-big activity goals** so they can build a pattern of success. The best kind of confidence (the kind that can carry you through tough times) comes from achievement. Every project will have many, many minor setbacks. Create an environment in which they can overcome the negatives and step-by-step convince themselves that it's possible to achieve the long-term goal—because they can see that they're getting closer to the target week by week.
- 3. Teach them to leverage resources.** One of the biggest excuses people make for not achieving goals is that they didn't have what they needed to make it happen. It's not what you have that matters. It's what you do with what you have. Look for resources that aren't being put to their full use and point them out to the team. When somebody comes to you with a request for a bigger budget or more support, ask them to explain how they're leveraging what they already have. Teach people to MacGyver their way to the top and you'll get more done with less effort, time, and money. (A caution: Don't get overly focused on bootstrapping. Make sure you're giving your team the resources they *really do need* to hit their goals.)



DON'T QUIT, ADJUST

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

—Winston Churchill

Serial winners win in spite of obstacles, challenges, catastrophes. They overcome and win anyway. But for all of us, new challenges and big problems can catch us off guard. They can turn even your best performers into has-beens. To help your team members learn how to consistently adjust to overcome obstacles, help them focus on the goal, take action, and simplify.

- 1. When it's time to adjust, help your team see it.** Teams can become obsessed with plans and processes. The highest performers can be single minded—monomaniacs on a mission. Remind them that all plans fail and that adjusting isn't quitting; it's finding a better path forward. Refocus the entire team on the goal and the deadline rather than obsessing over whatever part of the plan didn't work out.
- 2. When the situation is bleak, guide your team toward what they should do next.** When things go wrong, the first tendency for most people, particularly the inexperienced, is to panic. They can be overwhelmed by a flood of negative emotions and thoughts: "I can't do this. This is too hard. It's hopeless." The best antidote to fear and doubt is action. So encourage them to take a breath and then do whatever they or you can think of to solve the problem or get past the obstacle. No matter how thick the fog, you can always see clearly enough to take at least one step forward—and that's better than not moving at all.
- 3. Help them simplify, simplify, simplify.** The simpler the plan, the faster the team's progress and the fewer problems you'll encounter. The more complicated the plan, the more adjustments you'll have to make. And those adjustments will probably be bigger. When you see the team trying to overcomplicate, point it out and help them focus on the simplest path to the finish line. Be the person to ask the tough questions that help them refine a plan to its most essential parts.



DON'T JUST START, FINISH

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."

—Proverbs 13:12

The reason serial winners are serial winners is because they know how to finish—how to get through the last 2 percent of any big project or goal and cross the finish line. It's how they establish their worth. You can build a team of finishers by helping them develop their mental toughness, their focus, and their ability to assess potential pitfalls.

- 1. Keep an eagle eye out for anybody who seems to be relaxing before they cross the finish line.** This is the biggest trap people fall into. They think that once they can see the finish line they can coast across it. They think that it's in the bag. They start to slack off, they lose their momentum, and you can sense that their energy is lower. When that happens, they can't respond quickly enough when they run into some last minute obstacle. Don't let them stop until they're finished. Remind them that the beginning and the end are the two parts of any project that require the greatest effort and mental toughness. Ask them what they're doing right now, today, or this week to help guarantee that the team hits its goal.
- 2. Spend time with your team thinking ahead to avoid being blindsided.** Help them stay on high alert and consider everything that might go wrong before you finish. Talk through potential obstacles that might crop up just before you finish. Where is the team weakest in terms of their potential to finish? Where is the project shaky? Teach your team how to assess potential risks and mitigate them.
- 3. Help the team reduce or eliminate distractions.** When the team is close to hitting a goal or finishing a project, all focus should be on that one thing. When team members bring ideas or opportunities to you for feedback, ask, "Does this help us hit our immediate goal?" or "Is this something we can revisit once we finish the project?" When you see distractions in the environment—unnecessary meetings, clutter in the office, unimportant information being shared—point them out to the team.



DON'T SETTLE, KEEP IMPROVING

"No matter what the competition is, I try to find a goal that day and better that goal."

—Bonnie Blair

Winning is not a one time thing, it's an all the time thing. The more you win, the more you can win. The biggest payoff from winning is the knowledge you gain in the process. All of that precious knowledge your team members accumulate each time they win will be lost if they don't use it to tackle the next big challenge. Help your team continue to grow by keeping them challenged.

- 1. Avoid the winner's trap.** After a few successes, some people with lots of potential think the next win and the next will just happen. They don't realize they have to continue to do all of the things they did the first few times. After a big win, let your team revel, but then get them re-focused on what they need to do to win next time. Challenge them to review and grade their performance, individually and as a team. The point is to immediately catalog things that can be improved—things that didn't go well, areas of weakness, or anything critical that could be improved in small ways. Give them a game plan for winning again and a focus for their improvement efforts. It will keep them mentally honest and prepared to work for their next success.
- 2. Measure what matters.** Identify the most critical skills, activities, results—whatever matters most to the performance of your team—and figure out a way to measure them. Then broadcast the levels you expect. Give people a way to assess their growth and progress and you'll see more of it.
- 3. Help them spot new opportunities.** Every time you win, you move up. New doors open and new opportunities become available—new responsibilities, a chance to acquire new skills, promotions, a path to a bigger career or personal goal. Point out the options available to them and they'll gravitate to the ones they find most exciting. If you can keep them excited, focused and moving forward as individuals, you'll have amazing team success.

BECOME A SERIAL WINNER

I'll end with a basic truth of leadership: Developing your people into serial winners creates a different kind of pressure. When we're leading people who love to operate at the highest level, we have to operate at *our* highest level. Bottom line:

*If you want to build a team with more serial winners,
you have to start with you.*

Go to WeidelonWinning.com to explore more articles, videos, and resources designed to help you on your way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry Weidel is the author of *Serial Winner: 5 Actions to Create Your Cycle of Success* (Greenleaf, October 2015). He has spent the past 40 years building an award-winning financial services organization across North America. At Primerica, Larry built a sales and management team that consistently outperforms by helping the members of his team achieve and surpass their career and financial goals.

Larry holds weekly coaching calls for more than a thousand leaders across the United States and Canada. His videos on career success, leadership, and sales are widely popular. On his website, he shares a variety of resources to help people win in any area of life.