

PIPELINE

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COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

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The Real Meaning of Teamwork

(Editor's note: I read numerous trade magazines throughout the year. The following editorial from the March 2007 issue of Plumbing & Mechanical, written by editorial director Jim Olszynski, caught my eye because the game of football is often the center of many conversations during jobsite breaks. Written from the perspective of a mechanical contractor, you may find it interesting to see the parallels between your business and football.)

I'm one of those guys who turns to the sports pages first thing when I open the daily newspaper. Don't get me going or I could talk all day about the DH rule, zone vs. man coverage, or a thousand other sports-related topics. This is a lifelong sports nut coming at you.

However, one great thing has changed since my glory days when I hit a grand slam in a little league all-star game with both my dad and Stan Musial watching (long story). There's nothing resembling hero worship left in me when it comes to athletes and coaches. Though I still enjoy watching them perform, it dawned on me long ago that the sports world is populated by eminently fallible human beings.

That's because to reach the top ranks in any sport requires an all-consuming commitment to develop those athletic skills. Although there are notable exceptions, as a rule the demands don't leave enough time and energy for the shaping of a well-rounded person. That's one reason why today's sports pages are filled with so many police reports.

Nobody personifies sports fanaticism more than football coaches. The big names all seem cut from the same mold

of fire-breathing workaholics. Maybe it takes that kind of obsession to be a winner in the NFL or NCAA Division 1. I wouldn't know.

However, this I do know. Since at this stage of life I have little use for learning the proper techniques of blocking and tackling, football coaches have nothing to teach me that I have not learned better from persons in other walks of life. Famous coaches are always giving speeches about the lessons their sport teaches that are applicable to the business world or to the great game of life. I think

football coaches would do better to instill lessons from the business world in the jocks they inspire to commit and endure mayhem, such as:

Size doesn't matter, spirit does.

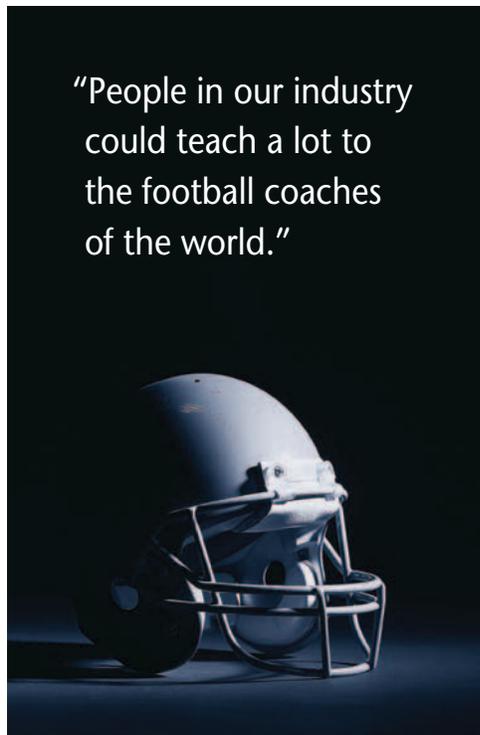
I'll believe that when I see a feisty 150-pound lineman playing in the NFL.

It's true for people in your line of work, however.

It's all about teamwork.

When football coaches blather about the importance of teamwork, mostly they are talking about blocking, a thankless activity that enables backs and receivers to rack up impressive statistics and the biggest paychecks. The people who play the blocking positions tend to be oversized galoots who are too slow and uncoordinated to entrust with ball-handling duties. I bet 99% of these oxen would rather play QB if

"People in our industry could teach a lot to the football coaches of the world."



they could.

For a real lesson in teamwork, check out the coordination among a crack construction project team, or the handoffs that take place on a busy day in PHC service companies involving CSRs (customer service reps),

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dispatchers and technicians. It's a beauty to behold in a well-run company.

Winning is everything. If this is the case, then every year all coaches except the championship winner must be regarded as losers. How do they all explain blowing the big games? However, I know plenty of contractors that have made money every year in business and have customer satisfaction records surpassing 90%—a larger winning percentage than any coach I'm aware of.

Football builds character. Then how come so many players get arrested for anti-social and criminal behavior? Compared with athletes, our industry's MVP candidates are not too self-absorbed and prone to whining about every little indignity. Most are content with a pat on the back now and then.

Loyalty. When your people get injured on the job or take ill, health insurance or workers' comp protects them economically. And they can be reasonably assured of still having a job when they heal.

In pro football, contracts are voided when crippling injuries render players unable to perform. And next time you're listening to a college football coach prattle on about loyalty, ask him how many scholarships he's revoked of "student-athletes" still able to attend class, but no longer of use on the gridiron due to a knee blown out on behalf of dear old alma mater.

Motivating people. Heck, it's easy getting people fired up to play in front of tens of thousands of excited fans and a TV audience. I'd like to see one of those football coaches figure out how to get a crew motivated to install roof-top piping in below-zero weather, or do their work inside a dirty, stifling crawl space when it's 100 degrees outside.

How much do you want to bet that screaming and humiliation won't work?

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Our Mission...

Piping Systems, Inc. provides quality mechanical contracting services to the industrial and commercial sectors of Southeastern Massachusetts.

...and Our Values

At Piping Systems, our decisions and our actions are guided by the following values:

Our clients, personnel, suppliers and shareholders are the partners of our success; we are driven by the mutuality of our interests. We take pride in providing quality customized products to our clientele at a reasonable price. We are committed to providing competent services to our clientele. Our communications are based on trust, integrity and reliable information.

We provide our employees with a motivating and safe work environment; we are inspired by their dedication and their loyalty. Our leadership is visionary and focused on priority goals and objectives while being responsive to the changing environment. We manage our human, material and financial resources efficiently and effectively.

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