

# LeadershipFAQs

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## What Can I Do To Make My Team Winners?

by Pat Gillick, *Manager, Seattle Mariners*

It was a wonderful privilege and pleasure to share the platform with Ken Blanchard at the *LeadershipTraQ Breakfast* in January. I was honored to be a part of the program, and I am delighted to be able to share some insights in this issue of *LeadershipFAQ's*. I hope the lessons I have learned in my own leadership journey will help you to become a better leader of your team.

### Remember – It's A Team Effort

Your company's success comes from your team. You are just one person. You can only accomplish so much. To go beyond your own limitations, you need help. You get that help from your team. So... ultimately, your *team* is responsible for your success more than *you* are! The real heroes in the Mariners organization are all out there in the "field" – the players, the scouts, the player development folks, the office staff that support us all. Start putting the focus on your people – get to know them better so you can do a better job of helping your company succeed... *together*.

### Get Everyone Into the Game

Many organizations are obsessed with superstars – they are looking for that one special person who will solve all their problems and answer all their questions. Meanwhile, they risk ignoring all the "talent" and wisdom already working for them. Don't make that mistake with *your* leadership – make it your business to exploit the wisdom, talent, gifts, strengths, and abilities of *every* member of your team. The Mariners had a winning season in 2001 without any "superstars" to depend on...but we had many talented

players. The key to our success was to use *every* player to their fullest potential. I explain it this way – we had a different "star" each night because each one of our players had their opportunity to "shine."

### Give Them Your Full Support

As a leader, your job isn't to play the game – you have a team to do that. So... what *is* your job? Simple... your job is to make sure your team has what they need to do *their* job well. Do you know what your team needs:

- **If it's information** . . . make sure you give them "up-to-the-minute" news...
- **If it's communication** . . . make sure you listen well and stay in touch often...
- **If it's resources** . . . make sure they have the equipment and help they need...
- **If it's flexibility** . . . then be willing to think "out of the box" and "bend" a little...
- **If it's trust** . . . turn them loose and let them do their job!

*Remember* . . . their success is *your* success! When your team is playing well, everyone wins, *including you*.

### Make Them Better

This means developing your people – helping them *grow...learn...get better*. The Mariners' player development staff made a major contribution to our success. They were there to help each player sharpen their skills and shore up their

weaknesses. It showed on the playing field. What are *you* doing to help your team members improve? Every leader has a variety of resources to draw on – books, tapes, workshops, seminars – the point is to *use* them...utilize them for your team.

### Make It Positive

I'm talking about majoring on encouragement, affirmation, support, high regard, and just plain *fun*. Every team has its share of problems, but you shouldn't spend all your time, effort, and words on the negatives. Too many leaders only talk to their people when they see a failure, point out a problem, or criticize a behavior. Don't make that mistake with *your* team – create a more positive atmosphere by affirming success, showing people how to do it better, and expressing appreciation for their contributions. *Whenever you are in public, throw a bouquet to your team* – it is one of the most powerful ways of affirming them. (And incidentally, it is one of the easiest ways for you to really play the hero!)

As Ken Blanchard writes in his book, *High Five: The Magic of Working Together*, "**None of us is as smart as all of us.**" I have been privileged to work with some of the most dynamic and exciting baseball organizations in my career. But in business, just as in sports, it's all about teamwork. An effective team will have the most profound affect on the success of your company. And your leadership of your team is key.

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