

# Employer's Advantage

## From Jim Sirbasku:

*Winning the Gold with Vision, Chemistry, and Balance*

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*First Impressions Last\**

## From Jim Sirbasku's Desk

### *Winning the Gold with Vision, Chemistry, and Balance*

In the race to lure talent to our organizations and make ourselves more competitive in the global marketplace, we need to make sure we maintain a careful balance in our teams. Anyone who believes that star talent alone will lift an organization to top performance need only look to the Olympics, where teams have failed to bring home the gold in recent years. This year, this country sent a brand-new Dream Team to Beijing – some are calling it the Redeem Team, on a mission to redeem the U.S. reputation as a basketball powerhouse.

Top basketball players competed in the 2004 Olympics and even in the 2006 World Games, but the teams did not appear. A key ingredient was missing: the chemistry that smoothly blends a group of stars into a unified whole. Uneven team play by superstars led U.S. planners to build a foundation for 2008 that would send an actual team to the Olympics. The formula included rounding up the superstars (NBA elite), requiring them to play together in early qualifying matches, and, finally, making sure both defenders and shooters were part of the mix.

This is a simple formula and a no-brainer for a coach or team leader. And yet the Olympian shortcomings of the Dream Teams are but one example of how heads of organizations repeat the same mistakes when seeking the success that top team performance leads to. Instead of throwing money at the problem,

they throw talent at it. And they quickly discover that a bunch of talented people is just a bunch of talented people. Players, and workers, need a reason for being and a plan for working together to have the beginnings of a team.

Let's look at some of the key ingredients that go into making up a team:

- Balance, of the kind that Coach Mike Krzyzewski attempted to bring to this year's Dream Team redeemers
- Vision, or a common focus
- Chemistry that allows team players to make progress and reach their goals because they believe in the mission and respect their teammates

Let's pretend we are advising a team leader who needs to improve the productivity of a group of talented people. Each one performs well individually, but they do not function well together. Squabbles push them off track, and meetings reveal disagreement on even the fundamental issue of how to work together. The group must complete a project that requires detailed focus and reaching regular goals along the path to completion. After meeting for several months, team members have not produced anything useful.

Using the example of this year's Dream Team, we will help the team leader assemble and shape the group into something more than just a group of individuals.

First, we will:

### **Find the balance.**

The first thing the leader will want to do is discover the strengths and weaknesses of people making up the group. Assessments that review employees' strengths and weaknesses will help. The group needs a mixture of those who immediately grasp the big picture and know how to create a plan, and those whose strengths lie in checking the fine details. Additionally, the group requires performers who can help move the project along at a regular clip so that no one misses a deadline, and those who are able to hear differences of opinion and build a verbal bridge between them. In the ideal situation, the team needs

(continued)

**It doesn't matter who scores the points, it's who can get the ball to the scorer.**

- Larry Bird, retired professional basketball player

to be in charge of moving itself and taking responsibility for its actions without a boss hovering nearby. Someone, or several someones, need to encourage open and lively communication.

Obviously, it is a rare person who possesses all of these strengths in equal amounts, although many people will possess some of the necessary qualities. The more likely scenario is that the team will include people good at many things and people who excel at a few things. A team leader wants to ensure that he has the right strengths for the specific project and a good mix of all necessary qualities.

After assembling our team, we will:

#### **Share the vision.**

A team must know why it exists. The team leader's job is to ensure that this knowledge is imparted, described and repeated as often as necessary to keep key players on track. If the team is just forming and/or includes new members, top management can show support by discussing and describing the organization's vision and the team's specific mission. This is a good time to let members ask questions or voice doubts, and to treat each concern or idea with respect. This is an important example to set. If members hear someone making light of their fears or playing down their ideas, they will be reluctant to speak up in the future.

Now that the team knows what it is supposed to do, we will:

#### **Mix carefully for good chemistry.**

As the team leader learned when he was checking the balance of strengths and skills, everyone is different. That does not mean the differences will not mix well. In fact, they can play off each other to create charged

discussions, enthusiasm for projects, and spectacular results. It is essential that team members respect each other's differences and learn from one another. Becoming best friends at work or doing things together outside work is not necessary, but they do need to get along at work. The highest performing teams learn from each other, and the best team leaders find ways to coach players over the bumps that conflicts cause and use them to the team's advantage.

Even when a team is performing beautifully, it will still need coaching. Disagreements will erupt, or the waters may calm too much for progress to occur. The coach needs to monitor team balance constantly as members leave and others come in, and as the mission changes. But if the coach remembers to build the team on a firm foundation, assembling and regrouping productive Dream Teams is not an impossible challenge.

Profiles Advantage is focusing on the five perspectives of the coach. With this message we have examined three – employee job fit, employee motivation, and compatibility between the employee and his/her work team. Upcoming themes will examine:

- Compatibility between the employee and the manager
- The employee's effectiveness as a leader

We hope you are finding the discussion beneficial and are enjoying this exploration of the leader/manager as coach.

*Jim Sirbasku, CEO  
Profiles International*



## **Why Teams Lose (Even Teams with Talent)**

### **COACH ASSEMBLES AN ARRAY OF TALENT, RATHER THAN CONSIDERING WHAT THE TEAM LACKS.**

RESULTS:

- Everybody talks; nobody listens
- Disparate players have little in common
- Team members work on their own agendas

### **COACH'S DIRECTION IS HAZY.**

RESULTS:

- Individual members want to control, not participate
- Indifferent players are absent at meetings, or arrive late and otherwise disrupt activity
- Communication is poor or absent
- Performance standards are too low or non-existent

### **NEITHER COACH NOR TEAM PUTS ENOUGH TIME INTO DEVELOPMENT.**

RESULTS:

- Team is marching in place with no growth evident
- Goals are not set and projects do not get finished

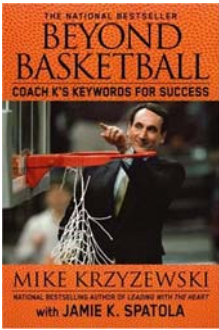
### **COACH IGNORES TEAM MEMBERS' FEARS AND WORRIES.**

RESULTS:

- Communication is poor or absent
- Team members do not trust one another

**Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.**

-- Michael Jordan, retired professional basketball player, businessman



## **BOOK REVIEW: Dream Team Coach Sees Life beyond Basketball**

Coach Mike Krzyzewski had a good reason to look beyond basketball when he took the 2008 Team USA to the Beijing Olympics. Although U.S. teams are still competitors, they performed just well enough to bring home a bronze medal in 2004, not the highly prized gold. Olympic talent has gone global,

and basketball is the sport that shows it off.

So what does a coach do when faced with such a challenge? Just as any competitive leader would do, he looks beyond the game itself to see what he can do to get his team to play as a unit instead of individual stars. Krzyzewski's **BEYOND BASKETBALL: COACH K'S KEYWORDS FOR SUCCESS** might have served him as a guide, even though he knows it all by heart.

In an interview, the Chicago-reared Krzyzewski reveals that teaching was his lifelong dream. The Duke University men's basketball coach for almost three decades, he obviously lives his dream both on and off the court. Coach K co-wrote the book with daughter Jamie Spatola by selecting about 40 words or phrases to create the book's central message. He explores each word in a chapter, and although one can imagine the importance of every one of them to a basketball team, they are words that transcend sport as much as Krzyzewski does.

Take the word adaptability, which Coach K explores in a story about playing for West Point under the tutelage of Bobby Knight – and of a particularly grueling daily drill, called Zig Zag. When he later was Knight's graduate assistant coach at Indiana, he was puzzled that his mentor did not require the Zig Zag drill of his players. When Krzyzewski

worked up the courage to ask about it, Knight told him that not all players were alike and not all required such a drill.

He remembered the lesson well. From it, Coach K learned to create different coaching plans for different players and different teams, with changes sometimes coming from day to day. He learned to adapt.

**BEYOND BASKETBALL** explores such words as collective responsibility, courage, empathy, failure, guidance, integrity – taking readers from one end of the alphabet to the other. Finally, the book discusses The Fist, or five concepts of cooperation: communication, trust, collective responsibility, care and pride. Although Krzyzewski and his players use The Fist as a visible symbol of unity, this teacher is not just out to coach a stellar team to greater performance. He is also educating his players and students about life.

Like many coaches, Krzyzewski was also a college player, a three-year letterman at the United States Military Academy. After a stint in the Army and as Knight's assistant, he became head coach at Duke in 1980. His teams have enjoyed great success and Krzyzewski has been a National Coach of the Year 12 times. He is also enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame.

### **ABOUT THE BOOK**

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**BEYOND BASKETBALL: COACH K'S KEYWORDS FOR SUCCESS**

Author: Mike Krzyzewski and Jamie K. Spatola

192 pages

Publisher: Business Plus

ISBN-13: 978-0446581875

**People want to be on a team. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They want to be in a situation where they feel that they are doing something for the greater good.**

-- Mike Krzyzewski, Duke basketball coach and United States national head coach

## PRODUCT FOCUS: Share the Vision with Profiles Team Analysis™

Imagine yourself as the leader in a room full of people, and the task requires them all to look up. Instead of directing them to do so, you look at the ceiling, intending for everyone to follow your lead.

Is it luck when all eyes in the room also look up? And if all eyes do NOT look heavenward, is that a sign of poor leadership? Should you have said, "Now, everyone look UP"?

Not necessarily, but it is healthier for the team – and the team leader – if all players share the same vision. A sure approach to help build a team that is unified in its focus is to use Profiles Team Analysis™, a development tool for departments, work groups or committees.

A team works toward organizational objectives, as opposed to individual members working on their own goals. But to work well together, individuals must connect to each other. Profiles Team Analysis helps leaders maximize the effectiveness of the team by analyzing its dynamics to ensure a strong connection.

Profiles Team Analysis is put together from data collected through the Profiles Performance Indicator™. Profiles Team Analysis reveals the team-building strengths of each team member in 12 areas. Further helping team leaders are reports that include an analysis of key factors the team lacks, an analysis of each team member's strengths, and a summary that the leader can use to assign tasks to individuals. The information helps eliminate conflict, build cooperation, improve communication, and assure the team achieves results.

Obviously, not everyone is the same, but certain characteristics must be part of any successful team. So the Profiles Team Analysis looks at team members' tendencies in these 12 essential areas:

- The tendency to take charge, be assertive, and take control of a situation
- To be outgoing, people-oriented and extroverted
- To show patience, tolerance and understanding
- To focus on details, precision and accuracy
- To show a desire to compete and win
- To reveal a positive attitude regarding people and outcomes
- To be easygoing and casual
- To enjoy identifying and analyzing problems
- To desire to meet deadlines and take action quickly
- To show emotions and share feelings
- To take part in the team and work well with others
- To show concern for standards and high quality of work

### The Profiles Team Analysis report includes:

#### A Team Balance Table

A visual summary of how the leader and each member scored on each of the 12 factors.

#### The Overall Team Balance

An exploration of characteristics not well represented on the team.

#### Behavioral Factors

The characteristics of team members who scored moderately high or high on each factor.

#### Team Leader Action Summary

Action steps that provide a quick review of guidelines for supervising the team.

Each team member can complete the assessment in 15 minutes, using an Internet connection, or by writing responses in a booklet. A computer compiles the results and prints them in minutes.

The completeness of the Profiles Team Analysis and its simplicity, make it easy for a leader to build a team that delivers. If successful teams are eluding your organization and impeding progress, don't look at the ceiling -- call Profiles International at (254) 751-1644.

**Sometimes a player's greatest challenge is coming to grips with his role on the team.**

-- Scottie Pippen, retired professional basketball player

## STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: First Impressions Last\*

*Your image is you. You've heard this before, haven't you? You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.*

*This wisdom has been handed down for centuries, and yet we sometimes wonder: Is anyone paying attention? How often have you visited a business, a professional, an advisor of some type, only to wonder how they remain in business? Some people just don't seem to care about making an impression...a good impression, that is.*

A Personal Story from Jim Sirbasku

When Bud and I started Profiles International Inc., we rented 550 square feet of office space and sold to companies with bigger closets. We knew it was important for us to look bigger than we were, so we hired a professional firm to give us a logo that delivered an impact. We also asked them to create an image brochure to tell our story in such a way as to impress even the biggest corporations

One day, we gathered all of our printed materials: Letterhead, business cards, image brochures, etc., and Bud exclaimed, "Our image is bigger than we are!" From that point forward, we made it our mission to grow the company to be as big as our image. Of course, this has become a never-ending program of reinventing ourselves by creating an ever-growing image.

Through this evolution, Profiles International Inc. has changed from a pencil and paper testing company into a high-science information company. We have employed the services of skilled psychologists who develop and improve our products. Through the Internet, our products are instantly available to customers worldwide.

Our company image is all about lasting impressions. Getting our image right is one of the most important exercises we undertake in assuring our success as business owners. Most people think their company's image is something largely outside of their control. It's not! Based on our experiences, as well as information we've gleaned from a variety of professionals, the following three steps will help you to build an image to foster the success you desire as a business owner.

### Step 1. Identify the Image You Want to Project

Before you can build an image, you need to decide what image you want for your business. Ask yourself three questions:

#### What Image Should My Business Project?

If you were a banking institution, you'd most likely want to project conservatism, low risk and good standing. If, on the other hand, you were a Silicon Valley electronics company, you'd want to project an image of innovation and risk taking. Decide whether you want your customers to view you as innovative, reliable, conservative, bold, progressive, traditional, professional, friendly, etc. Come up with one or two words effectively capturing the image you'd like to project.

#### Who are My Target Customers?

Whatever else you do, you must ensure that your image closely matches the image your target customers have of themselves. Who are your target customers? Where do they currently go for advice on products and services like yours? How much do you they have to spend? Would you open a luxury hotel in a low-income area? There's simply no point in being the most expensive or best of class in your area if nobody in your area can afford to shop with you. Equally, you'd be squandering the potential (and the likely higher real-estate

costs) in a high-income area by establishing a budget motel. For optimum success, be sure that there are enough of the kinds of customers you'd like to target to make the business work, and that the image you decide to project matches your target customers closely enough to attract them to you.

#### Who is My Competition?

Look at the image of your most successful competitors. If you have an outstandingly successful competitor, figure out which aspect(s) of their image fosters their success. Are they very reliable? Have they a strong service orientation? Have they an incredibly wide range of products? You'll want to adopt positive elements of their image, and enhance them with whatever you feel makes your business special. If your competitor offers an extraordinarily wide range of products and you do too, you can adopt that aspect of their image, but enhance it with another feature of your business. For example, in addition to the wide product range, let's say you also create a reputation for extremely friendly service. Don't try to compete with a successful competitor's image head on; find some additional aspect to make your image special, if not unique.

### Step 2: Build an Identity that Projects your Desired Image

Once you know what sort of image you'd like to project, it's time to build a vehicle which will allow you to project your new image effectively.

#### Start with a Logo

A good identity is about consistency. All of the ways in which you communicate with your customers must have a consistent and considered look and feel. There are many other aspects to a company identity, but few are more important than the logo. When it appears over your door, on your business card, or your letterhead, in advertisements, and on brochures, your logo should instantly convey your desired image. Get professional help. Some believe that designers are very expensive to work with. This need not be so. Besides large graphic-design studios that might cost a little more, there are many freelance graphic designers who will work with you to help you to craft a logo that works well for you. You'll find plenty of designers in the Yellow Pages. Don't skimp on your logo, because poor communication of your image will cost you more than a designer.

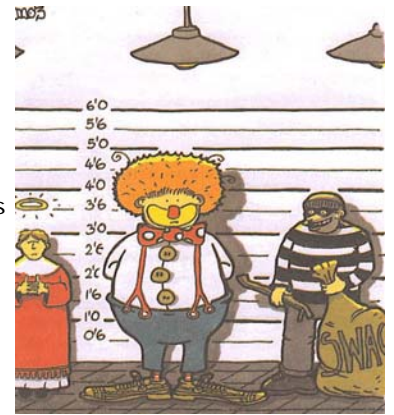
#### Working with Designers

Designers are like lawyers and other professionals. They work better when you have a plan for them to follow. Before you sit down with your designer, brainstorm about the basics of your required logo. Doing so will save your designer time and save you money.

The main elements you need to think about are:

#### Taglines

Slogans often accompany a logo. We all remember "Pepsi Cola Hits the Spot," and Avis "tries harder." These one-liners are intended to enhance the message portrayed by the logo, and to



**Basketball is like war in that offensive weapons are developed first, and it always takes a while for the defense to catch up.** -- Red Auerbach, basketball coach

enhance the message portrayed by the logo, and to make it more memorable. Developing a one-line catch phrase before meeting with a designer can make the designer's job easier.

Think of the main aspect of the image you feel sets your business apart from your competitors, and will appeal most to your customers. If you emphasize the family in your business, then your tagline might be something like "Not just a garden center – a family center." Build a six- or seven-word catch phrase around whatever is the key aspect of the image you want to foster.

### Color

Color is an important part of your image. Reds, yellows, oranges and other bright colors tend to suggest pioneering, trendsetting and fun; white, blue, gray and darker greens tend to suggest a quieter, conservative image. (Look at the dominant colors in bank logos.) What colors are appropriate to the image you've selected? Be careful not to be swayed by colors you like personally but are at odds with your image. A good way to begin is by thinking carefully about the sort of colors you don't want to use. This will be of great help to your designer.

### Typefaces

The image conveyed by the more formal typefaces used in newspapers is vastly different from that projected by simple cursive typefaces, which is, in turn, different from the image portrayed by heavily stylized modern alphabets. The typeface you choose is one of the strongest image cues your logo can provide. If you know what sort of image you want, your designer will be able to advise you about appropriate typefaces.

### Graphics

Designers are adept at producing clever graphical representations of the message you want to convey. If you decide to use a graphic element in your logo, be sure that it is easy to understand, and that the logo still communicates your message even if a potential customer doesn't get the point of your graphic. In other words, use graphics to enhance the words. Don't let the graphic dominate. It could confuse and project the wrong image.

### Step 3. Once You Have Your Identity, Use It!

It's time to start using your new identity to build your image.

### Use Your Logo Everywhere

Your logo is at the heart of your company's identity. It must appear on all signage, vehicles, letterheads, invoices, business cards, envelopes, packaging, uniforms, anything issued by your company. Look for

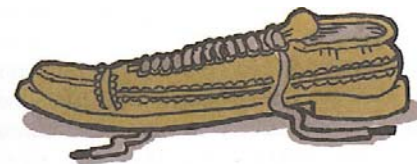
opportunities to use your logo in everyday situations. For example, there are many inexpensive, easy-to-use graphics programs that allow you to produce first-class marketing materials with little effort. Use them!

### Be Sure that Your Employees Buy Into the Image

A key to projecting a consistent image to your customers is ensuring that your employees understand the image you are trying to project, what values it

encompasses, and how it translates into everything they do. This needs to be

integrated into every aspect of your business, from the way you answer the telephone to the way you deal with customers.



### Can I Change My Existing Image?

Absolutely. If you have an established identity that has failed to build the image you desire to the level you would like, change it. You may be concerned that some elements of your existing identity are successful in their own right, and still relevant. For example, your logo may already be quite well known, even if it's not quite conveying precisely the image you would like. Work out which parts of your current identity you'd like to retain, then go through the exercise of creating your identity in the manner discussed above. When it comes to logo redesign, you will find that working with your designer to come up with a new logo to fit your new idea of the identity you require, but still retaining the better elements of your previous identity, is a lot easier than you might have expected.

Image is something you need to review regularly as your business grows and expands and your target customers change. Examine it regularly. Is the image you're projecting still what you need? Is the identity that got you to where you are now appropriate to future development? If not, fine-tune it.

Your business's image is one of your most important assets. The small investment of time, effort and money you make in it now will realize far greater returns long into the future. Invest in your image and make a lasting impression, a good impression the first time, every time.

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**One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team.**

- Kareem Abdul-Jabaar, retired professional basketball player