



“FOR MOST OF MY LIFE I HAVE BELIEVED THAT SUCCESS IS FOUND IN THE RUNNING OF THE RACE. HOW YOU RUN THE RACE—YOUR PLANNING, PREPARATION, PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE—COUNTS FOR EVERYTHING.” — JOHN WOODEN, {FORMER UCLA BRUINS HEAD BASKETBALL COACH}

## Lessons from Wooden: Leadership, Discipline & Teamwork

### 3 Keys To A Successful Sales Organization

March is about basketball—about the “madness” that encompasses a nation as the country’s top teams put it out for a chance to be crowned champion. It’s about underdogs and upsets and perennial favorites that come out shining year after year. It’s also about leadership, discipline, and teamwork, all critical factors in the success of any sales organization.

Nowhere is the parallel between NCAA champions and successful business organizations more apparent than in the teachings of the legendary former UCLA Bruins coach and 10-time NCAA champion, John Wooden. He first defined, then taught, his pyramid of success in the training room, on the basketball court and then to millions of sales leaders worldwide.

Wooden built a dynasty brick by brick, proving in the process that when all the little details are done right, greatness will follow. As he wrote in *Wooden on Leadership*, “There was no single big thing that made our UCLA basketball teams effective, not the press or the fast break, not size, not condition—no single big thing. Instead it was hundreds of small things done the right way, and done consistently.”

What can sales leaders learn from Wooden’s example?

### Leadership Counts

**“Whatever the context of your leadership—sports, business, or otherwise—your team scores the points. You, the leader, are responsible for teaching the team how to accomplish that.” — John Wooden**

There is no substitute for strong leadership. Many coaches can recruit great players, but great players alone don’t make great teams. Leadership is the string that ties it all together. An exceptional leader will make a great team out of whatever and whomever they have been given to work with. They will implement systems, train for excellence and set standards that weed out ineffective performers and empower the rest to reach their fullest potential. A poor leader, conversely, will pull a strong team down.

As author Steve W. Martin wrote in his HBR blog post, *Is Your Sales Organization Good or Great?*, “There is no single greater influence over the success of the sales organization than how the sales leadership creates the sales culture and environment for the people who will work for them.”

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ACTIVITY—TO PRODUCE REAL RESULTS —MUST BE ORGANIZED AND EXECUTED METICULOUSLY.

## Discipline Matters

***“Activity—to produce real results—must be organized and executed meticulously. Otherwise it’s no different from children running around the playground at recess.”***

— John Wooden

Wooden was a stickler for discipline... and for detail. He didn't just preach it, he taught by example, meticulously preparing for each practice, documenting everything on 3" x 5" note cards. Nothing was left to chance. No time was left unaccounted for. He was diligent in recording everything and just as diligent in analyzing it – eventually going back as far as 25 years comparing and contrasting what worked and what didn't. As for whether that made a difference, it could be argued that the results (four undefeated seasons, 19 conference championships and 10 NCAA titles) speak for themselves.

We've written a lot over the years about how a well planned and executed territory management plan backed by a solid sales infrastructure made up of people, tools, processes, and systems is integral to achieve repeatable, scalable sales growth. Implied, but not stated is that these tools and systems are for naught if not used properly. Anyone can purchase a CRM system or marketing automation software. Many do. Most do not use them effectively.

Today's sales leaders have far more sophisticated tools (CRM and marketing automation tools to name a few) with which to plan and track activity than Wooden's 3 x 5" note cards. Those who understand their value, are disciplined enough to use them, and enforce that discipline throughout their ranks will consistently see better results than those who do not.

## Teamwork is Essential

***“In business and other organizations, the “ball” that must be shared is knowledge, experience, information, contacts, new ideas, and much more. All these things must be freely exchanged with others throughout the organization if it is going to succeed—prevail—in these extremely competitive times.”***

— John Wooden

As cliché and overused as the phrase is, there really is no “I”

in team. Sales organizations that succeed repeatedly are those that put “we” before “me.”

Today's CRM tools enable an easy free flow of information. When the tools are used in a disciplined manner to log, track and share data, they put an end to information silos and “ask Joe” situations. When they are not, they are about as helpful as an unopened pack of index cards.

In the end, it all comes back to leadership. The leader must make the tools available to the team, instill the culture of knowledge sharing and cooperation, and instill the discipline required to leverage the tool to its fullest potential.



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## Partner Effectively

If you have a passion for product development and the operational expertise to run your business, but are constrained by current sales efforts, NuGrowth Solutions can help. Our outsourced sales solution is a total company commitment that includes unparalleled sales leadership, dedicated inside sales representatives and proven territory management systems. We bring the people, the processes, and the systems to take your sales organization to new heights.

If you are interested in leveraging our team to increase revenue for your business, please give us a call at **800.966.3051**. We'll show you how we can help.

### References:

Wooden, John, and Steve Jamison. *Wooden on Leadership*. First ed. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2005. Print.

Martin, Steve W. “Is Your Sales Organization Good or Great?” *Harvard Business Review*. N.p., 25 Feb. Web. 26 Mar. 2013. <[http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/02/is\\_your\\_sales\\_organization\\_goo.html](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/02/is_your_sales_organization_goo.html)>.

### About NuGrowth.

NuGrowth Solutions helps organizations grow their businesses with pace and purpose. We build and lead results-oriented, “sales as a service” business development teams and support them with exceptional lead gen marketing—utilizing our proprietary territory management methodology to generate leads, build pipelines and increase sales for our clients.



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