

3 Secrets from the Coach of the Century

After my last blog on Hero's, one hero stood out in my mind and I'd really like to share why. You've probably heard of him. His name is [Coach John Wooden](#) of the UCLA Bruins basketball fame of the 60's and 70's. During his tenure he won 10 NCAA National Championships over 12 years. He was called "Coach of the Century" by ESPN. His path to success was made up of many secrets that apply not only on the court, but in business as well. Here are 3 that I have found most meaningful:

Secret 1 Wooden's mantra was that the one with the best players almost always wins. He prioritized the skills he looked for, with key ones being quickness, control, and team attitude. He believed in references and would utilize 4-5 opposing coaches. He sought not only playing skill, but temperament and ability to withstand pressure and adversity. From my experience, this all applies within the business world as well. He used many sources to rate his players on where they stood on the team, from his assistant coaches to the players themselves. Last but not least, he knew that this was not a fool proof process. Mistakes are made in any hiring or recruiting process, but when that happens, dealing with it quickly is most important.

Secret 2 Keep it simple! Not much to it, but Wooden said "The more you make things complicated, the more there is to learn. Keep things as simple as you can and you have a chance to do them better. I'd always rather do a few things well." You can apply this logic to any business. His coaching style was basically repeating a handful of plays and shots – over and over – but doing them very well.

Secret 3 To be a great leader, you can't spend time worrying

about being liked. Coach Wooden stayed on top of his players and worked them to get the best out of them. He worked them so hard that some players even considered leaving. Players on the bench thought they should be in the game. This didn't make Wooden popular, but he didn't see his role as a people pleaser. He saw his role as someone that gets results, knowingly affecting the lives of others.

In business, we know that our decisions will not always make everyone happy. With time or a better understanding, though, they usually see that the decisions were in the best interest of the company and therefore to everyone working in the company.

I have read several articles and books on Coach Wooden over the years. One of my favorite books that includes even more of his keys to success is [*Be Quick – But Don't Hurry*](#) by Andrew Hill, a former player under Coach Wooden. I have experienced most of his keys to be true and hold a deep respect for his wisdom. After all, he was the Coach of the Century...