

The Power of Priorities and Focus

What are your priorities for the next year? Do you have a top 3 to 5 things that you are focused on? Do all of your employees know what they are, so all can be pushing forward in the same direction? We got to hear from George Bodenheimer from ESPN at the EO Nerve conference in Charlotte a few weeks back. He shared stories about his rise from the mail room to Executive Chairman, and how ESPN grew from its rocky start to the flagship of all sports networks across the world.

Bodenheimer showed us a video of the very first broadcast from ESPN that happened in September of 1979, and clips of the great moments over the years that have been part of our lives for a long time now. If you are younger than 35, just think how hard life would be without ESPN SportsCenter? Growing up in Rochester, NY, I missed a lot of great SEC college football because we didn't have ESPN at that time. Now, you can be pretty sure that if there is a big game on anywhere in the country, you will see it on one of the ESPN stations, if not on major network.

Bodenheimer talked about moving out of the mail room and starting in sales down in Texas and a few other southern states. He would go to the local stations and have to sell them on using ESPN, which wasn't always easy, despite that it was free. Imagine that scenario with how big the sports industry has become. Some questioned the money-flow involved in having a 24/7 all sports station. Well, we all know how that has turned out. When Bodenheimer was president of ESPN, he presided over the growth of: ESPNHD, ESPN2HD, ESPN Plus, ESPN PPV, ESPN3, ESPN Motion, ESPNU, and ESPN Deportes.

One of the key things that Bodenheimer pointed out to us was that to achieve the things that he did, he wanted to have all

his people on the same page, focused on the key priorities. Each year, they would get the main supervisors together and they would all debate the 3 to 5 key priorities that they would focus on for the year. Then, they would have them printed out on a card and given to all employees so they would have them to refer to at any given time. This is crucial to get your team on the same page, pushing them all in the same direction.



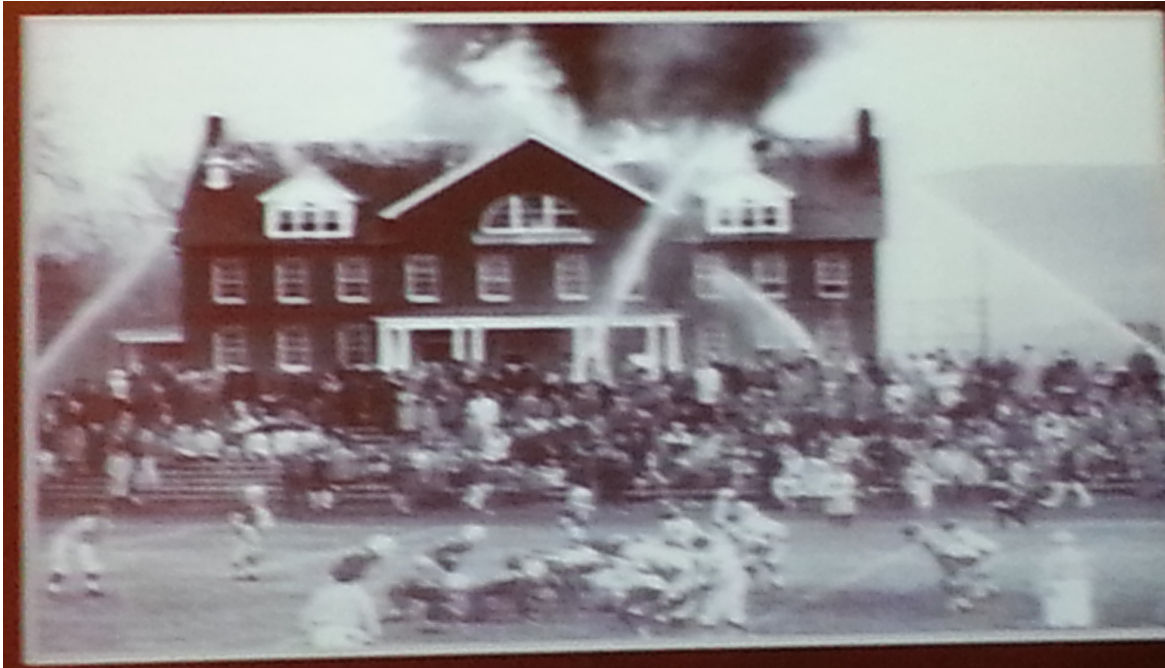
Here is what the card read:

2013 Company Priorities

- SportsCenter
- X Games
- US Hispanic Sports Fans
- Latin America

Another picture Bodenheimer put up for us was a picture he used to help remind himself of the power of focus. It is this

old picture of a college football game.



As you can see, the school building is burning down in the background and the team continued to play on, focused on the game. He had this picture hanging where he could see it daily, so that he wouldn't forget to place a lot of importance on focus.

What are you doing to create the few priorities that your company or organization can focus on right now, to move forward to your goals and to stay ahead of the footsteps coming up behind you?