

# Collegiate Baseball Magazine

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### Build a Plan for Coach Training

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This is the time of the year when coaches and instructors need to take the time to plan. Not for a better offense or defense, not for a better set of uniforms or recruiting schedule, we need to plan for our own personal growth and focus on our professional and teaching skills.

We all are so caught up in the young men we work with often times we forget about ourselves. What is your plan to make yourself a better manager, coach, and teacher? Sure as we are sitting here preaching about off-season goals and work out schedule, we seldom take our own advice.

Now, we COULD use the same excuses our students use. You know the ones - the ones that raise the hair on the backs of our necks. We see straight through that and criticize player's lack of initiative. Do you hold yourself accountable as well?

Let's look at it from a corporate perspective, and put yourself in the role of the employee. In corporate America no one is 100% capable and fully experienced to execute the job responsibilities on the day they are hired or promoted to a position. You are expected to grow into and with the job. We forget that in baseball.

Unlike a corporation with MBOs (Management By Objectives) and specific human resource development systems, baseball coaches are on our own. For the most part, we are in a training business with a remarkable lack of in depth professional train-the-trainer opportunities and standards. (I'll be addressing this in detail in the October issue)

In fact, inherent in the term "professional" is a continuous approach to acquiring and developing new skills. We, however, come from a field in which the word "professional" means "genetically most talented".

Other professions like medicine, education, golf, athletic trainers, even soccer, require (and offer) specific continuing education criteria. Baseball has no universal professional standards.

Some of us are fortunate to work for the Chuck Hartmans, Skip Bertmans, and Bill Thurstons of the world, where the OJT (on job training) is worth a Harvard MBA. But the operative term here is "some". The rest of us are left to structure and manage our continuing education on our own. OR NOT....

Here's a series of suggestions to manage yourself. The list may sound familiar - we give a form of this to players every year.

- Review your past year's teaching successes and failures by category - mechanics, tactics, mental preparation, athleticism, nutrition, and personal communications and management.
- Meet with your boss to determine and align your needs with his program.
- Identify funds in the budget for coach training and development. Explore budget sources other than the "Baseball Budget" within your institution. DON'T COP OUT HERE, if things get tuff. Run fundraisers specific for coach training. Send a letter to each parent on the team requesting \$50 for a coach to attend a course let say on... how to prevent and rehabilitate sore arms. Trust me, parents want you to know more about this subject! ASMI (American Sports Medicine Inst.) does the course every year. Talk to local orthopedic medical practitioners. Ask them to find a few hundred dollars. It would be a great business move on their part.
- Develop a written action plan - ***in any business if it's not written down, it's not real!*** And get approval from your boss. The plan should involve a formal review and sharing of the training with other coaches and an action and implementation plan if necessary.

Baseball unfortunately has a reputation for the sport least likely to accept change. We are historic, we are nostalgic. It's appropriate and in fact necessary, to identify, embrace and hold fast to those values that make baseball a part of our souls. A historic tradition shouldn't however, limit the furthering our knowledge about the game - or about expanding our skills to teach the game. We shouldn't re-live the movie Ground Hog Day, doing the same lesson over and over, year after year. Talk about burn out!

Increasing our knowledge, incorporating appropriate technology, and developing our teaching skills require the same personal commitment that we

ask of our players. Not only is it in the best interest of the game but in our own professional growth, success, and recognition as well.

It is as much of a responsibility of the staff coach to generate his growth needs as it is for the head coach to acknowledge, support, and manage the process.

We live in a world exploding with information and expanding resources. Today's students interpret a response of, "That's the way we've always done it around here" as "I don't know the answer to that question". If this was your answer ... you know the feeling. Assume responsibility for your personal development and get a plan started NOW!