

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

HAVING FUN HELPS YOU WIN

Twenty years ago I volunteered to coach my daughter's fourth grade basketball team. That experience was so much fun I volunteered the next five years as well. It was a tremendous bonding experience with my daughter and I learned a lot about leadership, communication, motivation, time management and many other things that have served me well in my business and personal life.

The first day of practice I told those young girls that we only had four rules on our team:

1. **Have fun**
2. **Do your best**
3. **Learn & Improve**
4. **Win**

They enthusiastically agreed that having fun was our most important goal. They also agreed that doing their best would give them a sense of pride, which is a form of having fun, and that learning and improving was also important for having fun. I concluded this first "pep" talk by saying that from my experience it was always a whole lot more fun to win than it was to lose.

Years later it occurred to me that these same principles applied to business. When a friend of mine was promoted to president of a large employee-owned company many of his speeches included how important it was to have fun at work. One employee gave him a bumper sticker that asked the question "ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?" My friend had that bumper sticker prominently displayed near the door to his office. Through employee-ownership his company has enjoyed a ten fold increase in revenue and has been very successful in many other ways also. This is a great example of having fun and winning in the process.

Having fun isn't about frivolous activity, it's about having a passion and enthusiasm about your work in the same way you do about your hobbies or recreational pursuits. Be enthusiastic about and have a passion for your work and it will be more fun. Instill the same kind of "having fun" mentality in your team members and you'll have even more fun.

Doing your best is more about excellence than perfection. When you do your best and you know it, energy is generated that allows you to do even more in the future. When you accept less than the best from yourself and those you lead, you and your team members miss out on this energy rush.

The legendary college basketball coach, John Wooden, said it best, "It's what we learn after we know it all that really matters." To be great at anything requires that you **want to** improve, **set a goal** to improve, **get feedback** on your performance, and **practice purposely** to improve. What do you want to improve about yourself and your leadership ability? What books are you reading? What CD's are you listening to? What seminars are you attending? What skills are you purposely practicing? What talents are you developing – in yourself and those you direct?

And, finally, have you defined "winning" for yourself and your team in specific terms that can be put on a scoreboard? Is there a tracking system in place that gives you feedback on your performance and that of your team? If not, do whatever it takes to define winning and start keeping score.

ARE YOU HAVING FUN YET?

ARE THE MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM HAVING FUN YET?

When you encourage team members to do their best, help them learn and improve, and show them how to win individually and as a team, they will have more fun – and you will too.