



The Cardinal Way: Built to Last

By Tony Calandro; October 25, 2013

For any player drafted by the organization, the Cardinal Way is an 86 page handbook that outlines expectations of each player in areas ranging from infield and outfield positioning, bunting a runner over to another base, executing a suicide squeeze and the manner in which players should conduct themselves off the field.

From a business standpoint, the handbook defines the organizational philosophy, a philosophy that places a greater emphasis on home grown talent coming up from its farm teams than on buying high priced talent across the 30 teams in major league baseball.

Built vs. Bankrolled -- The Cardinals bucked the pressure of a short-term approach and decided to focus significant resources on scouting, drafting and player development. Today, the Cardinals have a homegrown roster that has the youngest average age in the playoffs and 20 players on a 25 man roster who were drafted or signed as amateur free agents.

Connecting with Customers and Community -- This business model has also created a loyal customer base that has an emotional attachment to the brand, surpassing the 3 million-attendance mark in each of the past nine seasons, with an average of more than 42,000 fans seeing each home game. The only other team that has surpassed the 3 million attendance mark over the same period is the New York Yankees, and that city has more than five times the population of St. Louis.

Additionally, the Cardinals are also ingrained in the community. Through their charitable arm, Cardinals Care, they have distributed nearly \$18 million to support St. Louis area non-profit youth organizations, built 19 youth ball fields in local disadvantaged neighborhoods and served over 4,500 kids per season as part of the Redbird Rookies program since its inception in 1997.

Storied Franchise and Responsible Business -- The Cardinal Way is much more than a baseball strategy for a midsize market team to successfully compete in Major League Baseball. It's a model for how any business can efficiently manage finite resources, distinguish itself from competitors, strengthen customer relationships and remain competitive for the long term. Many companies, regardless of industry sector, would be wise to steal a chapter out of the Cardinals playbook.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tony-calandro/the-cardinal-way-built-to_b_4164652.html

The Cardinal Way: Making Talent Development a Game-Changer Strategy

By Art Turock; March 27, 2014

Since 1960, the St. Louis Cardinals eleven championships occurred over five decades. No other team can claim such consistent winning. The Cardinal's sustained success originates with defining and teaching basic skills for hitters, pitchers, and fielders. Every fundamental—hitting philosophy, bunt plays, pick-off moves—is taught the same way across the organization. There's not even room for guesswork in exercising the right values in off-the-field situations. The baseball education offered in the minor leagues is designed to ensure a consistent message with what players hear when they graduate to the Busch Stadium clubhouse.

A long line of Cardinal coaches formalize their player development methods in an 86-page "operations manual" called The Cardinal Way. The Cardinal Way aims to improve players' skills during every minute spent on a baseball diamond. It even establishes routines for engaging in pre-

game practice. Go to any game in the Cardinal system. You won't see players clowning around or absent-mindedly going through the motions. Meticulous practice shows up in batting practice, shagging fly balls, and pitchers warming up to come into the game.

Once a game begins, Cardinal coaches help players learn from their immediate game experience. As pitchers rest in the dugout between innings, a pitching coach debriefs the last inning to analyze what pitches were thrown, and where (in plate location), and when (in the batting count). At the major league level, hitting coaches review videotapes of a hitter's earlier at bats to pass along tips for their next plate appearance. Players inform teammates about an opposing pitcher's location and pitch command. These routines are well-ingrained habits.

Translating The Cardinal Way to Your Business

Business leaders easily relate to the Cardinal's strategy. They would love to staff a management team of A-players, while not being able to pay humongous salaries. It's possible to extract these two best principles from The Cardinal Way to make your company one where developing leadership capabilities happens every day.

Best principle 1. There is a right way to perform the array of basic tasks required for the key positions on a team. Spelling out performance standards for baseball players is similar to breaking down the facets of leadership in a business. Invite your management team to compile a list of leadership basics, like decision-making, problem solving, idea generation, running meetings, or on-the-job training. It will be easier to spot a task being performed in a doing-what's-comfortable style, and then define a step-by step sanctioned approach for all managers to follow.

Best principle 2: There's a right way to practice to master leadership basics. Very few baseball players turn out like Ken Griffey, Jr. and Bryce Harper, who transitioned from high school to the majors with only a short stint in the minor leagues. Similarly, very few natural-born leaders can take charge of a team after just participating in a few leadership training programs, developmental assignments, and mentoring sessions.

So follow The Cardinal Way and look to orchestrate the following skill-building routines while work gets done. Start each day with a Grounding for Greatness, a warmup where team members describe how they'll practice to improve specific skills during the day's activities. Instead of tolerating a colleague's ineffective habits, arrange a team ritual where any member can instantly signal to re-do a just-completed communication, and initiate practice of a more skillful response. Instead of tolerating boring meetings, require your meetings to have at least one agenda item requiring the group to practice specific leadership skills.

Not many CEOs would declare their faith in an eminent leadership development process as the basis to ensure consistent profitability and customer satisfaction ratings. What might be called a leap of faith is really a mindset shift carrying make-or-break stakes. Isn't it time to break away from your competitors who accept merely competent leaders? If you're willing to orchestrate an eminent leadership development process, you could end up producing record-setting results, attracting great employees, and competitor-proofing your business. That's a game-changer strategy!

<http://www.turock.com/the-cardinal-way-making-talent-development-a-game-changer-strategy/>