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Building championship teams during uncertain times for SNFs

In his seminal work, "Good to Great," author Jim Collins said: "The moment you feel the need to tightly manage someone, you've made a hiring mistake."

Life experience in leadership at work, in the community and as a marathoner have led me to believe there are essential steps to building championship teams:

- **Assemble the talent:** It all starts with assembling professionals who are dedicated to excellence, well trained and eager to stay trained, self-starters who can also work in team, and people driven by governing values in their personal and professional lives.
- **Build an agreed upon vision:** At work, in community leadership or on sports teams, we all have a sense of our focus and mission. It is that sense and focus around which the original team is built. But championship teams take it a step further by building consensus around shared vision, and adapting organizational focus and priorities around team strengths.
- **Develop a plan:** Championship teams plan. While in the information age the planning stage is often shorter and the launch phase quicker, they plan. And championship teams plan for success and contingencies of success, and for failure and contingencies related to failure.
- **Train and act daily:** There is no winning, no quality product, no priceless content, no championship without both training for action and taking action. As important as planning is, nothing is accomplished without acting on those plans.
- **Communicate:** Championship teams communicate clearly and often and in 360-degree direction. Vision, feedback, pride, and fear are communicated and valued top-down, bottom-up, sideways. Importantly in our current multigenerational workforce, championship teams embrace multiple channels of communication: in-person, email, texts, social media, online collaboration.
- **Value accountability:** Accountability on championship teams is a 360-degree proposition. Coaches hold players accountable, and players do the same for coaches; managers hold team members responsible for actions, and team members do so for their supervisors; leaders from the janitorial staff to the CEO each hold themselves and teammates accountable. Championship teams value and embrace accountability.
- **Adjust:** One of the key differences that separate good teams from championship teams is that championship teams look at the data and adjust quickly and as needed. Some of my biggest and best failures came when I or my team did not adept to the challenge at hand.
- **Diligently act:** It is easy for teams to get off pace in acting diligently after making an adjustment. Championship teams know that it is after making an adjustment that it is most important to continue to take action.
- **Win:** Championship teams are dedicated to winning, to celebrating winning, and to knowing that failure is not the opposite of winning but a step towards it.



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Zappos founder Tony Hsieh said in his book "Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose," "We must all learn not only to not fear change, but to embrace it enthusiastically and, perhaps even more important, encourage and drive it."

The truth is that in recent years' professionals and teams focused on delivering quality care to people in need have had to focus on two enterprises: Healthcare and Change Management. Going forward there will be more of the same.

As we face payment reform, delivery reform, the aging of America, the strength and challenge of an increasingly age and ethnically diverse workforce and the consumer demands of aging boomers, now more than ever before is the time to build championship teams.

Those teams focused on quality, innovation, data, and partnership will have a competitive advantage. Above all of these is quality.

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