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Vince Lombardi's Leadership Style

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BY MICHAEL ON AUGUST 10, 2016

SPORTS LEADERS



Vince Lombardi was one of America's most famous football coaches. He started his National Football League (NFL) career as offensive coordinator for the New York Giants from 1954 to 1958 and served as Head Coach for the Green Bay Packers. He led the Packers to five league championships during his nine years as coach from 1959 to 1967.

The Leadership Style of Vince Lombardi

1. Winning is a habit

Lombardi saw winning as a mindset and habit that had to be cultivated. He famously said, "Winning is a habit. Watch your thoughts, they become your beliefs. Watch your beliefs, they become your words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become your habits. Watch your habits, they become your character."

As a leader, you should have the desire to win and not fall into the trap of mediocrity. Start thinking of winning as a habit, and notice if the sum of your words and actions are leading you toward success or away from it. Make small changes in your words, actions and habits so that they take you closer to your goals. If you don't believe you will succeed, you are sabotaging your own growth as a leader.

2. Pay the Price it Takes

and doing more than what others are doing would give his team a competitive advantage. Lombardi meticulously planned every training session and put his team through an extremely tough training regimen. Professional athletes make their job look easy, but the truth is that 99% of the work that goes into winning a championship takes place before the game.

You cannot bypass hard work on the way to success. Remember that the bigger the success you desire, the harder and smarter you'll need to work. Are you willing to pay the price for your success?

3. Take responsibility for your role as a leader

When Lombardi first became head coach for the Green Bay Packers, he set out to define the role of his players and his own role as coach. Instead of putting the responsibility of winning on the players, he assumed that duty himself. He communicated to his team his expectations on their commitment and hard work during training, but also outlined what he would be responsible for — teaching them and pushing them to maximize their potential.

By taking on the burden of winning, Lombardi removed pressure from the players and allowed them to focus on being their best on the field. This also built trust between him and his team — trust that if both sides focused on their roles, they could achieve success.

Are you taking responsibility for your role as a leader? What can you do to remove pressure from your team so that they can do their work more effectively?

Who Was Vince Lombardi? A Short Biography

Vince Lombardi was born in Brooklyn on June 11th, 1913. At 15, he wanted to become a Catholic priest, but later decided against it. He was an outstanding football and baseball player at St. Francis Preparatory School.

At 20, he played football for Fordham University and although he was undersized, he was named along with six others as the Seven Blocks of Granite; a name given to the Fordham team's offensive line.

Lombardi's first coaching job was at St. Cecilia High School as assistant coach. When the head coach left, he took over the position and stayed on for seven years. His second coaching job was as assistant coach at the U.S. Military Academy. His time at the academy shaped his coaching style for many years to come.

Vince Lombardi's first experience with the NFL came in 1954 when he became the offensive coordinator for the New York Giants. Lombardi and his team managed to turn the New York Giants around to win their first league title in 1956.

Lombardi signed on as head coach of the Green Bay Packers in 1959. At that time, the Packers were a team that had basically almost lost their whole season. He turned the team around and, in the span of nine years, they won five league championships and won two Super Bowls.

Lombardi eventually became known as one of the best coaches in the history of football. The NFL Super Bowl Trophy was renamed the Vince Lombardi Trophy in his memory.

Awards and Honours

These are some of the awards and honors that Vince Lombardi has received: