

# Business/News & Views®

## Be the Best

By: [David W. Weatherholt, MBA](#)

Do you ever wonder what it is like to be on a world championship team? How would it feel to be part of the Los Angeles Lakers, New Orleans Saints, New York Yankees, Chicago Blackhawks, or “The Red Fury” Spanish National Football team? To know that you are the best at your level is an awesome feeling. It also means better than average profits.

Several years ago I was involved as an assistant coach for a youth baseball team. The team was part of a Babe Ruth League. However, our players were the guys that didn’t make it on regular Babe Ruth teams and ended up in our league- a kind of a second string league. My role was simply to help a friend with a group of teenagers. During the preseason practices we shagged flies, worked on the infield, those 6-4-3 and 4-6-3 double plays, our pitchers pitched, catchers caught, and batters batted. We paid attention to basics. The players and coaches all enjoyed the practices while working hard and having fun. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

When the season began we won our first game, then the second, next the third. During the games the dugout was a buzz of excitement and activity. The players, whether sitting on the bench or on field, were part of the team supporting each other; involved in every pitch. By the end of the regular season we were undefeated. We advanced to the playoffs as the top seed and ended up winning the championship, going undefeated with a 17,0 record. After winning the championship game, my friend, the head coach, called the team together for some final words. He congratulated us on a major accomplishment and went on to say “to be undefeated at **any level** is a unique achievement”. It dawned on me that we had really accomplished something special. We were at the top of the league- the very best at our level.

The owners and management of most companies are satisfied with the status quo, content to earn an annual profit with incremental year-to-year increases. What happens if your market changes and the tide that raises all boats ends up lower than the previous year? The immediate solution is to reduce expenses and hope the market changes, allowing for automatic increases. However, idea behind a “peerless competitor,” is to stand alone in your market, earning the best margins regardless of market conditions, i.e. the best at your level. (see previous articles: [Become a Peerless Competitor I](#), [Become a Peerless Competitor II](#) and [Become a Peerless Competitor III](#))

Becoming the top performing business in your market takes commitment, focus, hard work, planning and the ability to take advantage of lucky breaks. Most companies, and people, will take the path of least resistance, content to harvest the low hanging fruit but not willing to invest enough to become the best. The exception is the company or person who wants to be the very best in their market. *Are you one of the very few who wants to be at the top?*

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A. 10600 Cutter Circle Anchorage, Alaska 99511-0385 USA T. 907.360.9241 F. 888.731.1093

E. [david@bnewsviews.com](mailto:david@bnewsviews.com) W. [www.waconsult.com](http://www.waconsult.com)

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Competing at the top requires more than simply pumping additional money into an organization. A solid base like the “Peerless Pyramid” is quite simply the starting point, and while organization will not guarantee business success, a poorly organized structure will guarantee business failure. To perform at the top of your market requires going beyond a solid structure, but connecting that structure together with business processes includes taking steps toward implementing solid business processes:

1. Recognize the Process
2. Formalize the Process
3. Simplify the Process
4. Repeat the Process
5. Flawless implementation
6. Measurable results
7. Continuous improvement

The first step is to **recognize a process**. All companies both large and small have processes. The difference between small companies and large companies are recognizing a process. In order for a company to become large, it must recognize processes. An order entry process is simply how your customer receives their product or service. In a retail store the customer selects the product, brings it to the cashier, pays for the product and leaves.

This is an example of the order entry process, and although it may seem intuitive, recognizing that it is a process is a huge step. In team sports, plays are designed to let each player know what they should be doing. Sports plays are like business processes and happen whether they are recognized or not. The better teams simply recognize these processes and take them to another level.

**Formalize the process** is the next step and simply means to write it down. A well written process lists each step in detail written to a level that everyone will understand. My first management job was as a sales representative and required me to take a customer’s order and communicate what the customer wanted to our production department. My first order was reviewed by an experienced sales assistant who told me to put more detail into the write-up. This company’s production department was full of experienced journeymen who might be offended if my instructions were too simple. The sales assistant patiently told me to never assume our production department knew what to do and that simple, detailed instructions were always best. All of this takes hard work and absolute attention to detail. *(To be continued in the next issue of Business/News & Views®.)*



Let me know if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions.

Write David W. Weatherholt at [david@bnewsviews.com](mailto:david@bnewsviews.com)

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