

TRAINING — IS WHO WE ARE



If you ask Hall of Fame caliber coaches in competitive collegiate athletics to reveal the secret of their success, literally all of them will respond by saying one thing: "Talent!" No matter how much coaching-related knowledge you have accumulated — or skill you have developed — it is impossible to win games against quality opponents on a consistent basis without talent.

If you ask elite teenage athletes why they opted to accept a scholarship from one university over all the others they could have chosen, their answers consistently sound something like this: "It was obviously a very difficult decision, but at the end of the day, I feel my choice provides me with the best possible chance to reach my full potential."

If you dig a little deeper in these situations, you understandably find out that "reaching my full potential" translates more to athletic advancement than it does to academic excellence. It is also largely a function of the track record the coach and the university in question has established for winning national championships and developing players of distinction.

With all of that in mind, it's probably no surprise whatsoever that year after year, the football program at the University of Alabama (UA) and the women's basketball program at the University of Connecticut (UConn) consistently welcome elite recruiting classes. To the contrary, it would be an anomaly of

sorts if they didn't. What does any of that have to do with the business of training? In a word, we would suggest, everything!

While most organizations across industries place some degree of legitimate value on training, there are a few that have found a way to leverage their training function as a genuine source of competitive advantage. If you qualify as a potential recruit with these organizations and are lucky enough to land a job, you will be thoroughly and intentionally tested.

Goals will be set for you that will demand a level of short-term effort that renders work-life balance akin to "mission impossible." You will stay up late and get

TRAINING ISN'T SOMETHING TRAINING PROFESSIONALS DO - IT IS WHO THEY ARE.

up early. You will experience incremental success and unavoidable frustration. You will periodically question if you have what it takes, and you will somehow persevere fueled by an inner strength you never consciously realized you possessed.

You will be guided on your learning path by credentialed training professionals who are the equivalent of the strength, conditioning and position coaches at UA and UConn. They will unapologetically

ask for more when you have given everything you thought you had to give. Those trainers and coaches will also somehow magically appear when you find self-doubt creeping in to assure you that you never would have been hired in the first place if you didn't possess the potential to make your dream a reality.

These companies (big and small; for profit and nonprofit) measure success by whatever is the business equivalent of winning national championships. Championships and the consistent display of excellence in every imaginable way is not only their focus, it is their collective passion.

In that regard, they view training as the fulcrum around which their competitive advantage revolves. It is inextricably tied to their ability to "stay out in front." Training isn't something they do; training, quite simply, is who they are. And while the organizations they compete with typically invest significant dollars and resources measuring the return of investment of one program or another, these organizations tend to measure the effectiveness of their training function by the achievement of their strategic objectives, and little else. 🍀

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