



## **Letters on Leadership #2: Determining and Implementing Standards**

In our previous installment of *Letters on Leadership*, we defined goals and standards, highlighted their importance and stressed their differences. Goals reinforce how we want to perform; standards reinforce *how we want to behave*. Both are required in order to create and sustain a Championship Culture. Yet, while most athletic and professional organizations have goals, not many have clearly defined and enforced standards.

In order to define and implement standards, the question we must first answer is, “What are the behaviors that we need?” We believe too many leaders make the mistake of answering, “What are the behaviors that I don’t want,” rather than asking themselves what the behaviors are that they do want! Don’t make this mistake.

When determining desired behaviors, a good place to start is to think about what it means to be a member of your team and organization. As the leader, what are the values that you embody and that you want your team to embody as well? What are the values that are most important to you? Values form the foundation of a Championship Culture.



Core Values are behaviors. Once we determine our Core Values, we must then figure out the standards needed to reinforce them on a daily basis. It is easy to *say* that our Culture is based on the Core Values of honesty, commitment and passion, but are we proving it every day? Adhering to our standards does!

For example, at The Program, our Core Values are Selfless, Tough and Disciplined. It would be easy for us to get “Discipline” printed on our t-shirts, but this doesn’t actually make us disciplined. In contrast, our standard to reinforce Discipline is that we respond to all internal or external communication (emails, voice mails, text messages etc.) within 24 hours. Adhering to that standard does reinforce Discipline!

***Everything that happens or fails to happen is the responsibility of the leader.***

Next month, we will discuss how to effectively establish a commitment to achieving and surpassing our organization’s standards.

Attack!

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*"Letters on Leadership" are published periodically by The Program, a leadership development and team building company that works with the nation's leading corporations as well as professional and collegiate athletic teams.*

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