

# 7 sports strategies you can use to succeed in business

By Elle Kaplan



Roger Federer

Athletes are some of the most widely-admired, well-respected professionals in America. Among the 100 most watched television shows in 2017, 81 were [sports broadcasts](#) and, according to [Forbes](#), the sports industry is expected to reach a value of \$73.9 billion by 2019.

Sports remain a central national pastime but, as all fans know, these athletes wouldn't enjoy their amazing results without hard work, strategy, and the latest advances in a number of fields.

There are plenty of lessons to be learned from these high performers. Take a look at these seven sports strategies and start applying them to your business today.

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## 1. Simplify

No matter how difficult the task at hand appears to be, the key to managing it is to simplify. Nick Saban, football coach of LSU and Atlanta, learned [this principle](#) from Lionel Rosen, a psychiatry professor at Michigan State University. Since the game itself is much too complicated for a single mind to comprehend all at once, Saban would tell his players to focus only on the next play, the next drill, on one single step of the process.

When you or your team are faced with a gargantuan project, see whether you can pare down its components. Write out a detailed outline, delegate

appropriately and zero in on what you can finish in the day or even the hour. You'll find yourself more confident and capable.



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## 2. Play to your strengths

Team sports rely on the varied characteristics and specialized abilities of their members. There is little ambiguity in terms of who has what role. In [volleyball](#), for instance, the tallest woman may take on the position of middle blocker, since her reach would give her a distinct advantage in that place.

When you are leading team, know what your members' strengths and weaknesses are. Move beyond reviewing their experience to get to know how they see themselves. You may discover a hidden talent that could support the overall results of the team.

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## 3. Keep feedback channels open

"Whether you're an athlete or business owner, customer feedback is similar to playing back film of your performance," said Drew Westervelt, COO of HEX and former professional lacrosse player.

While the supervisor, team leader, or business owner may take on the more obvious role of coach, much of your feedback is going to be from your customers and clients. Feedback can be hard to take, particularly if it seems to undermine the hard work you've already put into a project.

Nonetheless, the more you and your business can embrace criticism, the more successful you'll be.

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## 4. Appreciate the team

Even in the solo sport of tennis (in its singles form), elite players rely on a small group of specialized experts. A tennis player's team may consist of a coach, trainer, physiotherapist, and nutritionist, with additional support as needed. Roger Federer, widely regarded as the greatest male tennis player of all time, has received training from no fewer than [seven coaches](#) over the course of his career.

Never forget about the individual contributions of your team members, no matter how small. If you feel like something is missing from your professional toolbox, take action and find the person who can fill in the gap, even if all that's needed is a little advice.



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## 5. Coordinate the team

One of the most unfortunate occurrences to witness in a baseball game is the [outfielder collision](#). The clash of egos and poor communication can lead to disaster, whether it's in the arena or boardroom.

Avoid the wastefulness of redundancy and the inefficiency of conflicting interests. When everyone has the big picture in mind and knows how to navigate their place in it, your entire business will thrive.

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## 6. Prioritize consistency

Consistency carries over into several aspects of the business world. You want your product, results and work ethic to all be consistent. However, it begins with your work ethic.

[Cal Ripkin](#), former baseball shortstop and third baseman, played 21 seasons for the Baltimore Orioles. He also holds the record for most consecutive games played: 2,632. When asked what mentality fueled his consistency, he replied, “Any day could have been my greatest day playing the game.”

That doesn’t mean that you can’t take time off for sickness. But when you are at work, remember that what you put into each business today has the potential to yield incredible results down the road.

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## 7. Visualize success

According to the [New York Times](#), visualization has played an important role in elite sports for some time. Though in use for at least half a century, specific techniques have become more and more widespread and sophisticated. Now, an athlete might imagine everything from the ride to the venue to the awards ceremony. Also, sight is just one component of the experience – every sense is vital for making an image as clear as possible.

Use visualization as a tool for your business success. Take the time to imagine important meetings and presentations. Picture the development and success of your projects. It will activate your brain to manifest your goals that much faster.

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## Summary

Whether it’s a specific mentality, awareness of the overall team or set of psychological techniques, there is much to learn from the achievements of successful athletes. Reap the rewards of their accomplishments by learning their strategies and applying them to your business.

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