

NAIA-ADACORNER



@NAIAADA



Mark DeMichael

Indiana Wesleyan University

Director of Athletics

Lead to Mission

All of us know the importance of brand identity and mission statements. A well established brand identity and mission statement will be the foundation of everything you do. They will set expectations, form your assessments, market your value, drive your hiring process and focus your programming.

Several years ago, we were coming off a tough year and I was determined to find the source of our struggles through the head coach performance reviews. What immediately jumped out at me was the lack of consistency in the answers to the question, "What are you doing and why are you doing it?" We had a clear mission statement and brand identity model, but I had failed to lead in a way that pointed everything back to our brand and mission. The result was a department that lacked cohesion, consistency and focus.

I spent the ensuing month meeting with colleagues, studying and praying in search of a strategy that would strengthen our department on the foundation of our mission and identity. That month produced six leadership principles for me to focus on that have been transformational for me and for our athletics department.

- 1. Prioritize Your Hats.** Game management, fundraising, budget management, teaching, committee work, community relations, etc. are all a part of what we do. The danger comes when we place any or all of these roles above what I believe is our most important role ... personnel. Lead your staff well! The order of your priority list after personnel leadership will vary from school to school, but everything else is easier when you are making people your number one priority.
- 2. Integrity.** Proverbs 11:3, "The integrity of the upright guides them." Operate each day doing the right thing. Be honest by honoring your word, admitting mistakes and avoiding making false promises. Do not get involved in department gossip and address it when you hear it among others.
- 3. People Skills.** Be an effective communicator both verbally and non-verbally. Give consistent feedback and accountability to your staff. Make time to LISTEN to your

coaches, either in scheduled meetings or by just dropping in on them. Have your coaches' backs! Support and defend them.

4. Confidence. Recognize your strengths and acknowledge your weaknesses. Be decisive and control your stress. Accept criticism with humility and poise.

5. Motivate. Be passionate about your mission and identity and be visible doing it! Value all of your programs, coaches and student-athletes and celebrate the mission successes with them. Be a servant leader. It cannot be about you.

6. Responsibility. Understand the demands of coaching and be a coach to the coaches. Be available to help solve problems.

"Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or have concluded that you don't care. Either case is a failure of leadership." – Colin Powell

I hope that as the new academic year kicks off, you will feel empowered to be the leader that your department needs to be able to consistently answer the question, "What are you doing and why are you doing it?"

NATYCAACORNER



@NATYCAA2



Kevin Salisbury

Community College of Rhode Island

Interim Director of Athletics

Greetings from NATYCAA! As we look forward to the start of the 2019-20 season, we work closely with our institutions in preparing a quality experience for our returning and new student-athletes. Our first impression to faculty, staff and visitors is critical and is a direct factor in our enrollments. The impressions we create come from fundraising dollars as well as branding.

While fundraising may be a scary road to some, it is all relevant and necessary in community college athletics. While many of us throughout the country are seeing our budgets either level-funded or even reduced, fundraising for some must be accomplished simply to complete schedules and pay for the "needed items" as opposed to the "nice to have" items. Many athletics departments and varsity programs take part in fundraising events such as camps, golf tournaments, and even Hall of Fame dinners that bring in much needed

dollars. The ROI on these events are continually evaluated as many of them require a great amount of work by many individuals year in and year out. However, these events not only produce much needed dollars, they also create very valuable connections with alumni and friends. Fundraising dollars can be utilized to brand your facilities, athletics department, and your institution. In return, branding will then assist in all fundraising endeavors.

Your brand is the first thing people should notice when discussing your athletics department. It is about sending "your" message as you build relationships. Branding ties in directly with fundraising. One of the most important keys to improving fundraising is acquiring those alumni that have not played an active role since graduating. Also reaching out to new individuals and groups that you want to attract can be important avenues to increase fundraising and brand awareness.

The first step in the branding process is to be sure wherever you place your logo/emblem, it must be universal on all items. Next, your message must be the same whether it comes from the student-athletes, coaches, or staff. It could be your mission statement or it could be a simple phrase. From there, everyone involved in your department

must "walk the walk" and "talk the talk." As they network with others in the community, be sure everyone on your staff is sending the same excitement and message about your department.

As you reach out to your alumni and friends, your brand must be apparent. To keep alumni engaged, be sure to not only reach out to ask for fundraising dollars, but also socially – wish them a happy birthday or happy holidays, for example. Develop those relationships every chance you get. Lastly, social media networking is another great way to get your brand out to the community. Messages on social media must occur on a continual basis so you maintain the excitement and progress about your department. The athletics web site must be easy to access and up-to-date. Final scores of all contests (win or lose) should be sent out continuously and include the brand whenever possible.

From all of us at NATYCAA, we wish you all well as you prepare for the 2019-20 season!