



Marketing Issues

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What Is Your “Game Plan”?

Super Bowl XLV was won by the Green Bay Packers. They beat the Pittsburgh Steelers 31 – 25. The 2010 World Series was won by the San Francisco Giants defeating the Texas Rangers. In the Stanley Cup playoffs this year the Chicago Black Hawks defeated the Boston Bruins, and the NBA Championship saw Miami Heat defeat the San Antonio Spurs. These winning teams were not always on top, but they put a plan in place to get to the championship. And they didn't stop there—they won it.

So what do professional sports teams have to do with the roofing industry, and more specifically, the Roofers and Waterproofers Union? At first glance, nothing. At least that is how it appears on the surface. But when you look deep into the whole realm of the organizations, we are much more alike than you think.

Today the Packers and Steelers are the professional sports teams that all others set their standards by. But they weren't always the champions that they are today. They had to overcome many seasons of not winning the “big one,” and sometimes not winning many games at all. Whether they lost their place due to arrogance or just from lack of preparation for the next season doesn't matter. What matters is that they once lost their place in the sports world, and now have regained the respect that everyone longs for. The Packers were a powerhouse in the '60s; the Steelers dominated the '70s.

Both teams then disappeared from the radar. Now they are back on top.

We are in a similar situation. In the '50s and '60s, union roofers controlled a tremendous amount of the roofing and waterproofing industry—55% of the market, to be exact. Then in the '80s and '90s many things changed which affected our ability to organize and maintain our membership. Membership continued to decline, and today we control a much smaller percentage of the roofing and waterproofing industry.

Just as with the previously mentioned professional sports teams, it didn't matter how we lost our presence. Whether it was due to arrogance, lack of adapting to change, or simply not minding the store—it didn't matter then, and it doesn't matter now. We simply have not met the challenges that have been placed in front of us. What does matter is that we have an opportunity to adjust to the new laws and challenges we face today, and we must change to grow our membership.

We need our own game plan to get us back into the playoffs. Planning is everything. The first things to determine are your goals, and whether they are short-term or long-term goals. Some short-term goals, for example, include establishing an organizing committee, improving your apprentice program or perhaps introducing yourself to non-signatory contractors. Long-term goals might consist of getting local contractors on projects, achieving area standards or establishing yourself within the political community as an activist.

Goals are essential for your plan and will help you attain the market share that is needed to control the industry.

Once you have determined your goals and developed your plan, you will need to consider which type of

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campaign you will use: “top-down,” “bottom-up,” or a combination of both. It can take years to accomplish the ultimate goal of organizing a contractor, so be prepared and willing to change your plans.

The successful sports teams of today had to develop a plan and make hard decisions about themselves to emerge from not going to the playoffs to winning championships. Today we are in a similar situation and we have an opportunity to bring the majority of the industry back to being union. It is time that we use all the tools in our tool belt and show the industry that we are the best-trained, most-productive and safest workers in the roofing and waterproofing industry! If the Marketing Department can be of any assistance, please feel free to ask. ■