

Does your BrandTeam play like Brazil...or Germany? (Part 1)

 By Colin Morris

18 Sep 2014

As world soccer seasons get under way, I reveal 11 parallel team-roles between the winners in Brazil and those winning in brand boardrooms; and why the copywriter (no 10) has to be Messi, and the PR exec is (no 1) Neuer....

Following the amazing World cup in Brazil, we invariably think of winners as individual sportsmen or women or teams, but when one steps back and looks at it, winners (and losers) crop up in every human activity. From passing exams, to that BIG promotion, to landing the girl of your dreams, life is one long competition. The world over, being seen as successful, is what sorts out the men from the boys.



But what makes a winner? Besides their extreme talent, individual winners tend to have the following characteristics. They are: Positive, instinctive, inspirational and relentless; they are perfectionists, exhibitionists, ruthless, and risk-takers. *Sounds like you?*

Yet, when individuals collectively get together, another layer of "Team" characteristics kick into play. They must: Trust, communicate, be flexible, aware, and time driven; they listen, see the big picture, they become goal orientated and selfless. This, your thinking, is *also you?*

Stepping back further, one business in particular, occurred to me as mirroring that close team ethic most, and that business is the business of brands and marketing. Particularly, the activities carried out by ad agencies on behalf of their brands, which require a consistent and relentless working synergy by both sides to succeed.

It's this same synergy of focus and application that enabled Germany to defeat Brazil 7-1 in their own backyard and then outlast Argentina in the final. Becoming in the process, the first European nation to win on South American soil.

Why your BrandTeam should play like Germany...

The brand synergy involves many individually different roles but all with one focus - to hit their common 'goal.' Namely, campaigns that win in the consumers mind, win at the till, and win consistently over entire seasons. In our case, the length of the brand plan.

When I sat in Johannesburg and thought it through, I realised many of the same attributes employed on the lush grass pitches of Brazil are equally necessary to succeed in client's boardrooms and agency studios. And just as there can never be more than 11 players in a football team there appeared (to my mind at least) to be a similar diverse group of 11 roles in a BrandTeam line up.

Like any other, the BrandTeam, is only as good as its weakest link. Germany of course -appeared to have none- and this breeds the confidence which fuels the trust each needs in the other. This winning mentality ensures 11 equally gifted individuals who work together will always make $1+1=3$, all over the pitch.

So, let's look in depth at those parallels displayed in the boardroom AND in the stadium. I shall name my personal best 11 in Brazil, position by position and align each with the brand role they most resemble.

But first we'll start *off* the pitch, with the man who pulls the strings. And often carries the can....

Every BrandTeam must have a head coach...

Whether at the World Cup, Champions League or English Premier there has never been a strong team without a strong Manager to guide them. Styles may vary but they bring to the pitch the ability to organise and inspire, so that every player knows what is expected of them, and goes out and does it.

Do you THINK it sounds like a *job description* for the brand marketing director? Take home 3 points!

Head Coach - The Marketing Director

They set the right goals, tasks, and roles. They decide when to spend (attack) when to build awareness (keep possession) and when to consolidate (defend). Equally, as we all know, both are *not easy* to please. They approve or reject their team's work because ultimately if they fail to set their squad up with all they need to beat the competition, it's their brand, their reputation and their job on the line.

Germany's Joachim Low is the one Coach sure of job security, for at least the next four years! He benefited from a 10 year plan and consistency of formation through every level of national team from under 12's to under 21's. Growing up together, also contributed to a stable 'no-star' system, unlike in Brazil or England.

There's another way a shrewd Marketing Director is like a good Coach....they both know how to *squeeze the most* out of their budgets. Fortunately, in the marketing arena, the MD's tenure is still a lot longer than today's Coaches.

In Part 2 we'll find out which brand people play my defensive roles; will the Creative Director or Head of Client Service feature? Or should they both be used in attack?

I'd really appreciate your comments (and role selections) to: morrcolin@gmail.com

ABOUT COLIN MORRIS

Colin Morris is a Creative Director, Content-creator and Brand Strategist. Working across Africa as The Creative Pitch Doctor he is passionate about training Agencies and Brands on How to Win-then Keep Business. He has a 67% Win Pitch record across London, Jo'burg, Lagos, Dar, Accra & Nairobi for McCann, Lowe, Leo Burnett, and Y&R from above line through to Digital Agencies. Has written - produced over 65 tvcs winning Loerie and D&AD along the way...

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