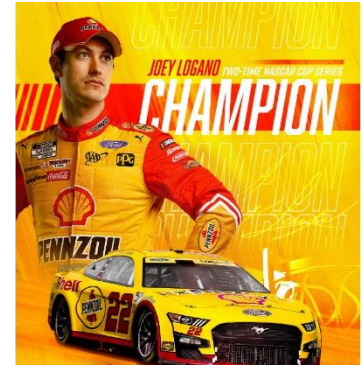


Leadership Lessons from the 2022 NASCAR Champion

On Sunday, November 6th, NASCAR driver Joey Logano earned his second championship with a dominating performance in the final race of the season. In his post-race press conference, he provided several clear messages for leaders in any setting.



The Performance Project

Several years ago, I created “The Performance Project” to identify leadership and management lessons from the performing arts. I deliberately minimized, but did not ignore, references to the sports for one simple reason. I’ve seen – and actually have colleagues – who published on leadership with a sports focus. I repeat that I do not ignore this topic. I’ve posted links to several sports-related stories and authored two articles on lessons from the Little League World Series and one on how an NFL player translated his skills into a NASCAR pit crew career.

Stepping into a Leadership Role

In 2022, NASCAR driver Joey Logano, already a champion from 2018, and driving for the powerhouse Ford team owned by legendary Roger Penske, found himself moving into the “lead driver” role on the three-driver team when his mentor (and the person who recruited him to the team), also a champion Brad Keselowski, left the team to become a team owner. Logano would now be the “senior” driver at 32 years old with teammates: a 28-year-old, 7-year “veteran” and a first-year “rookie” in NASCAR’s top series. It’s worth noting that both of his teammates come from families with notable histories and connections in the racing world.

Strong Leaders Beget Strong Leaders

I’ve learned from a career in the coaching/career counseling world that family lineage and connections are often a powerful influence, mostly positive but sometimes negative. Entrepreneurs beget entrepreneurs; doctors beget doctors, etc. The overwhelming message of “It’s the Manager” extends to leadership and has been proven in several settings. I’ve formally studied leadership and management for decades but equally influential have been my good fortune in working for some excellent leaders and managers.

So, the fact that Joey Logano has emerged not only as a champion on the track, but as a leader is not surprising. Perhaps there’s a bit of a surprise in how clearly he stated his leadership philosophy after 300+ miles of intense competition and an hour-plus of post-race celebration. The question: **“Roger (Penske) was in here, he said that when Brad (Keselowski) was leaving,**

he told you that you're now the veteran, you're in charge, you've got to step up. What did you do to meet that request of his?"

Here are Logano's exact words from his post-race press conference.

A Leader Is...

I'm not the type of leader that wants to be on a pedestal above everybody and say, hey, I've been here the longest, listen to me.

It's not how I do it, it's not how Paul (Wolfe) does it, it's not what I think is best.

Leadership Is Shared

I wouldn't say it's just me stepping up. I feel like (Ryan) Blaney stepped up a lot, and Austin (Cindric) is a good leader right off the bat, too, with this Next-Gen car.

Yes, my experience is valuable because I've been here a long time and I know how things work and I know how the sport works and all those type of things. That's all well and good. But I had to unlearn a lot of things when it came to the race car itself.

A Leader Listens

I feel like the best way a lot of times is to really get everyone's opinion and gather it and form your own opinion; and if it's something you feel truly strong about, you fight for it.

And then as a team, that's what I want: I want my teammates as drivers to voice their opinions and put something together. When we feel like something is right, we form one voice together.

Same thing all the way through it, from TC all the way down. That's what we want as a race team.

A Leader Is Willing to Have Tough Conversations

That means there's hard conversations that just have to happen. That's good to have. As a leader, together, that's okay with me. I'm fine with the tough conversations. I love tough conversations. They're better, if you ask me. That's what you need. That's where growth comes from. It doesn't come from shoving things underneath the rug.

This is great, and that's what — this is where the hard conversations happen, when they come to championships at the end of the day. And when you think of what Penske was able to do this year as a team, winning an INDYCAR championship and a Cup championship in the same year, never been done before, that's a really special thing.

Roger Penske's Influence

It's valuable to note, with a clear connection to the points above, that Roger Penske's leadership influence – and modeling – is evident. Penske's leadership style (described on multiple sources), directly for his race teams, is summarized in his own words:

"I think that's what we're doing in racing. Racing is a great platform for innovation and expertise and also effort. ... I can tell you teams that are winning are not just lucky, they're putting in the effort to make the success they have around themselves."

Conclusion

The world of sports often provides clear examples of superior performance and teamwork, valuable lessons for leaders and managers. The excellent point here is the **clearly articulate principles on leadership** from Joey Logano. Another reason to congratulate this champion.

212^o CAREERS

Leadership and Career Coaching
One Degree Better



ARTICLE

www.212-Careers.com

info@212-careers.com

