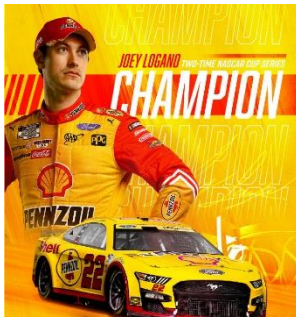


A New Season: Additional Leadership Lessons from a NASCAR Champion



In November of 2022, I wrote and posted an article on “[Leadership Lessons from the 2022 NASCAR Champion](#).” Expressing a little surprise at a message delivered just after a grueling final race and a championship celebration, the clear powerful message from Joey Logano is a good one for leaders in a variety of settings. Fast forward to February 2023 and a new NASCAR season is about to begin. Again, I’m surprised – perhaps not as much as November – by another strong message for Joey Logano as he looks forward to the new season.

Just Because You’ve Won Once (or Twice)

In this pre-season interview, Joey got to an important point quickly:

“It’s nice to run out the season as a reigning champion or a previous champion, whatever it is, but it’s over in my mind. We had our moment to enjoy it, to celebrate. Now it’s back to work. We’ve got to do it again. The goal is the same again this year. We can’t do the same things – we’ve got to find more and adjust again. Nothing changes.”

Sports and the performing arts seem to do a good job in driving this point. I’ve heard from multiple performers that I’ve interviewed for The Performance Project that “you’re only as good as your last role (performance).” Sometimes, for individuals or organizations, there are the constraints created by a “remember when” paradigm.

Never Enough

“Our team motto this year is ‘never enough,’ and it’s for those reasons. You can always do better. You can always do more. You can’t be content and be OK that you won two championships.”



Cultures Comes from the Top

Legendary car owner Roger Penske’s impact on his organization, Penske Racing, and Joey Logano was noted in the “Champion” article. And the powerful influence of an organization’s culture is evident again here.

“You’re a product of your environment. You are who you hang out with, and I’ve been there for a while now — the majority of my career. I’ve seen it, I live it, and he doesn’t tell me this. Roger doesn’t tell me anything. You just know. ...I will say being around him sure isn’t a bad thing to have that mindset as well.”

Among Penske's clear messages establishing the clear culture he wants are his 1) recognizing accomplishment in the moment, then immediately moving on to what's next, and 2) what's reported as a Penske classic, "not tripping on your headlines."

For the major teams in NASCAR, there's a direct connection between teams and the auto manufacturer, in Logano's case, Ford Motor Company. A meeting with CEO Jim Farley resulted in no congratulations but a message Logano ultimately took as a challenge.

'Well, it's good you guys won. You're probably not going to win next year. You'll probably be a little more comfortable because you guys already did it.'

Logano's response:

And I was like, what? I was instantly pissed off. Instantly. What did this guy just say to me? After letting it set in for a month, I realized what he was doing. He's really smart. Now I have a chip on my shoulder because now it's to prove a point.

It's a Team with Multiple Leaders

There are many parallels that can be drawn with a NASCAR team and the teams in many organizations. There are multiple leaders. In NASCAR, they can include the manufacturer, the owner, the crew chief, the driver, and more. Owners, department heads, managers, supervisors – in many organizations.

For many NASCAR teams, like many teams in other organizations, the "frontline" performers, the customer service workers, the sales teams, the teachers, the artists, the drivers are the individuals who "perform." For the top NASCAR teams, a driver or drivers act more – and are seen more – as leaders. Prior to the 2022 season, Joey Logano "shared" team leadership with Brad Keselowski (who left for a bigger leadership challenge of team ownership). Acknowledging his role as the team leader, however, he sees it more as a mentor.

"I don't think there should be any A, B, or C driver. We need to try to do it together as a group. "Now, granted, I may have the most experience, but Blaney's got enough experience to help along now, too. Together, we can lead two other rookies with us."

The Future – A New Season



How the 2023 NASCAR season for reigning champion Joey Logano is unknown. It started with a win in his Daytona 500 Qualifying Duel. And in a wild overtime finish to the Daytona 500, Joey finished second, a car length behind after 500 grueling miles.

Joey Logano is portrayed as an enigma by some, fiercely competitive on the track, jovial family man outside the car. Perhaps it's that combination that makes him interesting to follow from a leadership perspective. But there is definitely something in the attitude he expresses that deserves notice.

*"I got a cool little badge and a great parking spot for Daytona.
That's it. It's over, and we've got to do it again."*

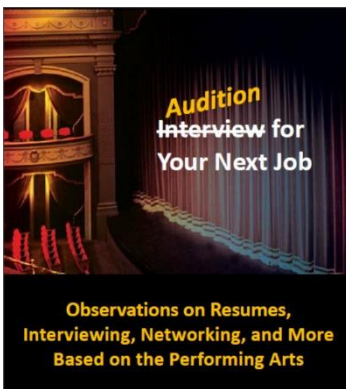
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The Performance Project focuses, primarily on lessons from the performing arts. However, there are occasional articles from sports. This is the third NASCAR related article and I've written an article on [Leadership Lessons from the Little League World Series](#).