10 Strategic 'Must Make' Decisions Affecting You and Your Athletes

- Strategic Value Decisions.
- The Network you create.

- The Best Vehicle for YOU.
- Management Choices
- Reaching Critical Mass

- Choices in Core Training Belief
- Choices in Method of Execution

THE MORE YOU LOVE YOUR DECISIONS, THE LESS YOU NEED OTHERS TO LOVE THEM.

- Roy Disney
“Must Make Decisions”

Those decisions that when left unmade result in a waste of the precious time trustingly given by the youth we work with. Decisions that take them the distance.

You can’t control the wind but you can set the sail.  

Yiddish Proverb

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.  

Sun Tzu
The Ten “MUST MAKE” Decisions

The goal is to make ten decisions that will allow your team to be successful over the long term - not for you to be a successful coach.

1. Who are You going to be?
2. Who will You surround yourself with?
3. What model for your Age Group Program?
4. How do you put into place the team structure that is best for success?
5. What is your ‘Critical Mass’ Strategy?
6. What is your philosophy on coach to swimmer ratio?
7. How will you balance Capacity versus Utilization.
8. What Competitive models are you going to use?
9. How will you design your dry land training?
10. Who are your necessary Performance partners?
Who are you going to be?
Who will You surround yourself with?
What model for your Age Group Program?
How do you put into place the business structure that is best for success?
What is your ‘Critical Mass’ Strategy?

Path to Success Making the Strategic Decisions that Count
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1. What is your philosophy on coach to swimmer ratio?
2. How will you balance Capacity versus Utilization?
3. What Competitive models are you going to use?
4. How will you utilize dry land training?
5. What are your necessary Performance Partnerships?
#1 Who are You Going to Be?
#1 Who You are Decisions

- What ‘Code’ do you value most?
- Who are your mentors? Plan the strategy.
- Have you decided on what you will look like in 5 years, in 10 years?
- What Career path suits you:
  1. Traditional Club
  2. Team Affiliated with an Academic Institution
  3. Hybrid clubs.
Picking associates, partners and employees is a decision making process directly related to your success and is a process that requires guidelines.

1. Decide on what you most value.
2. Decide on what you most need.
3. Decide on the time you have to develop the relationship.

Associate network: ASCA, LSC ops, USA Swimming governance
#3 What Model for Your Age Group Program?

Antagonistic platforms for consideration:

a. Maximum Technical development OR body fitness and awareness?

b. Team values OR individual focus (prevailing trend)?

c. Newly emerging value systems OR traditional country club team mentality?

d. Rigid OR Flexible?

e. Advancement with Social Group OR advance based on testing and criteria?

My Preference Age Group:
Rigid, low volume, high feedback, ‘eyes on’ BUT with distance emphasis, Technique Goals and social advance.

My Preference Senior: Rigid, high volume, Performance Goals, and criteria advancement.
#4 How do you put into place the business structure that is best for success?

Parent Run – Parent driven.
Parent Run – Coach driven.
Coach Owned – Coach Driven
Coach Owned – Coach Driven
Parent Supported

Legal Structures:
- Non Profit 501 (c)3
- LLC
- Chapter S

Seize the moment when it appears, be ready with your plan.

Honey, we’ve got a board meeting tonight and I can’t find my hidden agenda!
#5 What is your ‘Critical Mass’ Strategy?

Critical Mass defined:
The point in time when your number of athletes is sufficient to allow you to make decisions without fear of failure or financial impact!

- Financial breakeven
- Reload capability for top competitive groups.
- Social energy and parental resupply.

For the La Mirada Armada the number is around 300:

Critical Mass Strategies
Advertising and flyer promotion does not really work.

What does work:
- Develop new Satelite programs.
- Merge programs.
- Add new niche groups.
- Develop Surrounding novice leagues.
#6 What is your philosophy on coach to swimmer ratio?

Christopher Allen - “The Dunbar Number” – 150

Frederick Mosteller - Tennese Study on Ideal Class Size in Early School Grades
Result: 16-17 in early cognitive years.
22-25 in upper grade years.

USA Swimming Data
Average club 12 and under group size 32.3
Average Senior Group Size 14.2

Changes to Consider:
Shorter practice lower ratio same cost to club - Itoman group
#7 How will you Balance Capacity vs. Utilization?

**Capacity Training**
- Improving systems and aerobic capacity
- Improves general fitness and improvements.
- Makes cup bigger; as BIG as can be.
- Long-term and more general training
- Takes longer to develop.
- Methodical & systematic.
- Sacrifices short-term gains for long-term goals

**Utilization**
- What can you do this season?
- Sacrifice the long-term with the short-term
- Finding balance is best
- This training is dynamic and volatile - operates on the edge of their capabilities
#8 What Competitive Models are you going to use?

1. Tech Suits – When coaching became difficult.

2. Meet selection
   Feel good Choices – Easy sell for parents and kids
   OR
   Long Term Development – tough to maneuver.
   • Mindset
   • Swim fast without winning
   • Filters the talent in your program

Balance of Schedule
• Soft meets - Artificial success Learning without confidence loss
• Meets at level – The test of where the athlete is
• Meets above level – The test of athlete’s potential
• Travel Meets – The Carrot

3. Better Competition Models for Age Groupers and Senior
   • Conferences
   • Satelite / Inner team competition
   • Open Water

“What are you complaining about It’s a level playing field!”
#9 The Dry Land Choice

Choices are many the right fits are few.

Again Capacity versus Utilization – even more so than water time

Prioritize:
- Body line and body composition are our first two priorities
- Shoulder stability our second priority
- Power rather than strength our third Priority

What about?:

Flexibility, Strength, Aerobic dry land fitness
Physiologist: Physiology - how organisms, organ systems, organs, cells, and bio-molecules carry out the chemical or physical functions within the human body. LinkedIn network

1. Biomechanics Specialist
2. Trainers, Therapists, Orthopedics
3. Nutritionists, Dieticians
4. Masseuse
5. Business Partners – PROFIT?
6. Web Designer / Master
7. Carpenter / Welder / Food Services

Trade off
My Armada Strategies Answers:

1. Who are You going to be?  
   David Marsh with Straight Hair

2. Who will You surround yourself with?  
   Coaches’ smarter than me but afraid to let me know it.

3. What model for your Age Group Program?  
   Size 11 feet and above only.

4. How do you put into place the team structure that is best for success?  
   Take over an Orphanage

5. What is your ‘Critical Mass’ Strategy?  
   Free dues

6. What is your philosophy on coach to swimmer ratio?  
   High maintenance athletes 0 – 1, Low maintenance 20-1.

7. How will you balance Capacity versus Utilization.  
   Call Bob Bowman so he can explain what Starbucks has to do with it.

8. What Competitive models are you going to use?  
   Derby, Preakness, Belmont – GO…. California Chrome

9. How will you design your dry land training?  
   Let the Armada Senior girls pick the exercise (I love Yoga).

10. Who are your necessary Performance partners?  
    California Lottery or Inheritance from lost relative.