



mentor profile:
Dr Paddi Lund



How a Crazy Australian Dentist Helped England Win 11 Test Matches in a Row!

Thinking differently about managing England Rugby Union has helped me to establish a record as England's winning-est coach in history. Now learn how one of the keys to my success came from an unlikely source: a self-confessed 'crazy dentist' from Queensland, Australia, Dr Paddi Lund.

It may seem strange that a dentist could have any impact on the performance of elite athletes such as those who adorn our squad and manage the team. Winning in professional sports isn't just about being in peak physical condition or having the right skills on the pitch. 90% of winning comes from THINKING like a winner, and managing the team accordingly. But in this day and age of maximum performance, high-stakes Rugby, it's not enough to simply think like a winner on the pitch. The skills and attitude of winning have to saturate our very beings off-the-pitch, as well. "A match isn't won on the day. A true victory is earned with intense preparation."

Advanced Management Skills

It's no surprise that we now utilise sophisticated leadership and management techniques in our training regime – strategies common to the business world for many years. Indeed, I learned many of my best management skills while running Sales Finance Ltd, my previous business.

I was in the habit of pursuing the best business information I could find from books and seminars – anything to give me that critical advantage essential to success. It was during an exclusive marketing seminar that I first heard about the Australian dentist who changed my approach to business, Rugby and life.

Introducing Dr Paddi Lund

Twenty-five years ago, Paddi had a conventional dental practice – not at all exciting from a business point of view. But something has happened since then, which is nothing less than extra-ordinary. So extra-ordinary that it has caught the attention of some of the world's greatest business minds (leaders in companies the likes of major banks, large shipping companies, manufacturing firms and service companies) ... and now sporting minds, as well. What did Paddi do that was so revolutionary? In a word, innovation. He learned to THINK DIFFERENTLY and to view his business through a different set of eyes. Amazing changes were the result.

Picture a conventional dental practice. The one down your street, or maybe the one you hated to go to when you were a child. The typical practice has a large sign and a wide storefront to attract passing traffic. You'd be hit by the 'dental smell' as you walked in the front door, and you'd find an unremarkable waiting room as you approached the receptionist at the intimidating front desk. These offices are stressful places to work, have high staff turnover, and are often only modestly profitable for the dentists that run them. That's the kind of business that Paddi had.

Now contrast that with his current dental business in Queensland, Australia. Paddi has taken down all his signs, locked his front door and removed his name from the phone book! He sawed up his reception desk and replaced it with a café bar, a large Italian espresso machine and a convection oven where he bakes fresh 'Dental Buns' for his customers! You don't 'wait' in a waiting room with dozens of others. You have your own Personal Lounge (your name and photograph are on the door) where you enjoy tea and coffee with your Care Nurse in Royal Doulton china with silver service! See what I mean about a 'crazy dentist'?

Paddi Works Less yet Makes More!

I could go on indefinitely about the differences. They extend to every aspect of Paddi's business, and when viewed together, are truly amazing. But what about the bottom-line? It's a good indicator of Paddi's success because now he only works three days a week and yet earns in excess of 3 ½ times the average dentist – and he doesn't charge higher fees!

But the measure of Paddi's success is found not just in his bank statement. He is HAPPY. Very happy. He loves his work and enjoys going to the office! He makes more money than he can easily spend, and he likes visiting with his customers. Not only that, Paddi's team members (whom he calls his business-family) are happy, too. That's clear because they don't leave. Three of Paddi's Care Nurses have been with him for more than fifteen years.

Most importantly, the customers are happy! So happy they pay their bills on time (often in advance), come back regularly and rave to all their friends about this wonderful dentist! Which of course Paddi loves. Indeed he encourages referrals. It's the only way he accepts new customers. Did I mention the sign on the doorbell of his locked front door: "By Invitation Only!"

Turning Convention on its Head

Paddi's business is different. Completely different. You notice it as soon as you walk in the door (which I've done on several occasions, but not for dentistry ... for the education!). But it's not till you talk further with him that you realise how completely he has re-invented his business: from the way he attracts clients, builds strong customer relationships, manages his team ... even what it means to be IN business!

When I first heard Paddi's story, it struck a chord – I'd certainly never been one to follow convention blindly. But it wasn't until I started experimenting with his ideas that I really began to see their effectiveness. The first thing I learned is that I should take nothing for granted – that I should inspect and question the reasons for everything we did in managing our team. That may seem logical, but it is so easy to fall in to the traps of routine and habit. Paddi's story gave me "permission" to question everything we had ever done in International Rugby. I've often thought, "My goodness, if he can do THAT with a dental business, imagine what I can do with a Rugby team!"

Often it's only when you observe someone else break the rules so completely – and for Paddi with such success both personally and financially – do you see the possibilities for your own position. I began to look at the business side of Rugby with a new set of eyes.

Winning Starts Off the Pitch

One of the first aspects of the game that caught my attention was, of course, our players; more specifically their motivation for playing ... and winning ... at an international level. To be the best, to be selected, simply isn't enough. I want my players to be so proud of their positions that they will do anything to keep them. So passionate about England Rugby that they reach down in their hearts and give more than they have to give, for that is what wins matches at this level. I want their time in the squad to be the absolute pinnacle of their careers, with memories to revel in for the rest of their lives. To create this attitude, we began to treat our squad like winners – like champions – right from the start ... even before the first training session.

We changed the look and feel of England Rugby, and it all began with the little things, another tip I picked up from Paddi. In business, the Critical Non-Essentials (as he calls them) give our customers and team a perception of the quality of our organisation and product. My players had to THINK first class before they would perform that way, and the "experience" of representing England would determine their attitude. So we thought differently about the physical environment. We kitted our players out in the finest of clothes: distinctive tailor-made blazers, suits and dress shoes. We were looking like a first class winning team.

Our squad room at Twickenham, where we do all of our match preparation, was good but lacked distinction.

So we transformed it into a haven of victory and national pride, paying attention to every detail, including engraved English oak nameplates above each player's locker. It's a place where winners live.

We began to keep our players in first class accommodation, rich with English heritage. We always reserved the same room for each player to make their environment comfortable and familiar. For a while we even personalised the rooms with players names and professional photo portraits, just like Paddi's personal lounges! We wanted our players to feel in control, to focus on the game ahead and to think like winners.

Our Success on the Pitch

We've come a long way and made many more changes and refinements over the years, but one thing is certain. Our different approach to managing England Rugby has had a big effect of our players' skills and attitudes. The spirit is there in the squad, players are proud to represent their country, and the intent to win has been galvanised into our very beings. And how has it affected our performance on the pitch? Well as of writing this article, England has won eleven Test Matches in a row ... a record for our sport at an international level. Does it mean we'll always win? Not if we take our eye off the ball. Are we world champions yet? No, but we have our goals, and we have the attitude to get us there.

Even though the game hasn't changed, our approach to Rugby Union has. Our entire squad – management support staff and players – has learned to THINK DIFFERENTLY about what we do. We question everything. Nothing is sacrosanct ... even my actions. I meet weekly with the two most senior and two most junior members of the squad to openly discuss our progress and what we can do differently to improve our winning attitude. The best ideas now come from the players ... because they have learned to THINK DIFFERENTLY about the game!

We've worked bloody hard to get where we are. We've earned our position. We'll keep fighting hard till we achieve all our goals. But who would have thought that a 'self-confessed' crazy dentist in Australia could have had such an impact on our sport? Maybe he's not so crazy after all. I hope to pass on the lessons I've learned from Dr Paddi Lund to you and your organisation. May they help you see a new path to thinking differently ... and winning!

Clive Woodward

Manager, England Rugby Union
 28 August, 2001.

P.S. Anyone in business who's serious about winning has to read Paddi's book, ***Building the Happiness Centred Business***, plus everything else in his ***Happiness & Profits Series*** of publications. Visit his website, and tell them I sent you to think differently!