

Brian billick



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

No one understands success better than Brian Billick. It is not because of his own achievements which include leading an NFL team to a Super Bowl victory, it is because leadership fascinates him. One of Brian's most noted feats was leading the Baltimore Ravens to a 34-7 win over the New York Giants in the 2000 Super Bowl XXXV. Making the victory so much more rewarding was the fact that Brian took over the role as head coach for the Ravens a year earlier when they were ranked as one of the NFL's most depressing teams. Two words are synonymous with Brian Billick - passion and accountability.

Those two traits are what steers a person to success. Brian was born in Ohio but his family moved to California. He learned success early as an athlete at Redlands High School where he played both football and basketball. He etched his name into the state record books with 21 career interceptions, a record that has yet to be broken. Following high school, Brian was a freshman linebacker at the Air Force Academy before transferring to Brigham Young University where as a tight end, Brian earned an honorable mention in the 1976 All-America honors. He also earned a Bachelors Degree in Communications

and currently endows a communication scholarship at the university. In 1977, Brian made it to the National Football League. He was picked in the 11th round of the NFL draft by the San Francisco 49ers and then traded to the Dallas Cowboys. However, as a player, Brian never got the opportunity to hit the field. Instead, he was hired as the assistant director of public relations for San Francisco for the next two years. He spent much of the 1980s

coaching college teams such as San Diego State University, Utah State University and Stanford University.

“ BRIAN BILLICK” Page 2 As a coach, he quickly learned there is no “ I” in team and that was something he instilled in each player. To Brian, coaching is more than teaching the plays of the game, it is teaching the values that make a team player. The success of a team is determined by working together towards a common goal. Each player must have the passion. As with any goal, reaching it requires 100 percent dedication. If a person can not commit to every aspect that comes with the territory then they lack the passion

needed to survive. The other important influence in a successful team is accountability. The task requires working together without selfishness but a person must also be willing to take responsibility for one’s actions. Brian feels it is a sign of respect for the team. Brian practices what he preaches. He joined the Ravens in 1999 and led the team into post- season playoffs every year since except twice and he takes accountability for those two years. As the team’s leader, he felt responsible but it did not discourage him from finding new ways to guide the team in the right direction.

Throughout his career, Brian earned the reputation of being more than just a great leader but also a motivator. He knows the values that make a person a leader are something that can be taught. Bringing out those qualities in a person by influencing their behavior, attitude and actions are what leadership is all about. Brian began his NFL coaching career with the Minnesota Vikings in 1992 when he was first hired as the tight end coach and by the following year, he was named offensive coordinator for the Vikings.

His leadership skills brought out success in the Vikings' camp and in 1994, the team

captured the NFC Central title. He remained with the Vikings until the end of the 1998 season. " BRIAN BILLICK" Page 3 In 1999, he was hired as head coach of the Baltimore Ravens. Basically a new franchise founded four years earlier, the Ravens were struggling as a team. In Brian's first year as coach, the Ravens won eight games. That was more wins than they had totaled in their first four years. The Ravens' defense finished second overall in the NFL.

In his second year with the team, Baltimore finished 16-4 overall in the 2000 season. They crushed their opponents in the playoffs and became only the fourth wild card team to go on to win the Super Bowl when they blew by the New York Giants. But domination had little to do with it. That October, the Ravens were on what looked to be a downward spiral when they failed to score a touchdown in five consecutive games. It was Brian who kept the team unified and focused on the primary goal. The team returned to the Super Bowl in 2001 but fell short when they lost 27-10 against the

Pittsburgh Steelers. That was still a remarkable feat considering they were one of the youngest teams in the NFL with 19 rookies that season. In 2003, Brian put the young team back in the playoffs. They led the NFL in rushing and ranked third in the league in defense. The next year, the Ravens were one game away from making the playoffs. The 2005 and 2006 seasons were disappointing for the Ravens but things may turn around in 2007 since they hired five new coaches to the franchise. Brian's leadership skills have an impact on more than just his players. In the seven years that

he has been head coach of the Ravens, three of his assistants have moved on to become NFL head coaches. In 2001, Brian's defensive coordinator Marvin Lewis joined Cincinnati and his linebacker coach Jack Del Rio joined Jacksonville. Three years later, he lost another defensive coordinator, Mike Nolan, to San Francisco. "BRIAN BILLICK" Page 4 It was shortly after winning the Super Bowl in 2000 that Brian, along with Dr. James A. Peterson wrote the book: *Competitive Leadership: Twelve Principles for Success*.

This book talks about the keys to being successful and being a leader, not only on the football field but in life in general. The book also talks about how leadership is not about authority. Being a strong leader is being willing to always learn more and not think you already have all of the answers. An important key in any leader is the ability to ask questions. It is not about being perfect, it is about being effective. Brian also spends a large majority of his time speaking to corporations about leadership skills. Brian also spends time improving the community and doing his part for

charities. NFL Hall of Fame coach Bill Walsh joined Brian and Dr. Peterson in writing the book: *Finding the Winning Edge*. This book focuses more on football and is a guide for developing a winning NFL team. Despite his coaching schedule, charity work and public speaking engagements, Brian still finds enjoyment in studying leadership. Whether it be from hands on experience on the field or from the history of past leaders, learning builds an effective leader. Brian values education and it is interesting to note that he was once a contestant on the game show *Jeopardy* and *The Match*

Game in 1977. At age 53, Brian continues to help others build the characteristics needed to succeed. Along with the success comes the ability

to be a leader, a teacher, a coach and a mentor. All of the qualities that make a person strong enough to take on that role can be learned through motivation. Brian prides himself on passion and accountability – the two traits that make him an admired leader. SOURCES The Baltimore Ravens. “ Brian Billick. ” (2006). Accessed 3 March, 2007. <http://www.baltimoreravens.com/includes/bio.jsp?id+=1180&personType=0>

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