

You may or may not believe this, but I think I am somewhat of a geek. I know it is hard to believe because I don't have a pocket protector or wear glasses taped together at the bridge of my nose, but there is a geeky side to my personality. One of the reasons I know this is because I have developed a very complex Excel spreadsheet just to keep track of... my son's basketball statistics.

It started 3 years ago when I started to assistant coach my son Ted's 4<sup>th</sup> grade team. I thought we needed to keep stats so that we could see where that team did well and what area we needed to work on. The sheet I developed could have been very simple, and it started out to be simple. Then the geeky side of my personality kicked in. Wouldn't it be cool to keep track of stats for each kid by the different tournaments they played in? Absolutely!

Then the geeky side kind of took over. It wouldn't be enough just to have stats by tournament, they had to all add together so that we could get a trend. Then that wasn't good enough because some kids couldn't make it to some tournaments and to measure those boys on the same scale wouldn't be fair. Now I had to track how many games each boy played and make sure that those percentages were taken into account. Not only for each game, but each tournament and everything had to roll up correctly for season to date totals.

I did this for 3 seasons for Ted, the only thing I didn't do (which I might now that I have thought about it) is roll all those seasons into a 3 season total for each kid. As coaches, the only statistics any player was allowed to see were his own. There was no need to have kids compare or analyze their teammates. The only reason I stopped tracking stats for Ted and his friends was because I am now coaching my 4<sup>th</sup> grade son Ben's team.

Over the years I have come to realize that keeping stats really only told part of the story of what was happening on the basketball court. I didn't have any measures for the actions that don't normally get tracked but have a huge impact on the game. Things like hustling on defense, making a great pass even when your teammate doesn't make the shot or encouraging your teammate even when they made a mistake. Nobody keeps track of those things, on any level that I am aware of.

As owners and managers of small businesses we have to keep statistics too. Our statistics are sales, raw material costs, rent, mortgages, heat, lights, employees, taxes and the list can go on and on. Some of us even keep these statistics by each job or project, and then roll them into year to date figures. If we can't do it ourselves, then we hire accountants or accounting firms to keep those statistics for us. For business owners, statistics are important. They tell us if we are making a profit, where we can improve.

But like the stat sheet in basketball, there are things that contribute to winning but do not show up on a financial statement. Things like attitude, friendliness and integrity in how you conduct business.

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