

the PROUTY PROJECT

6385 Old Shady Oak Road, Suite 260, Minneapolis, MN 55344

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Read'n Route To: _____

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"C" NOTE QUOTE:

"Lots of people
want to ride with
you in the limo, but
what you want is
someone who will
take the bus with
you when the limo
breaks down."

● If you know who said this quote,
please call 952.942.2922 or send an e-mail
to kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com with your
answer by **Thursday, April 30** — one guess
per individual. If we have more than one correct
answer, we throw those names into a hat and
draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

**And last issue's winner is ... Andy
Kollengode, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN.**



Andy knew that **Sam Palmisano, CEO of IBM** said the following:
"You can retrench, pull in your horns, protect the balance sheet, and preserve cash. Or you can realize that this is about humanity screaming for change."

Congratulations Andy! Andy plans to donate his \$100 gift card to the United Way of Olmsted County.

Cape Town Capabilities

I'm writing this just as we're heading to Cape Town, South Africa (**STRETCH Expedition 2009**), to participate in a 336-mile bike ride, culminating in the 68-mile Cape Argus Cycle Race. Ask us how we did in the race with 25,600 competitors, including some of the best cyclists in the world! Or, get first-hand testimonials by checking out our STRETCH Expedition blog at www.proutyproject.com/blog.

On the Homefront

A special *thanks* to **Beth Peterson** from team Prouty. Beth was the "head honcho" orchestrating our newly designed website — check it out at www.proutyproject.com. We'd love your feedback. Send all your ideas and suggestions to us at stretch@proutyproject.com. *Thanks!*

To quote Rascal Flatts in these challenging economic times, **"May your dreams stay big, and your worries stay small."** (Paying special attention to those "business metrics" that have little to do with money, and much to do with customer and employee relationships.)

Keep stretching, and have a spectacular 2nd quarter,

jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com

Jeff



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● STRATEGIC PLANNING

CAPTAIN'S PROFILE: ROB BATHE

Interview by Jeff Prouty



jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com

I caught up with **Rob Bathe**, co-captain of the Wayzata High School football team. His team recently won the 2008 Minnesota Class 5A State Championship. We talked about their unbeaten season (13-0) and the fact they were behind in score for **only** 5 minutes and 37 seconds **all** season.

Rob was also selected "First Team All State" offensive lineman (270 pounds), and is heading off to Dartmouth College this fall to study psychology and play football.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For the best article ever written on elite teams, go to *Fortune* magazine, February 19, 1996 issue. The article profiles elite teams around the world that have nothing to do with business, while offering big learnings for all of us in business.

Enjoy this article about an elite team of 15-18 year olds. I think you'll find some nice parallels to some of your teams.

Prouty: *You had a number of speakers come talk to you before each game. Any that stand out?*

Bathe: Yes, David Gross, Partner at Faegre & Benson said, "Show up. Be able to say that under the given circumstances, I did my best." That line struck me.

Prouty: *What about Coach Anderson? Did he have any techniques that worked particularly well with the team?*

Bathe: Coach Anderson gives a speech before every game, but he always asks us to take a minute to "clear our heads" before we go out on the field. For some guys, it's all about calming down. He also reminds us to "practice like you're being watched, every day."

Prouty: *You're the only unbeaten state champion in the history of Wayzata High School. What was the key to your success?*

Bathe: The chemistry of the team. Everyone knew their role on the team, and was willing to sacrifice for the good of the team.

Prouty: *What did you learn about yourself this year? Would you do anything differently in hindsight?*

Bathe: In hindsight, I would try to enjoy the season more while it was happening. I'm a pretty intense guy. Lighten up during practice, perhaps. Coach Anderson reminds us that, "we play football, we don't work football." Keep it fun.

Prouty: *Now you're heading to Dartmouth which was winless (0-10) in the 2008 football season. That will be a big change, from unbeaten to winless. Your thoughts?*

Bathe: I'm going there because it is a great school and because this will be a great challenge to help turn the record around. It will take us a couple years, but winning will be even more special. It will be exciting to see if we can set a goal to win the Ivy League championship, and then have everyone believe in that goal. I want to be part of the team that turns this around.



Prouty: *A lot of young kids come to the games to watch you and the rest of your teammates. What is your advice to the sixth grader reading this newsletter?*

Bathe: It isn't just about football, it's about what you do on and off the field. It's in the classroom, it's about your entire life. Hard work and determination will make the difference.

Prouty: *You're also a darn good singer, having been selected to the Wayzata High School Chamber Singers. Do you wish, in hindsight, you would have sung the national anthem with the rest of the Chamber Singers (in the Metrodome) before the state championship game?*

Bathe: As I'm going through my football pre-game preparations, I just thought it would be too difficult to sing for the crowd, and then head out for the first play. I didn't want to lose focus.

Prouty: *As you wind down high school, and head off to college, any observations about your football experience?*

Bathe: It's neat to have goals bigger than yourself. We were inspired by the coaches to play every play as though it was the last play we'd ever play.

Prouty: *What's the next big goal?*

Bathe: Academically, I want to maintain good grades and graduate from Dartmouth. But before that, I want to break our high school record for the shot put. My best is 53 feet, the school record is 58 feet.

Prouty: *How will you increase your best by 5 feet this spring?*

Bathe: With hard work and determination.

Good luck Rob. Thanks for inspiring all our readers — some who are 10 years younger, some who are 70 years older than you.

● ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

BIKING INTO THE HEADWINDS



grayce.belvedere.young@proutyproject.com

Article by
Grayce Belvedere Young

For the last number of months we've heard numerous CEOs explain the unprecedented economic turmoil as, "We have encountered significant headwinds that are impacting our business, specifically our revenue and profits." *So, how does the leadership team lead during this economic turmoil?* I'd like to share an analogy to offer some suggestions on weathering these times. This year's STRETCH Expedition, bicycling in South Africa, provided a visceral, vivid example of "headwinds." The day after the Cape Argus Race, front page headlines from the *Cape Argus Times* (Monday, March 9, 2009) read "Toughest Cape Argus Race Ever," with 60-70 km winds.

Winds are a common occurrence in Cape Town; however, we encountered unprecedented gale force winds for this year's 110 km (68-mile) race. For the 5+ hours pedaling my bicycle, I pondered the connection between managing one's business and managing the grueling race conditions. For me, these four main connections boil down to: **1 planning and preparation;** **2 precise focus;** **3 positive attitude;** and **4 perseverance.**

We thoughtfully **planned** and **prepared** for this trip — learning about endurance biking, proper nutrition, appropriate equipment, strategy of the race, and listening to the advice of our fabulous trainer, Greg Hayes of Life Time Fitness. And just as important, time in the "saddle" — hours and hours of spinning classes and cycling on stationary bikes. In the business world, we must also be very thoughtful and purposeful about the strategies we undertake in these economic times. Questions leaders may ask: Is now the time to introduce a new product/offering, or move into a new market, or focus on internal efficiencies? How do we maintain our position or grow? As leaders, you know planning and timing are critical to making decisions. While the complexity around us may make us hesitant to act, it must not stop us from planning for several scenarios and being prepared to act when appropriate.

Biking with over 25,000 cyclists requires **precise focus** — on the road conditions, the person directly in front of you (especially when drafting), your speed going down hills, people coming up behind you, and so on. Five hours of intense concentration was required to ensure a safe, accident-free race. As leaders, running your business requires the same precision — on your key metrics, on your strategies, on the development of your internal bench strength, and so on. Now focusing on the key aspects of your business is a must. And being very clear about what the top 5-7 aspects of your business are. As Michael Porter notes — strategy is as much of what you say "no" to as it is what you say "yes" to. Stay focused, and say "no" as needed.

At the beginning of the race, there was a wind tunnel which required 90% of cyclists to walk their bike out of the gate. As we proceeded the first 1-2 km, pedaling hard into the wind, we started to encounter cyclists turning around and deciding not to ride the race. It was very discouraging for us and the thought occurred to me that maybe we wouldn't be able to complete the race — a sobering thought after all the preparation over the last year.



It was then that I realized how important a **positive attitude** and **perseverance** are to accomplishing one's goals. I would try my best to finish as much of the race as possible, staying positive, and having fun. I smiled, put on my game face, and pedaled into the wind. And it worked. As leaders, you must do the same — put on your game face, encourage others, and persevere to advance your business. The economic headwinds will blow us around and the most important aspect we can control is our positive attitude and continuing to press forward. Remember, as a leader, all eyes are on you and you have incredible influence on others to be successful. You can positively impact your entire business.

All eight Prouty cyclists successfully achieved our goals of finishing the race and you, too, will successfully achieve your business goals.

● REFERRAL RECOGNITION

A very special **"THANK YOU"** to the following individuals who introduced us to new clients in 2008! We always appreciate our clients and friends sending us new business referrals.

We put each person's name in a hat, and drew **Charlie Westling** as the winner of a \$1,000 donation to the charity of his choice. **Congratulations Charlie!**



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6385 Old Shady Oak Road, Suite 260
Minneapolis, MN 55344

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Call 952.942.2922 or e-mail stretch@proutyproject.com.

THANKS!