

Arsene Wenger's Q 'n' A:



Arsenal boss gives fascinating peek into the world of the modern-day manager

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**Nurturing talent, handling players from 18 different countries,
what we can learn from getting lost while jogging and more**

**My way
A Japanese audience got a glimpse of the Wenger Method**

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger has given a fascinating insight into what he sees as the similarities between top level business and top level football.

Wenger gave a speech, and answered questions from a select group of businesspeople, in Saitama, Japan, on Friday before the Gunners played the final game of their pre-season Asian tour.

The Arsenal manager - who has a degree in economics - was entertaining and honest about egos in football, the game's star culture, handling players of different nationalities - and getting lost while out jogging!

**Q: In a highly competitive, globalized market,
how does Arsenal find the best talent?**

A: One of our strengths is young people know we will give them a chance. But what we look for is their motivation to be successful. But what is motivation? How can you tell if somebody is motivated? How can you remain motivated?

Well, for me, motivation is a person who has the capability to recruit the resources he needs to achieve a goal.

For example, earlier today I went for a jog in Saitama, but I couldn't find my way back. I was motivated to come back to the hotel, but I couldn't find my way. So, I was highly motivated and slowly I found my way back.

But what does that show? It shows that motivation is essential but not enough. You also need consistency in your motivation and that is what we try to test in players as well.

For me that is a very underrated quality. I could have said: 'Right, I can't find my way back to the hotel, so let's see if I can find a taxi.' But because I'm a sportsman, I decided not to get a taxi and that I would find my way back, no matter how long it would take me, so I continued to run.

That's what I mean in the consistency of your motivation. The stamina of your motivation.

When you look at people who are successful, you will find that they aren't the people who are motivated, but have consistency in their motivation.

You have many people who start diets on the January 1. Some of them last until mid-January, some give up mid-June and some of them last. We are interested in the ones that last because that makes a successful sportsman.

That doesn't necessarily mean successful sportsmen are happy people, but it means they are determined and they are ready to hurt themselves to be successful, and that's the type we are looking for - the people that are very demanding with themselves, and each other for a long time.

That consistent motivation is applicable to football, business, anything you do in life.

But where do you look for that talent?

We look all over the world. It's simple as that. I've spent a long time in the game, and I still think it's a little miracle how popular this game has become on a worldwide level at such a high speed.

Today, when something happens in London, they know it in Saitama at the same minute. So that means Arsenal are a worldwide club and we are interested in worldwide talent.

The world is small. Previously a young boy in Saitama never had the chance to become a world class player, but today he has that chance. Because if he has the talent and determination then he will get the chance somewhere.

And that's what we try to do - we try to look all over the world to find players who have the talent and desire because unfortunately, in football, there is more money than talent.

What is your experience of nurturing talent into world class players?

I believe one of the best things about managing people is that we can influence lives in a positive way. That's basically what a manager is about. When I can do that, I am very happy.

That's not the *only* part of my job, because the essential part is to win on a Saturday afternoon, but it is an important part. In a world where we only care about stars, it is important to say to players, 'You are not a star yet, but you can become one and I will give you a chance.'

At Arsenal, we are proud to do that, and we have fought against the policy of only buying stars. You have to understand that a player who is a star was, at one stage, an unknown person who had talent. We want to be the club who gives this guy a chance.

You working with some of the most highly-paid athletes in the world,

so how big is the factor of egos in your job?

If you're asking me if the egos are big, yes. You must know that a person, no matter how big a star he is, is ready to listen to you if it meets his needs. The condition for him to know if you meet his needs is to test you first: Is the manager capable of making him the player he wants to be.

Unfortunately in management, you cannot cheat for a long time. When you are in a squad of 30 people, the players detect at a huge speed the weakness in your personality.

So that's the moment of truth - when a person sits in front of you. They observe you and try to decide if you can help them. If they think you are the man who can help them, they will respect you.

The next step for them is deciding whether they are in a squad who can help them to be successful.

We had that problem when we were under financially-restricted conditions.

For some players, we didn't have enough stars to be successful as quickly as they wanted to be. Of course, that's one of the problems we face in our job.



Guess who: Was Wenger talking about Robin van Persie?

Is leaving your idea of football art only achievable by results on the pitch?

A manager is a guide. He takes a group of people and says, 'With you, I can make us a success,

I can show you the way.' But first you have to have a clear idea of what you want.

You have to have a clear concept and make it understandable so they can work with you, and that's not very easy.

That's why it was very interesting for me to work in Japan when I did, because you have to make your ideas as clear as possible and you have to adapt to the difference of culture.

And sometimes you have to maintain your own ideas against the results.

Is there a difference between man-management in football and in business?

Not really. The only difference is that most of the time in business, you manage people who have maturity. In football, you manage people who are 18, 19, 20 years old.

The responsibilities are quite big for them.

We forget that these players have to perform under huge public pressure, in front of 60,000 people, with a huge responsibility to win games.

I'm not sure how I would have responded to it if I was 20, rich, famous and a big star.

It's not easy to handle.

That's the main difference between man-management in football and business.

The other big difference is that you can work in an office and be at 70 per cent of your potential

and do your job well. You can't be a footballer and be at 70 per cent of your potential and play well.

And that's where the stress comes from. One player being weak can cost you a game. The player knows that. That's where the pressure comes from.

Every minute of every day a footballer tests himself.

That puts the body under pressure, because you know you can only perform in a game if you're 100 percent.

Look at the Tour de France. Chris Froome won, but he can lose it in one day, by just having one bad day in the office. That's top level sport.

Is there a market in Europe for Japanese players?

For a manager it is a dream to have a Japanese player. If you tell him to run 10 laps, you haven't even finished the sentence and he is already started.

In Europe, you have to convince the player that he has to run 10 laps.



Running man: Miyaichi and his countrymen make life easy says Wenger

What are the key ingredients of a winning team?

You can't have any weak positions. You need players who can make the difference. You need a team who can stop the other team from scoring goals - so a good goalkeeper and good defense - and you need to score.

You need one guy who can pass the ball - the quarterback - to one guy who can score the goal - the receiver.

Once you have a guy who can give passes to score, you will always have a chance to win football games. The rest is based on teamwork and attitude.

How do you cope with having a multi-cultural squad?

By creating a culture of our own. I've had years with people from 18 different countries.

For example, being on time isn't the same for a Japanese man as it is for a Frenchman - when a Frenchman arrives five minutes late, he still thinks he is on time. In Japan, when it's five minutes before the set time he thinks he is too late.

That means you have to create a new culture and identify how we all want to behave and create a company culture. That way, when someone steps out of line, we can say, 'Look, my friend, that's not what we said.'

So it's important to have clear rules and everyone knows and agrees with it.

Do you have a go-to method to inspire your team when they are feeling down?

We live in a life where everyone tells us what we don't have. Most of the time, I remind my team and my players of the qualities they do have.

None of us have all the qualities in life, but the good thing is that we can all be successful without having all the qualities. Players shouldn't forget the qualities they do have.

In business, a lot is dependent on individuals meeting personal objectives and often penalizing those that don't meet those objectives...

Success in life is balance between individual achievement and co-operation with others. The west is totally focused on individual achievement - you have to be successful no matter what.

Even if you have to kill your partners, even if you have to cheat a little bit, only one thing counts and that is individual success at any price.

But the Japanese culture is geared more towards co-operation with others. Your success is graded on how much you integrate into the collective spirit of your company. And sometimes even that can be to an excess because individual performance is not acknowledged as much as collective success.

In Europe, we have gone completely the other way - the sense of co-operation with others has dropped dramatically.

The sense of happiness is linked with a good balance between the two. That's what team sport is about.

A good footballer should feel he can express himself, but also be helpful to the group. If one of the two is missing you will never be completely happy.

That's the magic of team sport.

How do you deal with those who aren't meeting their objectives?

If they are under performing, our biggest power is to drop the player.

One of the difficulties in our job is that we have 25 people who fight to play on Saturday and on Friday night we have 14 who are unemployed and we tell them on Monday, 'Let's start again. You have another chance.' That's the difficulty with our job.