



Leading you to the T.O.P.

# The Franchisee FOCUS



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Success Handler, LLC  
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David Handler is founder of [Success Handler](#), a professional business coaching organization. With him as your coach, you'll explore the business and personal dreams you desire. Much like sports coaches with athletes, David will show you how to soar to new heights as a franchisee, franchisor, small business owner or corporate executive.



## The Genius Within by The Coach, David Handler

If you consider the thousands of decisions people make in a lifetime, how important can any one be? Most won't have long-term impact; yet a small few will forever change a person's fate. What if Ray Kroc never made a sales call at the McDonald brothers' hamburger drive-in? What if Bob Newhart remained an accountant? What if Bill Gates stayed at Harvard?

Each of these single decisions set in motion amazing achievements. On the other hand, presumed wisdom and insight sometimes head in the opposite direction.

In January 1976, legendary football coach Paul Brown retired from the Cincinnati Bengals' sideline. As team president, he decided to pass over his longtime top assistant, and gave the job to Bill Johnson. The Bengals had a good first season, followed by a mediocre one, and when they started 0-5 in 1978, Brown fired Johnson.

Meanwhile, the shunned assistant caught on with another franchise for a year, then took a job at the college level, before finally becoming head coach of an NFL team at age 47. He won only eight games in two years, which some thought validated Brown's decision. Then came the 1981 season, and when the San Francisco 49ers won the Super Bowl, the world discovered the West Coast offense and its innovative designer Bill Walsh.

Over the next seven seasons, Walsh brought the Lombardi Trophy back to San Francisco two more times. He also developed some of

*"A big THANKS to YOU!! Your opening session on Thursday was GREAT - so much on target for our group. That made Friday excellent - with amazing participation from everyone!"*

- Maggie F, Texas

*"Awesome newsletter message and fantastic analogy - Love it! Great job."*

- Lori K, Minnesota

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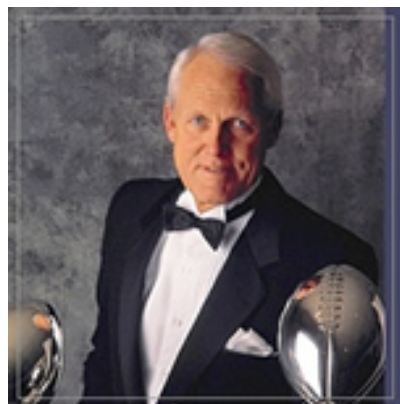
One company made a big splash with its ads during the last two Super Bowls – Go Daddy. To learn the philosophy of its founder, read [last August's article](#) about Bob Parsons.

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## Shared Legacies Coaches United Again

Learning Bill Walsh died of leukemia took me back to that January day in 1982. On the Cowboys

the era's biggest stars including Joe Montana and Jerry Rice. Equally as impressive, he produced a goldmine of coaching talent. Fourteen of the league's 32 current head coaches either served directly under Walsh or trace their lineage back to him.

"The Genius" – as he came to be known – died two weeks ago at age 75, and the praise poured in for him. "The essence of Bill Walsh was that he was an extraordinary teacher," said NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. "If you gave him a blackboard and a piece of chalk, he would become a whirlwind of wisdom. He taught X's and O's with amazing precision, but he also changed the X's and O's."

Changed them with revolutionary decisions like believing a passing attack could set up the run, when decades of conventional wisdom said otherwise. Coming up with the idea for those laminated play sheets you now see every coach carry on the sideline. Scripting the first 15 offensive plays of the game...and rehearsing them like an orchestra during practice.

Deciding to do a little differently what others are already doing isn't a winning strategy; it's too predictable, and you're always playing from behind. Hall of Famers pass on 3rd-and-2 when everyone in the stadium expects a hand-off. Changing the X's and O's is the key for you as a leader. You have to see farther down the road – calling plays well in advance – to achieve championship results. You also have to communicate the game plan to your team effectively, if they're going to take you there.

In researching Bill Walsh, I read articles praising him as: cerebral; innovative; fascinating; ahead of his time. He also had a sense of humor. For the 49ers first Super Bowl, Walsh flew to Detroit ahead of the team for a banquet. When the players arrived, a bellman greeted them at the hotel, and helped carry their luggage. Montana refused to let the older gentleman have his briefcase, and a short tug-of-war ensued...until he realized the bellman was Walsh. Some say that's the best relaxation technique any coach ever used at the Super Bowl.

Like most of us, The Genius had another side, too, described in various articles as: paranoid; ruthless; manipulative; condescending. Yet, the same writers commented on Walsh's ability to identify talent and his commitment to players. "He knew me well before I knew myself, and knew what I could accomplish well before I knew that I could accomplish it," said Steve Young. Always teaching, always leading, always encouraging players and assistants to exceed their self-imposed boundaries. That was the essence of Bill Walsh.

sideline, of course, was another coaching legend – Tom Landry. San Francisco's victory signaled a change of power in the NFC, which Dallas had dominated for 15 years. The next decade belonged to the 49ers. Ironically, Landry died in 2000, also at age 75...and also of leukemia. Somewhere "up there" they must be having great conversation about X's and O's.

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You'll make many decisions in the years ahead. Most will fade from your memory. Then there are the handful that will be game-breakers, and forever change your life and the lives of those around you. Turn to the genius within you to know when the time is right to let it fly deep down the field. It's what legends do.

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### **Bittersweet Memory**

Dwight Clark's TD reception from Joe Montana to give the 49ers a 28-27 victory over the Cowboys in the 1982 NFC Championship game is one of the most replayed highlights in NFL history. People refer to it simply as "The Catch." I refer to it as "The Heartbreak," having grown up in DFW, and being a Cowboys fan since Don Meredith played QB.

That moment knocked Dallas out of the Super Bowl, and kept me from going, too. I was sports producer at KDFW-TV in Dallas, and victory would have meant a trip to cover the game in Detroit. When Clark leapt high in the air and the ball somehow landed in his fingertips at the back of the end zone, I was standing 15 yards away, carrying the recorder for our photographer. To this day, I turn my head whenever that play appears on TV.

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### **Tremendous Accolades**

A trend emerged in the tributes to Bill Walsh. His players spoke of how much they loved him. "For me personally, outside of my dad he was probably the most influential person in my life," said Joe Montana. Jerry Rice added: "I came to San Francisco and I found another father, Bill Walsh. He was always there for me."

Many people visited The Genius in his final days, and, hopefully, shared their feelings with him. He probably would have appreciated hearing it, for he once said: "Nothing is more effective than sincere, accurate praise, and nothing is more lame than a cookie-cutter compliment." That's a good lesson to remember as you lead your team.

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