



Founder's Message



How to Achieve Success

By Robert E. Martin

In the last newsletter, we divulged the "not so secret to happiness." The end of The BMS Project's first two years in business were marked in 2023. You may recall that my Founder's Message revealed a not so secret pearl of wisdom, "to keep gratitude higher than expectations." This quarter, I share another bit of wisdom, "how to achieve success" in four easy steps.

Much like keeping gratitude higher than expectations, achieving success really isn't complicated. In fact, it can be disarmingly simple. First — come up with a good idea; second — test it; third — listen; and, fourth — discard it or fix it to make it happen. As the cartoon character Porky Pig used to stutter... "That's all folks!"

Last quarter, we briefly spoke about our first couple of years striving to refine what we considered to be our original "good idea." Namely, to act in a concierge-like, advisory

role to assist those in need by offering useful suggestions as to where to go and what to do to begin addressing matters involving mental health and suicide prevention.

Additionally, we continue to give support by offering a few "next-step" suggestions beyond the early-step guidance. We also developed a plethora of cursory, but valuable getting-started resources that are accessible and downloadable from our website. We still characterize youth sports as a portal — an entry point — into broader, future constituencies and stakeholders (i.e., athletes of all ages, parents, coaches, officials and communities at-large).

That initial epiphany — the grand idea — to provide suggestions to address athletes' and their families' mental health concerns, subsequently morphed into contributing education, resources and suggestions regarding how to keep things positive and safe in conjunction with sports participation.

In 2024, the emphasis of our efforts still remains with locating and vetting therapists and counselors, addressing mental health concerns, and contributing to suicide prevention. We have broadened the scope of our efforts to include suggested responses to serious risks and threats to safety and well-being such as: 1) sexual misconduct, 2) child abuse, 3) bullying/hazing, 4) addictions/substance abuse and 5) violence risks and threats.

In order to translate our original epiphany into a sustainable, practical, and enduring real-world service, we then conscientiously began creating programs to fulfill our mission to "Assist sports advocates to create positive, safe competitive environments and experiences for athletes and their families; as well as to promote mental health awareness and contribute to suicide prevention."

Our recently announced "Play Safe 2Day Athlete Safety and Well-Being Program in an Envelope" includes three inserts placed inside an envelope to be distributed to teams. These inserts incorporate four pillars of safety and well-being crafted to contribute to the successful accomplishment of our mission. (More about this program below.) All of BMS' current affiliated youth sports organizations have agreed to participate in "proof of concept" field tests of the 2024 Play Safe 2Day Program this spring; and, thusly, jointly participate in its development.

Then, we listen... very intently. Finally, we either discard or fix what needs to be done and make it happen. And that is how we make success happen!

Bob

Announcements



We're Growing!

For the past three years, our Founder, Bob Martin, has operated in a fully engaged, leadership role that began with the inception of The BMS Project concept, then carried forward to convert a good idea into reality. He identified the ingredients to a sound recipe for maintaining success: time, people, money and commitment. And made that happen to get The BMS Project off the ground!

With light-hearted humor sprinkled over a positive, can-do attitude, Bob and the entire BMS founding team have doggedly pursued the very serious business of The BMS Project. The rabbit in the hat has now started to more resemble a crouching tiger. TBD.



Bob, along with theBMSproject.org's President, Larry Lauvetz (pictured) and Executive Committee Chair and advisor, Dr. Francis Martin — with the capable assistance of Laura Adler and Dave Kelsey — have navigated a complex maze of opportunities and have brought The BMS Project to rapidly approach a fresh, new point of embarkation... what we believe will be the starting line to fulfill the great expectations that we were founded on.

With the introduction of The BMS Project's Community Outreach and Play Safe 2Day

programs, we are embarking of a series of "proof of concept" field tests of those BMS programs this spring. Our ideas and programs have been conceived with the intent of mitigating a myriad of grave threats and risks currently posed to athletes' safety and well-being. Our ideas incorporate resources and methods to avert tragedies and contribute to the safety and well-being of their families as well; thereby, directly contributing to the accomplishment of our mission.

In anticipation of the success of the spring field tests, we are proactively taking steps to bolster our infrastructure. The strengthening of resources will provide the capacity to scale-up quickly to whatever is warranted. A team of generous volunteers are busily engaged in developing a manageable database, IT and MIS systems necessary for future growth and expansion.

Simultaneously, we are stepping-up efforts to raise the funds necessary to underwrite that anticipated growth. In last quarter's newsletter, we announced that Kevin Simbeck will be soliciting donations on behalf of The BMS Project. Charles Royer has also assumed a contributing role to assist with applying for grants on our behalf.

In conjunction with the evolution of ongoing resource development and sourcing funding, The BMS Project is taking proactive steps to gradually transition from a personality driven culture to a more sustainable, stable, and traditional organizational structure.

After conceiving, birthing, and continually nurturing The BMS Project, Bob feels that it is time to turn over the reins to new leadership and has begun to relinquish a number of responsibilities and duties that he has performed during our early start-up phase. His plan is to remain active and involved in the continued growth of the organization as a volunteer rather than Executive Board Member. He has already begun incrementally training and turning over day-to-day activities to a cast of newly recruited volunteer officers and support service providers.



We wish Bob well as he finds more time to do the things he enjoys (while continuing to offer guidance and encouragement to The BMS team.)

Welcome to the BMS Family!



Welcome Kristen Abernathy, Executive Director

Please join us in welcoming Kristen Abernathy to the BMS project team. With the following credentials, Kristen's background is spot on for assuming the top leadership post in the organization:

She understands the mindset and challenges of the athletes for whom we aim to reach. Kristen is a former All-American softball pitcher — playing elite softball throughout her youth and playing Division 1 ball at UMKC then transferring after two seasons to play at East Texas

Baptist University, where she earned multiple awards. After finishing her playing career, Kristen graduated and had twin boys. She then started working at Rockhurst University as a softball coach while attending graduate school.

Professionally, Kristen has worn a variety of hats. After coaching, she moved into banking and rose through the ranks to run two branches where she worked with community members to build the brand and took on public relations responsibilities. After leaving the bank, Kristen was given an opportunity to start, build and run a softball training company, Fastpitch Masters. She took the company from an idea to one of the largest softball camp companies in the United States, offering more than 100 camps a year. During this time, Kristen was blessed to have a baby girl and so, after years of working 24/7 and traveling, she stepped away to take a position as a marketing/PR specialist at Its Just Lunch, a high-end matchmaking company. When the pandemic hit, she took a role as a recruiter with a staffing agency and then moved into sales and relationship management. Now, Kristen works as the community relations manager for an industrial EV company that builds, sells, and services fully electric class 8 trucks.

Kristen will gradually assume the Executive Director duties over the course of second quarter of this year and fully assume the reins in July 2024. She will initially be serving in a voluntary capacity.

Welcome Brandon Meyers, Treasurer

Brandon first became aware of The BMS Project while at lunch with a colleague who The BMS Project had phoned to solicit candidates to serve as Treasurer. When he heard about The BMS Project's need, Brandon informed his colleague that he would be interested in hearing more about the role.

Brandon felt a connection to our mission because of his personal experience with his son following a sports injury he suffered. Brandon became all too aware of the need for the type of early, concierge-like service that The BMS Project is endeavoring to fulfill.

Brandon is a professional banking executive overseeing and facilitating residential construction loans. He will initially serve as an Advisory Board Member giving him time to become familiar with the duties of the Treasurer's role.

We extend a warm greeting and welcome to both Kristen and Brandon, as they join The BMS Project family.



Customer Relations



Backend Database and MIS: As The BMS Project grows, so does our list of contacts and organizations for which we need to stay in touch. To this end, we are utilizing several applications to help manage our customer relations including:

Constant Contact — to create and allow theBMSproject.org to manage our database;
Nimble — to manage our customer relations (CRM); and
Zapier — to integrate Constant Contact and Nimble.



Automating Play Safe 2Day Survey

Volunteer software developer Chad Rhoads is working diligently to write proprietary software code that will permit automated registrations for the Play Safe 2Day Program. This onsite survey system will be implemented via cell phones by athletes ages 14 years and older.

The code being written will enable registrants to register to participate in mid- and post-season wellness and attitudes surveys of their teams... the aggregated team results will be returned to the team manager and organizational heads. It is anticipated the beta version of this system will be available for testing by the end of the month.

Development of a downloadable phone app is also being considered.



The Play Safe 2Day Athlete Safety and Well-Being Program in an Envelope & "Help a Friend 2Day" Sticker Program

As noted above, the Play Safe 2Day Athlete Safety and Well-Being Program in an Envelope will contain three inserts which will present what will likely become known as BMS' four pillars:

1. A suggested early-season team discussion utilizing the Top Three Athlete Tips as topic points.
2. An early-season Team Behavior Pledge to set the expectations for acceptable behavior on and off the field.
3. Mid- and post-season Play Safe 2Day safety and well-being team surveys.
4. "Help a Friend 2Day" stickers — QR coded to easily access our safety and well-being messaging.

Our Community Outreach will be field tested with a handful of teams recommended by our various affiliates. Assuming success (and we always do), the crouching tiger will be unleashed.

