



FIBA

We Are Basketball

WINNING AT YOUR OWN GAME: AN ATHLETE'S GUIDE TO OFF-COURT DEVELOPMENT



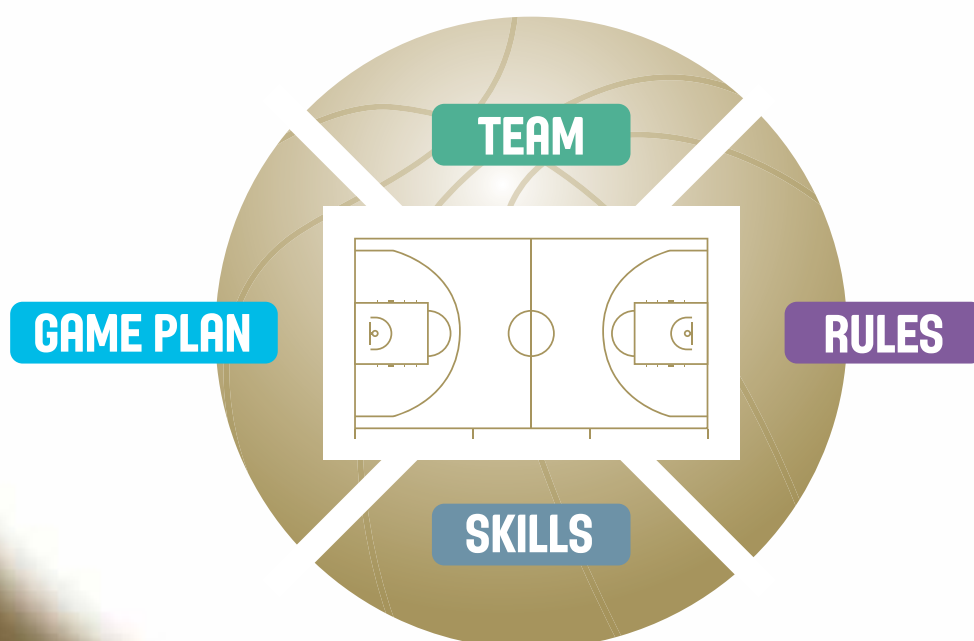
KEY ELEMENTS TO SUCCESS

As an elite Basketball player, you have worked hard to achieve your sporting dreams. You have lived and breathed the game, and now you are enjoying the results of your hard work and planning.

Just as you have developed strong skills to succeed on-the-court, there are aspects to life off-the-court that can help take your career to even greater heights – higher levels of play, earning more money, opportunities to represent the sport, and professional skills to ensure your success after you retire from the game.

At FIBA, we believe that your development and success on-the-court are not separate from your development and success off-the-court. This handbook is designed to help you think about some of the ways that success off-the-court can strengthen your career and prepare you to take full advantage of the opportunities that may come your way.

As we began to develop this handbook, we realised that success on-the-court has many similarities to success off-the-court. If you were to create four categories for the key elements of success on-the-court, it could look like this:



These same four categories – Team, Rules, Skills and Game Plan – apply to your development off-the-court. Consider the comparisons below:

YOUR SUCCESS	ON-THE-COURT	OFF-THE-COURT
Team	Coaches, teammates, managers, trainers	Agents, media, sponsors, FIBA
Rules	Technical regulations, doping, “norms” of the sport	Cultural awareness, conflict resolution and fair play
Skills	Shooting, dribbling, passing, defence	Communication, presentation, professionalism
Game Plan	Defensive/offensive strategy, practice regimen	Goal-setting, education, networking

As an athlete, you want to continually improve in these four areas for on-the-court success. And we at FIBA don’t want you to lose that focus. On the contrary, by developing in each of these four categories, you can maximise your opportunities as an athlete and as a professional. That goes for your career on-the-court and for your professional life after playing hoops.

This handbook is divided into four chapters, one for each of the categories listed above. The contents of each chapter can be summarised as follows:

- **TEAM:** Working with agents, media, sponsors and FIBA, to maximise professional and financial opportunities, while demonstrating the values of the sport in a positive way.
- **RULES:** Knowing how to play by the rules off-the-court, including how to adjust to new cultures, manage conflicts and make good decisions for yourself and your career.
- **SKILLS:** Improving and developing your communication skills, presentation skills and professionalism to make sure you make positive impressions on those who can impact your career in the short-term and long-term.
- **GAME PLAN:** Having the right plan in place to maximise opportunities and manage life after your sporting career, including setting long-term career goals and deciding the steps required to achieve them (e.g. education, skill development, etc.).

Succeeding on-the-court while developing off-the-court go hand-in-hand. Keeping the contents of this handbook in mind will help you realise your full potential and become the most well-rounded athlete – and person – you can be.

Good luck!



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TEAM

On-the-court, you work with your teammates, coaches and trainers to make sure you play as a team and accomplish team goals. You also have a team off-the-court that can help you create opportunities and manage details that keep you focused on playing at your best. By developing good working relationships with agents, sponsors, media and FIBA, you can make the most of your hoops career.



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1.1 AGENTS – CHOOSING AND BENEFITING FROM REPRESENTATION

On-the-court, your trainers and support staff keep you healthy so you can focus on playing well. As your career develops, you may also experience increasing demands for your time that require outside help. This is where an agent can become an important part of your off-court team.

A sports agent represents an athlete and helps identify, pursue and negotiate jobs and endorsement deals. An agent can help you manage your time, allowing you more time to focus on playing the game and performing on-the-court.

Agents have become more and more prevalent throughout the sports industry. In fact, the sports agent job market is expected to grow between 7-13% by 2016. This means that more and more athletes will be looking for representation, which will increase competition for honest, reliable agents.

Therefore, it is more important than ever to think carefully about what you need and want from your agent and what to look for when choosing one. Your agent will be a critical member of your off-court team, so you want to make sure that members of your team have the skills to help you and the kind of trust you can rely on.

In this chapter, we explore some important questions to think about when considering an agent. These questions include:

- What can an agent do for me?
- Do I need an agent?
- How do I choose an agent?
- What should I consider before signing an agent agreement?
- What steps should I take when signing an agent?

Making the decision to work with an agent should be taken very seriously because you are deciding to let someone act on your behalf – in many ways, an agent becomes your voice at the bargaining table. Working with an agent can have real consequences for your career – both positive and negative. Therefore, you must educate yourself about the player-agent relationship and consider many factors before signing any agreements.

WHAT CAN AN AGENT DO FOR ME?

As your career grows, you may experience greater demands on your time. More competitions, media appearances, speaking engagements and travel requirements can leave you with less time to develop and maintain your skills on-the-court.

An agent can help maximise your time by representing you in the following ways:

- **Understanding your value** in the Basketball market and negotiating with team management to pay you what you are worth
- **Understanding your needs and goals** to negotiate the length of your contract, salary and extra incentives that may be available to you
- **Identifying, pursuing and securing additional sources of income** through endorsements, appearances, speaking events, etc.

Some agents can also provide legal and/or financial counseling, but there are some important things to consider before giving too much influence to one person. We discuss these details a little later in this chapter.



DO I NEED AN AGENT?

The first step for you to consider is whether or not you actually need an agent's services. As outlined above, agents can help negotiate on your behalf and identify additional sources of income, thereby giving you more time to focus on your on-court performance. But if your career is not at a level where sponsorship deals and complex contract negotiations are interfering with your performance, then you may not want to make the financial investment of an agent's services.

To help identify your needs, ask yourself the following questions – if you answer yes to all or most of them, then working with an agent may be a good choice:

- Could I use help negotiating my contract/salary with my current team (or am I looking for a new team)?
- Do off-court commitments (e.g. public appearances, travel, etc.) put demands on my time for training, practice, and developing my on-court performance?
- Do I have (or am I looking to gain) sponsorship agreements?
- Do I have an interest in additional sources of income related to my career (e.g. endorsements, speaking tours, etc.)?
- Is my career at a level where I need help managing all the details that come with making more money, having more opportunities, and being contacted for various off-court engagements?



HOW DO I CHOOSE AN AGENT?

Once you have determined that an agent can be useful to your career, you will want to consider some important details when choosing a person to represent you.

While an agent can help take your mind off the administrative and logistical details of life off-the-court, you don't want to surrender all control to your agent. Remember, you are in charge of your career and you are ultimately responsible for overseeing your "business" as an athlete.

Selecting an agent will depend on your needs as an athlete and your personal preferences for the player-agent relationship. However, there are some universal details that any athlete should require of his or her agent.

As such, we have included a list of the **Must Haves** and **Nice to Haves**, and how you can make sure that your agent has the qualities you are looking for.

An agent **must have**:

- **Certification from FIBA to work within international Basketball as an agent.** There is a formal application and testing process for all agents in FIBA, and you can ask FIBA for a full list of certified agents. Information about the certification process can be found using this link: http://www.fiba.com/downloads/training/agents/Players_Agents_Certification_Process.pdf?v=3

Information about FIBA's internal regulations of agents can be found using this link: http://www.fiba.com/downloads/training/agents/Eligibility_Players_Agents.pdf

- **A solid understanding of Basketball and the professional market.** How else can your agent adequately measure your worth or know "who's who" when pursuing new job opportunities? How else can your agent maximise your time if he or she doesn't know the demands of practice, training, travel, etc.?
- **A reputation for honesty, reliability and professionalism.** Did you know that many sports organisations and jurisdictions (e.g. countries, states, cities, clubs, etc.) do not require any official credential, license or minimum level of education to work as a sports agent? This means that an agent's reputation is often the best (and possibly the only) measure of his or her honesty and reliability.

FIBA's agent certification process does much of this work for you, as agents are screened for any criminal background or adverse litigation. However, it is still a good idea to ask your teammates, coaches and Basketball veterans for their opinion about a prospective agent.

To make sure your agent has these must haves, you can:

- Consult your national federation, your coach, teammates and other Basketball professionals to see what other people you trust think of particular agents.
- Conduct an internet search and/or background check on a prospective agent and confirm with FIBA to see if any legal action has been taken against him or her.
- Ask prospective agents to supply you with proof of educational degrees, credentials or licenses that may be relevant to the business and legal aspects of contract negotiation, athlete management, etc.

Your individual personality and level of play will also inform your decision-making when choosing an agent. We call these qualities the nice to haves.

Determine your **nice to haves** by considering these points:

- **Do you want your agent to be part of a large agency, or do you prefer a more personal, one-on-one approach?**

Your answer may have a lot to do with your level of play and what your career requires. Large agencies can offer an extensive network of contacts that can promote potential opportunities with various teams and leagues. These agencies sometimes offer additional in-house services, including legal representation, financial management, travel assistance and estate planning. However, large agencies may charge larger representation fees and agents may have other high-profile clients competing for their time.

Agents who work individually or with smaller agencies may be able to provide more personalised representation and devote more time to you. This could allow them to get to know you more intimately, thereby creating more trust in the player-agent relationship. However, lesser-known agents may lack the experience and proven performance needed to navigate the Basketball world at the highest levels.

The choice you make is ultimately up to you. Consider your needs as a player and think about what is most important to you and best suited for your career needs.

- Do you want your agent to handle only contract negotiations and other matters with team management, or do you want your agent to represent you more broadly with legal and sponsorship matters?

We encourage you to consider using different representatives for different parts of your personal and professional affairs. Think of how your team operates on the Basketball court. It is never effective to have one player taking all the shots. Instead, each player has special skills that the team relies on for maximum performance.

The same is true in managing your off-court matters. Placing complete trust and authority in one person to handle all your matters may sound convenient. However, if something were to go wrong or the trust was breached between you and your agent, it would be better if that breach only affected one aspect of your career instead of all aspects of your career.

Consider using a separate lawyer to plan your estate and a separate financial advisor to manage your money and investments. Your agent may even be able to recommend reputable advisors. While utilising multiple advisors will require you to exercise greater oversight, it could be very beneficial in the long-run if something were to go wrong. (see the FIBA Financial Handbook - <http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/player/p/openNodeIDs/13220/selectNodeID/13220/Financial.html>).

Ultimately, the player-agent relationship is about trust. Your agent may have extensive knowledge of your finances, health and other intimate details about your life. As such, you want to know that you can trust your agent so you can focus on playing Basketball, not worrying about confidentiality.



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WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER BEFORE SIGNING AN AGENT AGREEMENT?

Once you have determined what type of representation you need and which agent can best provide those services, it is important to clearly establish the terms of the player-agent relationship. Consider these points when finalising an agreement with an agent:

- **Be very clear about your goals for your career.** Make sure your agent shares them and is ready (and qualified) to help you achieve them.
- **Require your agent to disclose all of his or her previous professional relationships.** There may be conflicts of interest, and you need to determine if you are comfortable with those potential conflicts before signing any agreements.
- **Create a written contract that both you and the agent will sign.** The contract should clearly state the following criteria: length of agreement, payment structure, expectations of both parties, scope of agent's duties, process for terminating contract, etc.
- **Refer to FIBA's Standard Contract** as a guide for developing a contract with an agent. Here is a link to a sample contract:
http://www.fiba.com/downloads/training/agents/Standard_Contract_Players_Agent_Player.pdf
- **Refer to FIBA's "Suggested points between Club & Player" document** to see a list of points that FIBA encourages you to address when developing a contract with an club. Below is a link to that document:
http://www.fiba.com/downloads/training/agents/Suggested_points_between_ClubPlayer.pdf
- **Refer to the clauses from the Basketball Arbitral Tribunal (BAT)** that pertain to player-agent-club relationships to understand important agent-club related considerations before signing a final agreement. Make sure to insert the BAT dispute resolution clause in all your contracts.
- **Consider consulting a lawyer** to go over (or draft) the terms of the contract before you sign anything. This will give you peace of mind and allow you to clarify or revise any unclear or unacceptable terms before an agreement is signed.
- **Translate the contract if it is not written in your primary language.** Ask that it be translated by a trusted source to ensure you fully understand the terms of the contract.
- **Include in the contract an annual or semi-annual review of your finances** if you have entrusted your agent to handle all off-court matters. Get this review done by an independent auditor. This will keep your agent accountable for his or her management of your finances, as well as provide you with greater peace of mind.

Once you have thoughtfully considered all aspects of who your agent should be and what he or she should do for you, trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, or if you have concerns before signing anything, be sure to address those feelings and concerns. Don't feel pressured to commit to anything with which you are not entirely comfortable. Take your time and remember that this decision will have a significant impact on your career.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD I TAKE TO SECURE AN AGENT?

Below is a checklist you can use to walk through the process of signing an agent. If you already have an agent, portions of this checklist may still be helpful for reviewing and/or strengthening certain aspects of your relationship with your current agent.

Pre-planning

- Determine if your current level of play in Basketball requires you to have an agent:
 - Are off-the-court details such as public appearances, sponsorship commitments and travel interfering with your performance?
 - If so, an agent may be helpful to maximise your time.
 - If not, an agent may not make financial sense. Instead, focus on improving your level of play, and then reconsider getting an agent when your career goes to the next level.

Choosing an agent

- Determine what kind of representation you want:
 - Large agency or one-on-one representation
 - Comprehensive representation in all matters (business, financial, legal, etc.), or only representation in team-related matters (contract negotiation, etc.)
- Consult FIBA's list of certified FIBA Agents and ask your national federation, coaches and trusted colleagues about the reputation of prospective agents.
- Conduct a background search on agents you are interested in working with and verify all educational degrees, credentials and/or licenses of prospective agents.

Making an agreement

- Require your agent to disclose all previous professional relationships to identify any conflicts of interest.
- Create a written contract detailing the terms of the agreement between you and the agent (e.g. length of agreement, payment structure, scope of agent's role, process for terminating contract, etc.). If an agent is going to handle your finances consider using an independent auditor to conduct regular audits of your accounts.
- Before signing anything, review the contract with an outside lawyer and if necessary, have the contract translated into your native language to ensure you understand the terms and obligations.

1.2 MEDIA – INTERACTING WITH THOSE WHO COVER OUR SPORT

Did you know that Basketball is the second most popular sport in the world? Only football (soccer) draws more participants and spectators. And no sport becomes popular without major media attention – can you imagine the World Cup being what it is today without media coverage?

Athletes and sports media have had a love-hate relationship for decades. On one hand, the media are directly responsible for spreading news about our sport. This grows the game, expands the market and leads to more opportunities for athletes than ever before.

On the other hand, as technology changes and information becomes more instantly available, the spotlight of media coverage on elite athletes is brighter than ever. It seems common these days to open a newspaper or read a sports news website and see another story about a successful athlete involved in some kind of scandal – doping, financial, gambling, sexual, etc.

But rather than viewing the media as “the bad guys” in your career, think of them as an integral part of your off-court team. Just like the fans who watch your games or the statisticians who track your progress, the media care about the game and are genuinely interested in the health and development of our sport.

As part of your off-court team, the media present you with significant opportunities for professional growth and exposure. At the same time, you should be conscious of today’s media-driven age and the professional responsibilities that come with it.

To help you navigate media relations during your career, we have developed some key questions to ask yourself and some useful strategies to use when interacting with sports media. These questions include:

- When will I encounter the media and how can I prepare?
- How can I develop my image by interacting with the media?
- How are public appearances different than game-related interviews?
- How do I handle uncomfortable moments with the media?
- What steps can I take when interacting with the media?

For the most part, the media is on your side and wants to work with you as you develop as an athlete. While the scrutiny of the media may intensify as your career grows, remembering these key points and simple strategies can go a long way in helping you build a mutually-beneficial relationship with sports media.

WHEN WILL I ENCOUNTER THE MEDIA?

Whether you play in a major international Basketball league or a smaller, developing club, there are always going to be journalists and media outlets covering your games. Depending on your level of play and the popularity of the team you play for, the level of media coverage (and scrutiny) will vary. But the following is a list of events during which you can expect the presence of media in some capacity:

- Regular season games
- Playoffs, league championships and major international events (world championships, continental championships, Olympics, etc.)
- Pre-season practices and training camps
- Athlete drafts
- Public appearances

At large Basketball events, there is likely to be an area called the “mixed zone”. This is an area directly off-the-court where media gather to cover the event and interview athletes following the game. Larger events such as the Olympic Games or World Championships will feature a very large, sometimes chaotic mixed zone that will have both domestic and international press, while smaller events may only feature a few journalists looking for a brief comment from an athlete. Either way, being prepared for all types of these situations will help you be more confident in your interactions, which will help you make a positive impression on the media, your team and your fans.

Being prepared is also important because the media may contact you at any time. While you may be prepared for direct contact from the media – phone calls, emails or in person questions – there is also the possibility that the media may “contact” you through indirect means. These include watching your behaviours on-the-court or off-the-court, searching online (e.g. Google, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) for stories, articles or other media about you or contacting friends, family, or acquaintances for comments about you. Whichever method the media may use to contact you, being prepared can help you influence the media’s perception of you. This can be an important part of building a good relationship with the media and developing a strong reputation that can lead to new professional and financial opportunities.



HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR INTERACTIONS WITH THE MEDIA?

You probably didn't make a three-pointer the first time you shot a Basketball. Similarly, it will take some practice to feel more comfortable talking with the press. But there are some simple things you can do at all levels of your career to ensure that you are confident and poised when presenting yourself to sports media.

- **Be yourself.** It may sound simple, but being yourself will put you at ease. You will convey yourself more accurately and represent your team more genuinely.
- **Gather your thoughts.** You won't always feel like speaking with the press, and sometimes you will have to even though you don't want to. Take a moment after the game ends to take a few breaths and think about what you will say. Doing so will keep your emotions in check and help prevent you from saying something you may regret once the intensity of the moment cools down.
- **Think of how you want to be perceived.** What you say and how you say it reflect directly on you – it affects how your fans, your team, your sponsors and the media perceive you. Remember that everything you say (and do) communicates a message, whether you like it or not. That is especially true in today's era of sound-bytes, texts and instant messaging. If you want to reflect a positive image, keep that at the front of your mind when responding to media.
- **Remember your environment.** If you're traveling outside your country or playing for an international team, you may have to respond to media inquiries that are not in your native language. Be prepared by having a few key messages prepared in the language of the media outlet with whom you are interacting. This will make a positive impression on international media and develop your image as an international athlete.
- **Ask for advice.** Take advantage of the experiences your teammates and other veteran athletes and coaches have had with the media. Ask them some questions about how they approach the media and what strategies they have used in difficult or uncomfortable situations.
- **Media training.** Depending on your level of play and resources available to your team or federation, you may want to consider formal media training. Media trainers are experts in how the media operate and they provide tips and techniques to individuals who face the media regularly. Investing in media training can pay off tremendously, especially if you play at a level where media scrutiny is particularly intense.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP MY IMAGE BY INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA?

Just like sports journalists want stories or information from you, you too can get something from your interactions with the media. We already mentioned that everything you do (and say) communicates. As such, each time you speak with the press or have your picture taken at an event, you have an opportunity to shape the image you want to convey to fans, teammates, sponsors and other interested parties.

Most every athlete wants to develop a positive image. However, not every athlete remembers that his comments to the press after a loss or an angry outburst at officials during a game directly affect how he or she is perceived. Building a positive image is just like building a great jump shot – you have to practice the fundamentals and make it a part of your routine.

Consider these points when trying to promote a positive image, especially when interacting with the media:

- **Think before you speak.** Take a breather after a game or practice before addressing the press. Doing so will keep you calm even though events around you may be frustrating or disappointing.
- **Be honest without being negative.** It's OK to be disappointed about losing a big game or frustrated with an off performance. You can share those feelings with the media, but try to put a positive spin on it. For example, if you missed most of your shots in a big game, let the media know that you are frustrated with your level of play in the game, but you look forward to practicing more to improve for the next game.
- **Actions can speak louder than words.** Words are not the only way to shape your image. The things you do also matter. Being polite and staying cool under pressure can go a long way in building a positive image. Getting upset on-the-court or arguing with teammates and coaches in front of the press can give you a reputation for being difficult or aggressive, both of which can tarnish your prospects for new contracts, endorsement deals and developing a bigger fan base.
- **Privacy is rare these days.** In this era of Twitter, YouTube and video cameras on mobile phones, you never know when the things you do or say will be transmitted to an audience you never intended to see or hear them. When out in public, be aware of your surroundings and remember that fame brings increased levels of attention and curiosity. Carry yourself responsibly and ask yourself what teammates, coaches, sponsors and family might think before doing anything in public that could be embarrassing or damaging to your image.

HOW ARE PUBLIC APPEARANCES DIFFERENT THAN GAME-RELATED INTERVIEWS?

You may have several opportunities during your career to make public appearances as a member of your team or as an individual athlete. Schools, civic groups and health and sports organisations may ask you to appear or speak at events related to your profile and success as an athlete.

In these instances, you may not face the intense questioning of reporters following the excitement of a game. But these opportunities are a great way to practice your media skills and refine your positive image.

Without being too scripted, it may be useful to create a brief story or message about your background as an athlete. Developing a message gives your remarks a foundation and you can use that foundation in all appearances that you make. Consider the following points when developing an effective message:

- **Who's my audience?** Knowing your audience is key to developing the right messages – you will speak to children in a much different way and about different things than you will when speaking to dignitaries or other elite athletes.
- **What are my key points?** Considering your audience and the environment you are speaking in, ask yourself what the three most important things you want to convey are. What do you want the audience/media to take away from your remarks?
- **How do these points relate to Basketball?** Make the connection between your main points and your career in Basketball. The audience wants to hear about your background and your experiences in Basketball, so connect that to your broader message.
- **What's my body language saying?** Be sure that the way you present yourself physically supports the messages you want to convey. If you are speaking to dignitaries about the ability of sports to impact international relations, you want to be sure to stand tall, use confident hand gestures and dress professionally. Remember, everything you do sends a message.
- **Have I rehearsed enough?** Depending on your natural abilities as a speaker or presenter, you want to make sure you have practiced your remarks enough to feel confident making them. Never go to an appearance unprepared, especially if you are new to public appearances. Being uncomfortable will reflect in your presentation and could affect the image others have of you, which could affect your chances of being invited back to appear at other events.



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HOW DO I HANDLE UNCOMFORTABLE MOMENTS WITH THE MEDIA?

While most interviews, press conferences and appearances will be professional and civil, there may be times when interacting with the media becomes uncomfortable. A journalist may ask you to comment about a teammate's on-court performance or off-court private life, or an interviewer may press you about negotiations with another team.

Even though a situation may get uncomfortable, there are some strategies you can use to ease the tension and steer the conversation in a more positive direction.

- **Stay calm.** When you feel that a question makes you uncomfortable, take a moment to think and not overreact. By overreacting, you may give the journalist a new story to report.
- **Feel free to ask for clarification.** You should never comment on something about which you are not informed. Don't feel pressured to answer a question just because it is asked. Politely ask for more information, and if you feel more comfortable once it has been provided, then proceed accordingly.
- **It's OK to say, "I don't know."** If you don't feel like you have all the facts, or if you feel like the interviewer is leading you down an uncomfortable line of questioning, feel free to say (politely and calmly) that you don't have enough information to make a well-informed comment. If it's about another teammate, you can say that you don't comment on other players, and if it's about your personal life, you can say that you only comment on your professional career, not your private life.
- **Trust your intuition.** If a line of questioning is making you uncomfortable, trust the way you are feeling. It may be that you don't have enough information or that the questioning is entering an aspect of your life that you prefer to keep private. While you are a public figure and commenting to the media will be part of your career, you can set reasonable boundaries that you expect the media to respect.

The key to any uncomfortable moment with the media is staying calm, polite and professional. By doing so, you deflect the tension, establish a clear boundary and take the conversation in a more comfortable direction. You also develop credibility as someone the media respects, while building a positive image as an athlete who stays professional under pressure.

WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA?

In summary, there are some key things to remember when interacting with the media in any environment. Remembering these points and integrating them into your professional development will build your skill sets and lead to smoother interactions and a more positive image off-the-court:

- Stay calm
- Be polite and approachable
- Be positive whenever possible
- Get advice from teammates and veteran athletes
- Think before you speak
- Everything you do and say communicates
- Actions often speak louder than words
- Don't discuss other players, coaches or officials unless planned and discussed in advance
- Feel free not to comment when you don't have adequate information or feel the questioning is inappropriate
- Consider your environment (language, culture, etc.) when working with the media
- Be aware of your surroundings when out in public



1.3 SPONSORS – WORKING WITH THOSE WHO INVEST IN YOU

Cal Ripken, Jr., one of the best baseball players of all-time, started his career in 1981. That year, he signed an endorsement deal with a small hot dog company. The specific worth of the contract is unknown, but it is safe to say that a sponsorship agreement in 1981 between a rookie athlete and a regional hot dog company probably pales in comparison to some of today's multi-million dollar endorsement deals.

But as Ripken's career developed over the next 21 years, he became one of the most popular and respected athletes in American sport. Not only was he likeable, but he stood out because he had a reputation for endurance, hard work and reliability (Ripken holds the record for most consecutive games played, playing in 2,632 straight games from 1982-1998). As a result, his endorsement opportunities grew, and by the time he set the record for consecutive games played, Ripken was baseball's top-earning endorser. His contracts with Chevrolet pick-up trucks, Starter athletic apparel and other companies were estimated to total close to 9 million USD.

Not every athlete will experience the success that Cal Ripken did – either on the field of play or off. But his story demonstrates the role of sponsorship in professional sport. As a professional Basketball player, you receive financial support from your club for your performance on-the-court. And as your Basketball career develops, your opportunities for off-court financial support will likely increase. Sponsorship is a primary source of this off-court income. Therefore, sponsors can become an invaluable part of your off-court team.

So you may be asking yourself, how can I attract sponsorship agreements? In this section, we offer ideas and tips that can help you optimise your potential for sponsorship deals. Topics covered include:

- What do I offer potential sponsors?
- What is the value of what I offer?
- How can I identify potential sponsors and be what they want me to be?
- How do I maintain (and grow) existing relationships with sponsors?

It is important to remember that many athletes may not be at a level of play where sponsorship is a realistic opportunity. However, all athletes seek to improve their performance and level of play over the course of their career. And with those improvements, greater opportunities may come to work with sponsors. Therefore, keep these ideas and strategies in mind, even if endorsement deals are not currently a part of your career. The truth is, the reputation you build at the early stages of your career will impact how marketable you are when you are playing hoops at higher and higher levels.

WHAT DO I OFFER POTENTIAL SPONSORS?

Before you can maximise your potential as an endorser for certain products or organisations, you have to know what you are selling. As a potential endorser, you are essentially selling two things:

- Your on-court reputation for performance
- Your off-court reputation for the type of person you are

Cal Ripken is a perfect example. His reputation on the field of play was centered around reliability and endurance. Off the baseball diamond, he was known as a very likeable guy who was a role model for integrity and honesty. As a result, he attracted sponsors whose brands represented the same image, including automobile companies and athletic apparel manufacturers.

As you begin looking into sponsorship deals, it can be helpful to make a list of what you offer in both categories. What you are looking for is a “competitive advantage” – in other words, what skills do you have on-the-court and what qualities do you have off-the-court that distinguish you from other athletes playing at your level and in your market.

On the on-court performance side, consider your Basketball skills. Are you known for a high shooting percentage, a high number of assists or perhaps intense defensive skills? Knowing what your skills are will help you position yourself with potential sponsors.

Also consider your exposure in terms of Basketball. Are you well-known in a particular country or regional market? Does your team have international exposure? In addition to knowing your skills, you also want to understand your visibility as an athlete. This will influence which sponsors may be interested in working with you because their sales goals usually have target markets in mind.

On the off-court side, you will want to list the qualities and attributes you possess that could set you apart from other potential endorsers. Do you have a reputation for being a team player? Or perhaps you speak several languages? Are you a good public speaker? Understanding your competitive advantages as a person will help you determine which sponsors may be particularly good matches for you, your image and your career development.



WHAT IS THE VALUE OF WHAT I OFFER?

Knowing what you are selling is key, but you must also determine the value of what you are selling so you can approach potential sponsors with specific monetary amounts for your endorsement. The amount you come up with should not be based on your own financial needs or goals. Instead, you must base the value of what you are selling on what it is actually worth.

Determining value can be very challenging because there are no set standards for how much specific skills on-the-court or unique qualities off-the-court are worth. But a good agent can help you determine your worth as a potential endorser. Additionally, you can talk to coaches, teammates, your national federation and other personal contacts who may have a sense of how valuable your potential endorsement could be relative to the market you are in.

Being able to articulate and explain your value is helpful both for you and prospective sponsors. You can feel more confident that you are earning what your services are worth, and at the same time, sponsors will have a better understanding of how you arrived at the monetary amount you are requesting. It may be helpful to arrange the things you can offer into packages that are priced accordingly. This strengthens your position at the bargaining table by giving sponsors some choices rather than an “all or nothing” approach. They can feel good about the deal they are making, and you strengthen your reputation for professionalism and flexibility.

It is worth noting that sponsorship agreements are often undervalued early in an athlete's career. Do not worry too much about that. Early deals can be invaluable learning experiences for bigger deals in the future. As such, you may not want to enter into any long-term deals early on because you want to have the option of renegotiating should your value increase quickly.



HOW CAN I IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SPONSORS AND BE WHAT THEY WANT ME TO BE?

In many ways, your level of play will determine how easily leads present themselves. For players in the biggest leagues and in the most visible markets, sponsors may be approaching them to discuss sponsorship. Athletes in smaller markets or playing in smaller clubs or federations may need to be more proactive in how they approach sponsorship.

An agent can and should be very useful in this area. In fact, it may be part of your agreement with your agent that he or she actively identifies and pursues sponsorship deals.

Whichever way you decide to pursue leads, there are some basic things you can do to get the process started. For example, create a long list of possible sponsors. This list should include obvious, Basketball-related products and companies, in addition to products and companies that you support or enjoy using. You and your agent can then work through the list and try to initiate discussions with interested companies. Ideas include:

BASKETBALL-RELATED PRODUCTS	PRODUCTS YOU ENJOY USING
Equipment (Basketball, nets, etc.)	Clothing (non-basketball)
Apparel (shoes, shorts, headbands, etc.)	Personal care products (deodorant, etc.)
Training (medical gear, equipment, etc.)	Service businesses (restaurants, banks, airlines, etc.)

And be alert at Basketball events for companies who are already actively involved in sponsoring the sport of Basketball. These companies may also be interested in partnering with individual athletes, so you and your agent should always be prepared. There is no “magic trick” to ensure that you match the needs of a potential sponsor. Remember that sponsors are taking a calculated risk when they sign an agreement with an athlete endorser. Therefore, they are quite particular about the process they go through and the qualities they are looking for.

The best sponsorship agreements are those in which the sponsor firmly believes in and trusts the athlete and the athlete genuinely supports the product he or she is endorsing. For example, Cal Ripken supports programmes that encourage children to be active and play outdoors. As such, it was natural for him to partner with a laundry detergent company whose advertisements show kids getting their clothes dirty playing outside.

You cannot “force” that type of natural relationship. But what you can do is pursue agreements with companies you honestly support and would enjoy endorsing. Likewise, sponsors are more likely to pursue deals with athletes they trust to represent them, so anything you can do throughout your career to demonstrate trust, reliability and responsibility (professionally and personally) can help you match your sponsors’ needs. Be yourself, be friendly and demonstrate through actions (not just words) that a potential sponsor can trust you to represent their brand.

HOW DO I MAINTAIN (AND GROW) EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SPONSORS?

Despite all his endorsement opportunities over his long career in baseball, Cal Ripken still has an endorsement deal with the same hot dog company that signed him in 1981. In the business of athlete sponsorship, it is always easier to renew an existing contract than to sign a new one. Therefore, it is critical to nurture your existing relationships to promote the chances of a longer-term deal.

Some experts in the field of sponsorship claim that most sponsorship deals last about as long as the average marriage. While you won't have to get on bended knee when working with sponsors, you may want to think of the dynamic between you and your sponsors the same way as you think about important relationships in your personal life. Most healthy relationships require a significant amount of work and effort. There will be challenges along the way, but in the process, you can build trust and strengthen the partnership.

Below are some hints for you to keep in mind when building your relationship with existing sponsors:

- **Create a professional partnership.** The relationship between an athlete and a sponsor is a true business partnership. For the relationship to be successful, each party must genuinely care about the other. You can show sponsors that you care about and appreciate their support of your career by interacting with them professionally at all times.

Most interactions you have with sponsors (both existing and potential ones) present opportunities to demonstrate your professionalism. Here are a few ways to show professionalism:

- Honour your commitments. Be on time, follow through and keep your word.
- Be accessible. Keep all contact information current and make sure your sponsor can reach you (or your point of contact) when they need to.
- Propose a schedule for regular contact. Set up a regular time to discuss progress – weekly, monthly – and establish the preferred means of communication – in-person, video conference, telephone, email, etc.
- Keep your sponsor up-to-date on your professional activities and personal commitments. Will you be traveling for a long period of time or be unavailable for regular contact? Let your sponsors know so they can plan accordingly.
- Don't ever let your sponsor be surprised by something you have said or done. If you say or do something publicly or on-the-court that may affect the sponsorship agreement, let your sponsor know immediately. This way, you can resolve the issue quickly and build trust in the process.

- **Make sure you and your sponsor share the same vision.** In any successful business partnership, both parties must be working toward the same goal and have clear ways of achieving them and measuring progress toward them.

From the beginning of the relationship, sit down with your sponsor and discuss the goals of the relationship from their perspective and yours. Both parties have to be realistic. You cannot promise that your team will win the World Championships or an Olympic gold medal. Conversely, you cannot expect your sponsor to finance your entire training regimen or limitless first-class travel.

Both sides must manage the expectations of the other to prevent anyone from being let down or disappointed in the relationship. As such, it can also be helpful to identify the limitations of the relationship in addition to the objectives of the relationship.

- **Regularly evaluate the relationship.** Once you have a shared vision in place and methods for achieving it, you will want to evaluate how the sponsorship is progressing from time to time.

Set up a mutually-agreeable framework for evaluation – semi-annual or annual reviews, regular conference calls, etc. Ask for feedback from your sponsor as to how they see your progress in terms of fulfilling the sponsorship agreement. At the same time, you can provide feedback from your experience with the sponsor, and together you can refine the relationship to make sure both parties are satisfied with its progress.

- **Find opportunities to add value...always.** As long as you are seen by the sponsor as adding value to their products, services and brand image, you have a very strong chance of renewing an agreement and possibly broadening its scope.

But just like personal relationships, the other party has to believe that you care and that you bring added value. You can find ways to surprise your sponsors and show them that you are aware of their needs and listening to their goals. Learn more about their products, complete a public speaking course or find other ways to bring more than just your name or athletic prowess to the relationship.

“Wow” your sponsor and your relationship will continue to grow to everyone’s benefit.

Sponsorships should never be the sole focus of your career, but they can be a motivating factor to improving your on-court performance. Furthermore, your sponsors should be seen as an important part of your off-court team. Working together with your sponsors, you can achieve greater exposure, develop new skills and earn more income, and your sponsors can reach new markets, sell more products and support the game of Basketball. It truly can be a “win-win” situation for everyone.

1.4 FIBA – MAXIMISING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FIBA

As Basketball becomes more and more popular, we at FIBA are always trying to provide current, responsive and exciting programmes and services that meet the needs of our members.

As one athlete among thousands, you may feel like a small piece of the puzzle considering there are 213 national federations across five geographical Zones. And you may wonder how FIBA relates to your career, or if FIBA can really benefit you directly. We at FIBA want you to know that you are part of the FIBA Family wherever you play, and our programmes and services can play an important role in your development on and off-the-court.

We at FIBA wear many hats. Of course, we regulate the sport worldwide, administer the rules and oversee arbitration and disputes. But we are far more than just an administrative body. We are committed to developing the game around the world and doing all we can to help athletes, coaches, officials and national federations reach their full potential. This includes providing these groups with useful, up-to-date resources that keep everyone informed and focused on playing hoops at the highest level possible.

You may be asking yourself, “What is FIBA all about?” or “How can I benefit from FIBA?”. In this section, we want to answer those questions by sharing with you how FIBA is structured and describing our programmes, products and services in more detail. That way, you know the kinds of resources available to you and how to access them. Sections in this chapter include:

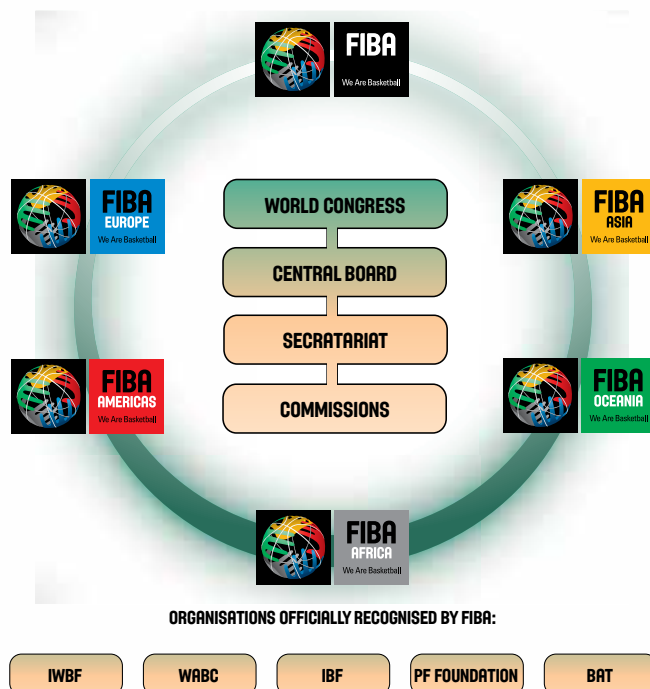
- How is FIBA structured?
- How am I connected to FIBA?
- How can I benefit from the FIBA website?
- How can I benefit from FIBA programmes, products and services?
- How can I contact FIBA?



HOW IS FIBA STRUCTURED?

As the international governing body for the sport of Basketball, FIBA has an organisational structure designed to manage the sport effectively while being attentive to the many groups under its leadership. These groups include (but are not limited to) national federations, athletes, coaches, officials and agents.

The following illustration outlines FIBA's organisational structure, and the paragraphs that follow explain the role of each level of the federation:



- **FIBA** – The administrative headquarters of FIBA is based in Geneva, Switzerland and oversees 213 national federations around the world. These federations are divided into five "FIBA Zones", each of which provides regional governance and oversight in certain parts of the world. These Zones include:
 - **FIBA Africa** – www.fiba-afrique.org
 - **FIBA Americas** – www.fibaamerica.com
 - **FIBA Asia** – www.fibaasia.net
 - **FIBA Europe** – www.fibaeurope.com
 - **FIBA Oceania** – www.fibaoceania.com

- **World Congress** – The FIBA Congress is the leading authority of the federation and has governing authority of FIBA's General Statutes, election of officers and other key leadership functions. Every two years, the 213 national federations gather at the FIBA World Congress to discuss and decide the biggest issues facing the sport. Each federation is entitled to one voting member at the World Congress, and one additional (non-voting) delegate per federation is allowed.
- **Central Board** – The executive leadership of FIBA includes a President (currently Ivan Mainini) and a Secretary General (currently Patrick Baumann). These two representatives are supported by a Central Board made up of 20 members distributed around the world. Members of the Central Board meet twice a year and, among other things, set the internal regulations of the game and assign the organisation of all FIBA World Championships.
- **Secretariat** – FIBA consists of eight departments that organise and execute the day-to-day operations of the federation. These departments include:
 - Administration
 - Finance and Human Resources
 - Sport and Eligibility
 - Sport and Development
 - Communications
 - Study Centre
 - Commercial
 - Information Technology

The Secretariat also oversees and supports organisation and administration of five organisations important to the values and mission of FIBA. These organisations include:

- **International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF)** – The IWBF provides opportunities for persons with physical disabilities to play the sport of Wheelchair Basketball.
- **World Association of Basketball Coaches (WABC)** – The WABC is an organisation that supports Basketball coaches around the world, providing them a place to share information, build new skills and develop best practices in the sport.
- **International Basketball Foundation (IBF)** - The newly set up International Basketball Foundation, will work on a number of projects ranging from safeguarding the heritage of the sport to overseeing education and charity projects. It currently oversees the development of the new headquarters of FIBA.
- **FIBA Pedro Ferrándiz Foundation** – This foundation supports and international research and documentation center for the sport of Basketball. Based in Madrid, Spain, the foundation includes a museum and a library that includes written documents, video and photographs relating to the sport.
- **BAT** – the Basketball Arbitral Tribunal (BAT), formerly known as the FIBA Arbitral Tribunal (FAT), is a service that helps resolve disputes that may arise between players coaches, agents and clubs (for more information, see page 36).

- Commissions – There are eleven permanent commissions responsible for overseeing, studying and advancing specific areas of the game. These commissions include:
 - **International Competitions Commission** – responsible for overseeing regulations for international competitions
 - **Women's Basketball Commission** – responsible for women's Basketball worldwide
 - **Youth Basketball Commission** – responsible for the development and opportunities for young Basketball players
 - **Ethics Commission** – responsible for overseeing ethical guidelines in Basketball (members appointed by the FIBA Congress)
 - **Legal Commission** – responsible for the development of general by-laws and internal FIBA regulations, and applying regulations governing the eligibility and national status of players
 - **Technical Commission** – responsible for proposing changes to the Official Basketball Rules and the training of referees
 - **Medical Commission** – responsible for consulting on all medical matters, including doping controls
 - **Finance Commission** – responsible for studying and recommending ways to assure FIBA's financial resources, including development of the financial report with the Treasurer of FIBA
 - **Appeals' Tribunal** – responsible for hearing appeals and arbitrating disputes within the world of Basketball
 - **Membership Commission** – responsible for monitoring the relationship between FIBA and its national member federations, monitoring the evolution of the Statutes and International Regulations of the national member federations as well as reviewing applications for membership



HOW AM I CONNECTED TO FIBA?

Even if you live and play thousands of miles from FIBA's headquarters in Geneva, you are closely connected to FIBA each day of your career. Every element of the game – its promotion, the rules, competition schedules and management, coaches education, etc. – has a presence in your day-to-day career as a player. Even the markings on the court where you play each day are an initiative from the FIBA main office. And the ball you hold and the basket you shoot for are approved by the FIBA Study Center.

One of the key links between you and FIBA is through your national federation. FIBA supplies national federations with important information and guidelines that directly impact your experience in the sport. Whenever you reach out to your federation for information or guidance on agent relations, anti-doping regulations or other important topics, FIBA has usually delivered that information directly to the federation. As such, your national federation may often be the best source for direct service and information relating to the local, regional and national laws under which you are working and living.

However, we at FIBA offer a wide range of programmes, products and services that can support you in your career on and off-the-court. Many of our service offerings are available online and the next section details our website in more detail. FIBA is always ready to respond to questions, concerns and ideas from athletes. Information for contacting FIBA directly is provided at the end of this chapter. When it comes to issues that affect the sport of Basketball, FIBA is the place to turn.



HOW CAN I BENEFIT FROM THE FIBA WEBSITE?

As the governing body for international Basketball, FIBA is the best source for information about the international game and the best source for programmes, products and services that can directly benefit your development on and off-the-court. So how can you benefit from FIBA and its service offerings? The next two sections should help answer that question in greater detail.

The best place to find the most current, up-to-date information is the FIBA website – www.fiba.com. The sections of the website that you may find most useful include:

- [Inside FIBA](#)
- [News](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Experts](#)

Below is an overview of each section and the contents of each one that you as an athlete may find helpful:

Inside FIBA

- [FIBA overview](#). Here you will find information about FIBA as an organisation, including its history, leadership team, overall mission and interesting statistics.

As an elite Basketball player, you are an ambassador for our sport worldwide. Therefore, it could serve you well to have a general understanding about the history of international Basketball and who is currently leading the sport. See the “How is FIBA structured?” section above to get a more thorough understanding of how FIBA is organised and how different commissions and departments relate to each other.

As your career develops and you start to play at higher levels, knowing “who’s who” can be very useful when networking, exploring career opportunities and growing our sport internationally.

- **Rules of the game.** In this section are the complete and authoritative rules of the game, including procedural rules, officiating and equipment standards and protocol.

As an active athlete, you are well-versed in the rules of the sport. But changes are made from time to time. Your club and coaches are kept fully up-to-date on any changes to the rules governing play. However, if you ever have any questions or need additional explanation or clarification about the rules, this section of the website will be very handy.

News

Much of your time is dedicated to training and preparing for peak performance on-the-court. With such a busy schedule, it can be challenging to stay up-to-date about what is going on in Basketball around the world. But like any line of work, the best professionals are those who know what is going on in their industry and can speak about it with authority.

This is another way FIBA can be very useful to you. In the “News” section of our website, you will find the latest news in international Basketball. This includes headlines from major Basketball events and major clubs, as well as access to news feeds from each country and geographic Zone under FIBA’s jurisdiction.

FIBA also provides a daily newsletter with updates and information delivered each day to your email. By signing up, you can stay up-to-date each day when you check your email at home, at the gym or in your free time.

Events

This section provides information about major FIBA and FIBA Zone events (e.g. World Championships, Olympic Games, Youth Olympic Games, age group championships, etc.). While you and your team will be fully in touch with your schedule of events, FIBA can provide you with a global view of what events are taking place in international Basketball.

Experts

The “Experts” section allows FIBA to provide specific constituency groups with information that is especially relevant to their stake in the sport. This section includes the following groups that you as an athlete may be interested in:

- **“Players Corner”** – Here you will find electronic versions of this handbook and FIBA’s “Athletes Financial Handbook”. The financial handbook was produced in 2009 to provide players at all levels with practical advice and things to consider when managing their finances. You may find this a very helpful tool as you begin managing your resources as an athlete. Here is a link to the Player’s Corner:
<http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/player/p/openNodeIDs/13220/selectNodeID/13220/Financial.html>

- **“Coaches Corner”** – This section is intended primarily for coaches, but may offer athletes some useful insight and training information. The main element is access to the FIBA Coaching Library, which provides coaches with news about coaches, training techniques and ideas that can help them develop their coaching skills. You can also search a database to find certified FIBA coaches. To access the FIBA Coaching Library, use the following link: <http://coachinglibrary.fiba.com/pages/eng/cl/p/index.html>
- **“Medical Corner”** – This section provides additional information about anti-doping policies and statistics that players may find useful, including all information relating to FIBA's Clean Game campaign. We at FIBA take anti-doping programming very seriously, and as an athlete, you will want to as well. The integrity of our sport is directly linked to the choices you make, so you want to stay current and fully aware of the anti-doping procedures that all athletes are subject to.

Use FIBA as your primary resource for all information related to anti-doping policies and the Clean Game campaign. Violating anti-doping requirements can have major consequences for your career – unemployment, a tarnished reputation, poor health – and you want to make sure that substances you consume innocently do not contain materials you didn't know were prohibited by FIBA.

While your team and trainers will help you stay current on anti-doping information, you can always turn to FIBA for the latest news in this area. Here is a link to the Medical Corner: <http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/medi/antiDopi/p/openNodeIDs/1177/selNodeID/1177/ruleProc.html>

- **“FIBA Agent Corner”** – This is a very useful tool for athletes thinking about or in the process of signing with an agent for representation. We have already covered the player-agent relationship in the Team section of this handbook, so we won't repeat ourselves. But again, you can maximise your relationship with FIBA by utilising the services we provide regarding agents (e.g. certification and licensing, listing of agents, sample contracts and other documents, etc.). To access the Agent Corner, use the following link: <http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/fibaAgen/p/openNodeIDs/1034/selNodeID/1034/pres.html>
- **“FIBA Legal Corner”** – This section of the website provides useful information about the Basketball Arbitral Tribunal (BAT, former FAT). BAT is a service that is designed to resolve disputes between players, agents and teams. By using the link below, you can access information about BAT, including details about how BAT works, how to request arbitration and statistics about BAT since it has been in operation. Here is the link: <http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/fat/p/openNodeIDs/16807/selNodeID/16807/pres.html>

HOW CAN I BENEFIT FROM FIBA PROGRAMMES, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?

Of course, FIBA is more than just its website. We at FIBA serve many functions and we are responsive to many different groups, and our service offerings reflect those functions and groups. Therefore, we have categorised our service offerings according to FIBA's main functions as follows:

- Regulating Basketball
- Promoting the game
- Supporting players
- Educating coaches & officials
- Developing national federations

Regulating Basketball

One of FIBA's most important functions is regulating the game, which includes administering the rules, settling disputes and overseeing and organising international competitions. Services that FIBA provides to help regulate the game include:

- **Basketball Arbitral Tribunal (BAT):** Formerly known as the FIBA Arbitral Tribunal (FAT), the newly-named BAT is a service that helps resolve disputes that may arise between players, coaches, agents and clubs. The goal is to provide a dispute resolution process that is fair, timely and affordable. Since it started, BAT has resolved over 100 cases and that number is growing. To see a list of awards granted from BAT arbitration, check out the following link: <http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/fat/p/openNodeIDs/16810/selectNodeID/16810/fat-awards.html>

Promoting the game

FIBA is committed to promoting Basketball worldwide, making it more accessible in developing countries around the world and providing new and exciting service offerings that keep the game on the cutting edge of the sports world. As players, you may be interested to know that FIBA offers the following products and services to promote the game:

- **Basketball Without Borders Camps:** Started in 2001, these camps for young people use Basketball as a tool to promote teamwork, leadership, international goodwill and healthy, active lifestyles around the world. The programme is a cooperative effort between FIBA and the National Basketball Association (NBA). To learn more about the programme and how you may be able to get involved, check out the following link: <http://bwbfiba.com/>

- **FIBA 3on3:** At the 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, FIBA introduced 3-on-3 Basketball for the first time in an officially sanctioned international competition. This new format offers an exciting and fresh take on the game we love to play. With short, five-minute periods and fast play with displays of skill and trickery, 3-on-3 is fun to watch and accessible to all who can find a basketball and a hoop. The future is bright for this new discipline and could offer players new and exciting options for play in the years to come.
- **FIBA TV:** FIBA offers access to live games, video highlights and interviews from all world and continental championships, including footage of many national championships as well. You can search and view these materials at the following link: <http://www.fibatv.com>
- **Websites for world and continental championships:** FIBA designs, activates and maintains specific websites for each world and continental championships. These sites include all relevant information about the event, including logistical details, team details, schedules of play, results and information about the host city/country and related activities. For more information and to link to these event-specific websites, visit FIBA's website at:
<http://www.fiba.com>
- **FIBA Archive:** This satellite website from FIBA provides historical data from FIBA and FIBA zones dating back to 1930. Results, team/player profiles and statistics are accessible through Events, National Teams or Players searches.
<http://archive.fiba.com/>
- **Other online resources:** FIBA also has a presence on major social networking sites where players and fans can interact, view videos and follow the latest developments in FIBA and the game in general. We at FIBA want players to join the discussion and follow us on the following sites, so be sure to check us out at:
<http://www.twitter.com/fibaworld> <http://www.facebook.com/fibaworld>
<http://www.youtube.com/fibaworld>

Supporting players

These service offerings may be most interesting or beneficial to you, as they provide direct support to players worldwide. The goal of these products and services is to give you resources that help you manage the administrative, financial and personal aspects of life as an elite Basketball player. Products and services include:

- **Athlete handbooks:** In addition to this handbook, FIBA offers the Athletes Financial Handbook. The Financial Handbook offers useful tips and strategies that can help you manage your finances responsibly at all levels of your career.

- **Clean Game Campaign:** The Clean Game Campaign is FIBA's anti-doping programme and it relates to all players at all levels of the game. Detailed above (see FIBA website section above for information and links), FIBA takes the Clean Game Campaign very seriously. Your success as a player is directly related to staying healthy and clean throughout your career. In addition, the integrity of the game depends on every athlete staying doping-free and naturally strong and healthy.
- **FIBA Agents:** Products and services related to FIBA Agents are described in the website section above. To summarise, FIBA takes athlete representation very seriously and makes every effort to protect your interests as a player. From up-to-date lists of FIBA Certified Agents to sample contract you can use when signing an agreement with an agent, FIBA can offer direct assistance for this aspect of your career.

Educating coaches & officials

As a player, you may be interested to know that FIBA offers your coaches and officials significant services to make sure you receive the best coaching possible and that competition is as fair and consistent as possible. FIBA's products and services for coaches and officials include:

- **Coaching Library:** Described above in the FIBA website section, the Coaching Library is a platform through which coaches (and Basketball enthusiasts) can access training materials (drills and exercises), video scouting details about teams in international competition, a searchable database of FIBA Approved Coaches, and reference and educational materials for coaches, developing players, and hoops fans around the world (including the "Basketball for Young Players" book available in five languages).
- **FIBA Referees :** In 2009-2010, over 1,100 FIBA Referees participated in FIBA Refresher Clinics, courses that provide officials with the most current information about how to referee live competition. In addition to training clinics and visual media for officials, FIBA also provides a searchable database that includes active referees, active commissioners and honorary referees.

Developing national federations

In addition to developing athletes, coaches and officials, FIBA is committed to making sure national federations have the tools they need to organise the sport effectively in countries throughout the world. FIBA's service offerings for national federations include:

- **The National Federation Manual:** This manual produced by FIBA, in collaboration with various experts from around the world, provides complete and comprehensive information on National Federations' administration and management. Its content is available on: http://www.fiba.com/downloads/Miscellaneous/natio_fede_manu.pdf
The manual was instrumental in the development of the "FIBA Academy" programme.
- **FIBA Academy:** The FIBA Academy is the educational division of FIBA. The academy offers a range of world-class academic programmes for athletes, administrators and event organisers and keeps these groups in touch with industry trends and developments. Educational programmes include a Basketball-specific online learning programme, residential executive programmes and the Global MBA for Sport and Major Events. All programmes are designed to facilitate networking and exchange of ideas. To learn more, you can access the FIBA Academy website using the following link: www.fiba-academy.org
- **Olympic Solidarity:** Olympic Solidarity is a commission within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that seeks to assist National Olympic Committees (NOCs), especially those in developing countries. FIBA works with Olympic Solidarity to develop continental programming and strengthen financial resources for countries and national federations in need of additional support. To learn more about Olympic Solidarity and its relationship with FIBA, visit the following links:
<http://www.olympic.org/en/content/The-IOC/Commissions/Olympic-Solidarity/>
<http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/expe/coac/olymSoli/p/openNodeIDs/1056/seiNodeID/1056/Pres.html>



- **FIBA Digital:** FIBA Digital is designed to support all 213 national federations with technological advances that improve administration and management. There are a number of FIBA Digital products, including:
- **FIBA Organizer:** This software programme allows national federations and leagues to manage and organise details related to competition and tournaments, including player management, scheduling tools and managing statistics.
- **FIBA Organizer websites:** Template-driven websites that can be used in conjunction with FIBA Organizer software. Users can create calendars, publish news, upload photos and set up email reminders about upcoming games.
- **FIBA Organizer membership:** A secure online database for management of clubs, teams and memberships. The database allows clubs, leagues and federations to manage databases for local competitions or an entire national federation.
- **FIBA LiveStats:** Free to download, this software allows users to collect statistics from elite leagues and championship games.
- **Online registration and payments:** Using FIBA Digital membership, federations, leagues and clubs can establish online registration for players or teams, including online payments using local merchant agreements or PayPal as a worldwide standard. Payments can be split automatically after receipt for distribution between different levels of administration (e.g. state vs. local).
- **Stadium Scoring:** For stadiums and arenas that host many competitions, this touch-screen scoring system can reduce the workload of entering scores and results. Officials can also validate results electronically after the game.
- **MyFIBA.com:** The “Facebook of Basketball”, this online networking tool allows fans and players to build their own Basketball page. Users can add player widgets, standings and results from selected competitions, comment on FIBA events and join discussion forums all year long.



HOW CAN I CONTACT FIBA?

National federations can be very helpful when you have specific questions about your team or local, regional and national laws. However, there may be times when you would like to contact FIBA directly and we are happy to help you with those inquiries. You can reach out to FIBA any time you have a question, concern or idea that you think we can assist you with.

When contacting FIBA, use the telephone contact information below and simply ask for the department with which you would like to speak.

International Basketball Federation
Fédération Internationale de Basketball
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RULES

Over the years, you have learned to train and perform under clear rules of the game. As a player, there are important things to think about off-the-court that can shape your career in meaningful ways. With more opportunities come more responsibilities, so it is important to understand those responsibilities and develop strategies to manage them effectively.



2.1 CULTURAL AWARENESS – ADAPTING TO NEW CULTURES AND ADJUSTING TO TRAVEL

Living and working in a new country and culture can be full of adventure, possibility and excitement. But it's not always as romantic or easy as it sounds. Just consider these cultural norms in countries around the world. Based on your customs, would you make any mistakes in these situations without any knowledge beforehand?

- In Romania and much of Eastern Europe, it is customary to carry flowers with the blossoms facing downward – it's also customary to give an odd number of flowers for happy occasions – even numbers are reserved for funerals.
- In Jordan, a man typically initiates a handshake with a woman, not the other way around.
- In the United States, passengers in taxi cabs ride in the back seat. In Australia, it's common to ride in the front seat across from the driver.
- In Uganda, it is rude to sniff your food, even if you find the aroma appetising.
- In Thailand, it is considered rude to touch another person's head (even a child's) because the head is considered sacred.
- In Argentina, business meetings typically begin 30-60 minutes after the scheduled time, so arriving "on-time" is actually arriving early.
- In Sierra Leone, hosts typically walk their houseguests back home or part way home after a party or gathering.

It is easy to make mistakes when adjusting to life in a new place. Locals may be understanding, but it is important to make every effort to respect the cultural norms of your host country with the ultimate goal of "fitting in" in your new home.

But fitting in takes time. We are deeply connected to the culture we grew up in. When we move to a new place, we often experience a range of emotions – both positive and negative – that affect our ability to feel "at home" in our new surroundings.

For those of you thinking about or preparing to move to a new country to play hoops, you may be asking yourself a number of questions, including:

- How can I prepare for living in a new culture?
- What is culture shock and how long does it last?
- What can I do to prevent or minimise culture shock?
- Is there such a thing as culture shock when I return home?
- How can I prepare for the demands of frequent international travel?

In this section, we provide you with some answers to these questions and tips to consider as you begin a new adventure abroad. Minimising the shock of moving to a new place and experiencing a new culture will help you adjust more quickly and perform better on the court...and you just might make a few more fans along the way.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR LIVING IN A NEW CULTURE?

There will always be surprises and unforeseen challenges when moving to a new place, but there are several things you can do to anticipate some of those challenges.

The single most important thing is to do some research. When you plan a holiday, you probably research several websites to find flights, hotels and fun things to do. Well, if you're going to do that kind of research for two weeks of holiday, then we encourage you to research the country, culture and community you will be living in for the next several years. You will benefit by feeling more confident when you arrive, which will allow you to focus your attention on why you are moving in the first place – Basketball.

Your research should be both **independent** and **interactive**. Independent research includes those things you can do on your own. Go online and you will be amazed at the amount of information you can find about moving to any country around the world.

Interactive research includes face-to-face interaction with people who know the local and national customs of the place you are moving to. Find people in your home community who grew up, lived, or traveled in the area you are going to. You may also find helpful resources at local universities, cultural centers or faith/community groups in your home town, region or country. You can also contact your national federation and international athletes on your team who may have experience with some of the challenges you will face once you arrive. Reach out to people who know best and you will be surprised at how much they can offer.

When doing your research and asking others for advice, consider looking into the following areas:

- **Language.** The biggest difference you can anticipate and prepare for is language. If you are moving to a country that does not speak your native language, it could be very helpful to take some language courses before you arrive or shortly after arriving. It may seem challenging to learn a new language, but even knowing a few key greetings and phrases will help you feel more comfortable and confident in your new home. And once you start using the language, you will pick up new phrases and vocabulary very quickly. It also shows local residents that you respect them and want to learn, which will make them more likely to help you when you need it.

In addition to the local language, it may be useful to develop your skills in English, as many international sports organisations (like FIBA) operate in English due to the global nature of the sport.

- **Living accommodations.** Find out about the different areas in the city or village you will live in – which area best suits your lifestyle? Look into the cost of housing and what is typically included as part of the rental price. In some parts of the world, rent includes furniture, electricity, heat and air conditioning, television and other amenities. In other parts of the world, rent only covers the cost of the space you will live in and it is up to you to purchase furniture and set up utilities. Being prepared and having your living situation in place before you arrive can make a huge difference in how quickly you adjust – there’s nothing more disheartening than moving to a new place and not having any electricity your first night in your new home.
- **Transportation.** Do some research about how people get around in your new city. Will you need a car or is there adequate public transportation available? How much will you need to spend each month on getting around? Knowing this will help you learn your neighborhood and settle into your surroundings more quickly.
- **Climate.** Find out what the climate is like at different times of the year. It may be summer in your home country right now, but if you are moving to another hemisphere, you will want to have winter clothes when you arrive (or vice versa).
- **Immunizations.** Depending on the country and region of the world you are moving to, or even visiting, you may need immunizations before you enter the country. This information is typically available online through your country’s ministry of foreign affairs. Your national federation may also have information regarding health and safety prior to your arrival.
- **Social norms.** Speaking with people who have experienced your new country first-hand can provide you with invaluable insight about what behaviours are (and are not) acceptable, and which behaviours may be different from those you are used to at home. Be prepared to make some innocent cultural gaffes, especially at the beginning, but knowing how to interact with others and present yourself can make your adjustment much easier. Look into accepted behaviors regarding gender roles, meeting new people, alcohol consumption, religious observances and even physical gestures – smiling, handshakes, pointing and other gestures often mean very different things in different cultures.



WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK AND HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

Culture shock is the sense of trauma, anxiety, confusion or disorientation that many individuals experience when they enter cultural surroundings different from their own. It is commonly associated with frustrations about communication barriers (e.g. language), dietary differences and different standards for cleanliness, personal space, gender roles and other social practices that may be different (or at odds) with one's own cultural experience.

Symptoms of culture shock include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Unjustified criticism of people and cultural practices
- Heightened irritability
- Constant complaints about local climate, food, cleanliness, etc.
- Making excuses for staying indoors
- Refusal to learn local language, eat local cuisine or interact with local residents
- Excessive desire to only speak with others who speak your native language
- Excessively positive or superior views of your own culture
- Excessive worry about being robbed, cheated or getting sick
- Excessive focus on returning home

These feelings are normal, and sometimes just knowing that can help ease your mind and help you move forward. The good news is that culture shock does not last forever. The more you experience your new cultural surroundings and understand local customs, the more quickly anxiety will subside.

Like any period of adjustment in life, there are several stages of culture shock – the 4 Fs – **Fun, Flight, Fight and Fit**:

- **Stage 1 – Fun.** This stage is defined by the excitement and adventure of experiencing a new place, new people and a new lifestyle. This stage often lasts only a few days to a couple of weeks, depending on your previous experiences abroad and your personal nature.
- **Stage 2 – Flight.** This stage features disorientation and causes you to want to avoid most everything and everyone that you see as being “different”. This can last a couple of weeks and in extreme cases, may even last for a month or two.
 - **Stage 3 – Fight.** This stage can follow or coincide with the previous stage. It is defined by the tendency to judge local residents and their customs as bad, foolish, strange or backward.
 - **Stage 4 – Fit.** This stage features an openness to interact with and understand your new culture. This stage may happen quickly (within a few weeks or month) for those most comfortable in foreign environments, or it may take a few months for those more hesitant to embrace their new surroundings.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT OR MINIMISE CULTURE SHOCK?

- **Remember that it's normal to feel this way.** Culture shock is completely normal but is hard to avoid completely. Knowing that it is normal can help keep your mind at ease that the discomfort and frustration will pass. Stay proactive and don't focus too much on the negative aspects of transitioning.
- **Ask for help.** It takes a lot of courage and patience to move to a new country. You may discover times when you need extra help with language or understanding local rules and customs. Ask your teammates or national federation for helpful resources. People want to help you adjust because the faster you feel at home, the more focused you can be on playing Basketball.
- **Keep in touch with home, but don't be dependent on home.** It is important to maintain ties with those you care about back home, and email, mobile phones and websites such as Skype and Facebook make keeping in touch easier than ever. However, try not to rely on people back home to fill your free time. Try setting aside an hour or two each week to touch base at home, but reserve the rest of your time for settling into your new surroundings and meeting new people.
- **Make room for familiar practices.** Just because you live in a new country and culture does not mean that you have to give up everything that you are accustomed to doing. Find ways to maintain your regular routine. If you frequent the gym, join a health club. If you enjoy the arts, explore local museums or concert venues. Doing the things you usually do will make life feel more "normal" in your new location.
- **Make friends with other expats.** Finding others in your new city who are also from other countries will help you feel less "alone". You can share stories of the challenges you have faced and gain insight on the best strategies for overcoming them. Many of your teammates, coaches and trainers may be expats as well, so they have probably experienced many of the same challenges (and adventures) that you will. Get to know them and share your thoughts, frustrations and observations.
- **Make friends with local residents.** While finding other expats can be very helpful in making the initial transition, you may also find that local residents offer many opportunities to engage with the culture directly. Making friends with local shop-owners, artisans and residents will help you feel like you are part of the culture, not just an outsider looking in.
- **Find links with local groups.** Joining clubs and other local groups can help you meet new friends and feel more "at home". An idea for possible groups to join is the expatriate groups who meet regularly for social outings. The internet and local message boards can be great resources, as well as locals who are familiar with what's happening in the neighborhood.

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS CULTURE SHOCK WHEN I RETURN HOME?

The longer you live and work abroad, the more accustomed you will become to your way of life in your new country. In fact, once you have adjusted and settled into a new place, it can actually start to feel like home. So when the day comes that you move back to your home country, you may be surprised to experience what experts call “reverse culture shock.” Reverse culture shock typically features four stages:

- **Stage 1 – Disengagement.** This stage starts before you leave for home. You begin thinking about returning home while you also say goodbye to friends, finalise arrangements with your employer and pack your belongings. You may experience a range of emotions – sadness to leave friends and teammates, excitement to see family again and uncertainty about what is in your future. Sometimes you may have to leave in such a hurry that you won't have time to process all the emotions you are experiencing.
- **Stage 2 – Initial euphoria.** This stage occurs shortly before leaving for home and continues for a week or two after arriving back home. You will be excited to see family and friends and share your experience with them. The length of this stage will vary for each person, and it often ends when you realise that most people are not as interested in your experiences abroad as you had hoped. They will probably be polite and listen to your initial stories, but you may start to sense that they grow tired and want to move on to a new topic of conversation.
- **Stage 3 – Irritability/hostility.** As you sense that people may not be as interested as you had hoped. Some of the feelings you may experience in this stage include:
 - Boredom and restlessness
 - Frustration and misunderstanding
 - Loneliness and homesickness for where you were
 - Changes in personal relationships and in how you relate to your native culture
- **Stage 4 – Readjustment/adaptation.** The good news is that the feelings in Stage 3 typically subside as you gradually readjust to life in your native country. You will begin to integrate your new ideas and perspectives with the traditions and way of life you have always known at home. There are positive and negative aspects to life everywhere, so being able to incorporate the positive experiences from your experience abroad with the positive aspects of life at home can make your personal and professional life much richer.

The best way to manage reverse culture shock is to anticipate it ahead of time. By knowing that returning home will not be as easy or ideal as it sounds, you can mentally prepare for a period of adjustment. Remember that everyone back home has a life of their own and they have continued living it even while you have been away. They have stories and experiences to share too, so be prepared to listen to their stories and not take it too personally when they may not show as much interest in your experiences abroad as you had hoped they would.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR THE DEMANDS OF FREQUENT INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL?

Traveling internationally to play Basketball can be an exciting adventure. You will get to see new places and experience new things on a regular basis. But you will also be traveling with a specific goal in mind – to win Basketball games. While international travel can sound “sexy” and exciting, constant travel can take a toll physically and emotionally. So what can you do to stay on top of your game while traveling? Here are a few things to think about that business travelers and international athletes find especially useful:

- **Jetlag.** When crossing numerous time zones in a single flight, your body will have to adjust to its new surroundings. Your flight may arrive at 12:00, but your body may feel like it is 24:00 and time for bed. So what can you do? First, as soon as you board the plane, ask the flight attendant what time it is in your destination and set your watch to that time. That way, when you look at your watch during the flight, you will mentally start adjusting to the time difference. If you arrive in the morning or afternoon, do everything you can to stay awake until a normal bedtime in your destination. Taking a nap can really disrupt your sleeping schedule and keep you up all night.
- **Visas.** Visa problems will certainly add to the frustration of travel. Your team and national federation will likely provide assistance when traveling to play Basketball in countries that require you to have an entrance visa upon arrival. You can be prepared by doing some online research on the websites for the ministry of foreign affairs for your native country, your country of residence, and the country to which you are traveling. This will help to make sure you don't get stuck with unnecessary hassles at customs.
- **Luggage restrictions.** Frequent flyers learn how to plan ahead to avoid delays and long lines at the airport. By learning about luggage restrictions ahead of time, you can speed the process and spend less time frustrated in transit. Go online and research luggage restrictions and boarding procedures. Websites for airlines and airports are especially useful. In today's security-focused environment, you will want to be aware of what you can and cannot bring onboard. Planning ahead of time will save you much time (and energy). And the more you travel, the more you will learn what is necessary to pack and what is not. The fewer items you bring along, the fewer chances there are for delays and problems to occur. The key is to be smart and think ahead.

An international career is full of possibilities, opportunities and excitement. At the same time, you should prepare yourself for some frustration, challenges and confusion. We live in a diverse world where there are many different ways of doing the same thing. Being prepared to anticipate and manage those differences can make a huge impact on your ability to adapt quickly and focus on the task at hand – playing Basketball and winning games.

2.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION – MANAGING CONFLICT TO AVOID DISTRACTIONS OFF-THE-COURT

Can conflict ever be a good thing? According to researchers at the University of Windsor and Michigan State University, it can be. In a study of conflict and teamwork within ice hockey teams, researchers discovered that social cohesion – how well the team works together – increases when teams use constructive methods of conflict resolution to settle disputes. Conversely, teams start to fall apart when they use non-constructive strategies.

None of us likes conflict. Many of us do everything we can to avoid it. But conflict is a part of life. And at some point, you are likely to experience conflict both on and off-the-court. The good news is that using proper techniques to address and resolve conflict can be a real opportunity to build teamwork and trust.

Left unresolved, conflict can seriously affect your performance at work. Experts on employment practices estimate that more than 65% of performance problems at work relate to strained relationships and conflict between employees.

And conflict in one part of your life can affect your performance in other parts. An argument with a spouse or significant other at home can be frustrating and distract you when you are at work. Likewise, a confrontation with a teammate or coach during practice can make you tense or irritable when you are at home with family.

Building effective conflict resolution skills can have a positive impact in all aspects of your life. The process of building those skills requires time and practice. In this section, we present you with some useful strategies concerning conflict.

The goal is to keep conflict to a minimum so you can focus on performing at your best level. To do so, we will divide conflict into two sections – [preventing conflict](#) and [resolving conflict](#). In each section, we will provide some helpful tools and techniques you can use on- and off-the-court, including:

Preventing Conflict

- [How can I manage stress before it leads to conflict?](#)
- [How can I balance work and life to prevent conflict?](#)

Resolving Conflict

- [Where does conflict come from and how can that help me resolve it?](#)
- [How does the way other people deal with conflict affect me?](#)
- [Is there a process for resolving conflict?](#)

HOW CAN I MANAGE STRESS BEFORE IT LEADS TO CONFLICT?

Stress, like conflict, is an unavoidable part of personal and professional life. As your career develops and more demands are put upon you, stress can become more intense. The key is to accept that stress is a natural part of life, but you must also be aware of the toll it can take. If stress is getting so intense that you are experiencing more conflict with teammates or family, or if your on-court performance is suffering due to stress, you will want to take action to reduce stress in your life.

Below are some key things you can do to limit stress in your life and prevent it from leading to conflict.

- **Diet.** What we eat and drink has a direct impact on our bodies' response to stress. To protect against stress, be sure to consume green, yellow and orange vegetables, in addition to whole grains. These foods promote production of serotonin, which gives your body a sense of well being. Other foods can actually promote stress. While moderate levels of caffeine (commonly found in coffee, soft drinks and chocolate) can provide the mind and body with a sense of alertness, too much caffeine can have the same effect on the body as long-term stress. Fried foods and other foods high in fat can depress the immune system, which can lead to more stress. Furthermore, alcohol and sugary foods and beverages have little nutritional value and can make the body feel depressed or stressed.
- **Exercise.** As an athlete, you probably are not suffering from a lack of exercise. But if you are feeling stressed off-the-court or outside the gym, a short jog, bicycle ride or stretching can trigger endorphins that relieve stress and promote a sense of well being in the body.
- **Massage.** Applying pressure on the body can relieve stress. Massage is a very effective way of reducing stress and it is also very therapeutic for the muscles as part of a physical training programme. Your team may use massage therapists, but if not, it may be helpful to incorporate massage into your work-life routine.
- **Relaxation.** While massage and exercise can help us relax, there are specific relaxation techniques proven to relieve stress and prevent it from building up. Breathing and visualisation exercises can be particularly effective. These exercises calm the mind, which helps us prioritise what we think (and stress) about. It may feel rather silly trying it for the first time, but you may be surprised at how effective it can be.
 - **Healthy communication.** One reason stress builds up is that we often do not talk about it until it overflows. To reduce stress in a proactive way, talk to people around you who you trust and are willing to listen. Friends, family, teammates and therapists can offer a listening ear. This can help you feel like others understand your frustrations, which can go a long way in helping you manage stress and realise that many stressful situations will pass with time.

HOW CAN I USE A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND LIFE TO PREVENT CONFLICT?

Elite athletes are often highly-motivated individuals passionate about their career. To perform at your best level, you have to commit large amounts of time to training and sport-related activity.

But regardless of what we do for a living, we each have a life outside work – in your case, off-the-court. You may have family to provide for or relationships to build. You may have pets to care for or personal interests that you like to cultivate. Finding a way to balance life on the Basketball court with life off-the-court can be a very helpful way to reduce stress and prevent conflict.

One of the key ways to create a sense of work-life balance is time management. By learning to manage your time effectively, you can honour your commitments at work and home and plan ahead for times when work may take priority over your personal life. Here are some tips for learning to manage time effectively:

- **Make time management a part of your routine.** Time management requires a proactive effort. The best strategy is to sit down and schedule your time on a regular basis. Sitting down each week for 15 or 30 minutes to outline the week ahead can help you avoid conflict caused by not having enough time to do everything that is asked or expected of you. For each day of the week, write out the work-related activities you must perform (e.g. training, meeting with sponsors/agents, travel, etc.). Then write out off-court activities that you have in the week ahead (e.g. personal appointments, dinner with family, etc.). Find windows of time for each commitment and build in some room in case certain appointments or activities go longer than anticipated. And try not to over-schedule yourself. Unexpected events will always come up along the way, so it is helpful to build in some time each day for flexibility.
- **Learn to say “no.”** None of us can “do it all” and trying to can lead to resentment, which is a fast-track to conflict. If someone in your life does not understand why you have to miss a personal event for a professional commitment, you can explain that you have outlined your schedule that week and you just do not have enough time to do it all. Most people will appreciate your efforts, and having a schedule will help you make time for different people and activities when time becomes available.
- **Get some sleep...even if you have to schedule it.** High levels of stress and not enough sleep are directly related. Elite athletes can find themselves working late at night and having to get up early in the morning. And traveling across time zones can cause jetlag and exhaustion. With adequate rest, your body can respond to stress and conflict in a healthier way, which helps keep your mind focused on priorities on and off-the-court.

WHERE DOES CONFLICT COME FROM AND HOW CAN THAT HELP ME RESOLVE IT?

The interesting thing about conflict – at work, at home, etc. – is that knowing what causes it can help us resolve it. So what causes conflict? The short answer is simple – life.

We live in a diverse world and each of you has a unique set of experiences and thoughts that influences the way you think, work, and interact with others. On the court, you may think that a particular defensive strategy is more effective against your rival team than the strategy being presented by your coach or teammates. The way you present your difference of opinion is only part of the puzzle – the other part is dependent on how the experiences and temperament of the others influence how they respond to your difference of opinion.

When your aim does not match someone else's aim (e.g. a teammate, spouse, etc.), conflict can arise. Two things can happen at this point:

- You may be uncomfortable with the conflict and choose to ignore it or pretend it is not there. This can lead the conflict to fester, making it last much longer than necessary than if you were able to deal with it quickly and move on.
- Or you may choose to address the conflict directly in the moment, but in a way that is not constructive. This can lead the conflict to escalate. Instead of communicating effectively about the conflict, the discussion could become personal and lead to focusing on the two people involved instead of the actual problem between them.

The dynamics of your environment on and off-the-court will change from time to time (e.g. new teammates, new coaches, new friends and relationships, etc.). And these changes will inevitably lead to conflict in some form. This is where investing in and learning about effective conflict resolution can be very handy. Having the skills to identify conflict and resolve it quickly on and off-the-court not only allows you to focus on your Basketball performance, it also builds trust and cooperation among your team.



HOW DOES THE WAY OTHER PEOPLE DEAL WITH CONFLICT AFFECT ME?

Have you ever been in conflict with someone and been mystified by their reaction? Did you think they overreacted, or perhaps they didn't react strongly enough? Their response may have frustrated you even more and led the conflict to intensify. Chances are, however, that the other person was just as mystified by your response.

This is because we each react differently to conflict. Being familiar with different approaches to conflict is a key step to dealing with conflict before it gets out of hand.

When you have a conflict with someone, try to remember that they probably have a different response to conflict than you do, and as a result, you will need to understand it and acknowledge it before moving forward.

Here is a summary of different styles for conflict – which one sounds most like your approach to conflict?:

- **Competitive.** People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made fast, when the decision is unpopular or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. However, it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations.
- **Collaborative.** People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive, but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution, when there have been previous conflicts in the group or when the situation is too important for a simple trade-off.
- **Compromising.** People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something, and the compromiser also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when the situation is at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.

- **Accommodating.** This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of your own needs. The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted. This person is not assertive, but is highly cooperative. Accommodation is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party or when peace is more valuable than winning. However, overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes.
- **Avoiding.** People tending towards this style seek to avoid the conflict entirely. This style includes delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem. However, in many situations, this is a weak and ineffective approach to take.

Once you know your own natural response and understand the style of the other person with whom you are in conflict, you can adjust your response in such a way that leads to resolution more quickly and effectively.



IS THERE A PROCESS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT?

Following is a helpful guide or checklist to use when resolving conflict. Remember to keep in mind your own approach to conflict and consider how you may need to adjust your style to cooperate in resolving the conflict effectively.

- **Step 1 – Set the scene.** In this step, your goal is to establish mutual respect between each other and identify the common goal of resolving the conflict and growing your relationship. It can be helpful to be in a neutral setting – that is, do not try to resolve a conflict in the same place that it started, or in an environment where one person may be more comfortable than the other. “Home-field advantage” should never apply in conflict resolution.
- **Step 2 – Gather information.** This is an opportunity for both sides to present their views and concerns. Remember these key points as you listen to the other person:
 - **Ask the other person for his or her point of view** and genuinely confirm that you respect his or her opinion.
 - **Listen actively.** Put your point of view aside and really listen to what the other person is saying. You will have a chance to present your view. Do not get defensive or interrupt – that will only intensify the situation.
 - **Present your view calmly and honestly.** Speak assertively without being too aggressive or submissive.
 - **Use “I” statements** – “I feel...”. “I’m frustrated because...”. Do not make accusations toward the other person or place blame. Remember, you are working together to resolve the problem.

Depending on your own approach to conflict, you may need to make more of an effort in certain ways. For example, if you have a **competitive** style, you may need to work harder at listening to the other person without interrupting. If you are more **accommodating**, you may need to be more assertive in how you feeling.

- **Step 3 – Agree about the problem.** This may sound obvious, but confirming what the conflict is all about will ensure that you are working toward the same goal. People can perceive the same situation in very different ways. In coming to an agreement about the nature of the conflict, you may actually discover that you are frustrated about different things.

- **Step 4 – Brainstorm possible solutions.** Both sides should come up with possible solutions. This way, everyone involved feels like they had impact on the final outcome. Be open to all ideas and reaffirm that you appreciate the other person's willingness to help resolve the situation.
- **Step 5 – Implement the solution.** Once you come to a mutually-accepted solution, be genuine in implementing it. Express that you will make a good faith effort moving forward. If problems arise down the line, start the process over by reconfirming what you agreed to and refine the resolution if necessary. As long as everyone stays calm and open-minded, a resolution can happen quickly and in a way that builds relationships over time.

Ultimately, it's up to you to manage the stress and conflict that enters your life. By taking steps to minimise stress, you can do a lot to minimise conflict. And during those times where you are faced with conflict, knowing how to address it calmly and openly can help tremendously. With these skills, you can build a better, stronger team on and off-the-court.



2.3 MAKING GOOD CHOICES – THINKING ABOUT BEHAVIOUR AND CONSEQUENCES

Basketball is a game of quick decisions. In a split-second, you decide where to pass the ball, whether to take a shot and when to make a defensive move against your opponent. Over time, you have refined your on-court decision making skills and those skills have helped bring you to an elite level of play.

The decisions you make off-the-court are just as important as the decisions you make playing the game. Just think of how many well-known athletes wish they could go back in time and make a different decision about something they did off the field of play that affected their career – the picture they shouldn't have posed for, the drugs they shouldn't have taken, the fight they shouldn't have started.

Not making good choice can be extremely costly for you, your sponsors and the sport in general. Consider Tiger Woods' challenges in 2009-10 following his admission of infidelity. Not only did Tiger lose millions of dollars in sponsorship deals, his absence from the PGA Tour cost the Tour, television stations and vendors an estimated 220 million USD. In addition, wrong choices that play out so publicly can be devastating for personal relationships, private holdings and friends and family.

Much of your earning potential is related to your reputation on and off-the-court. Teams want to hire players who are known to be hard working and reliable. Sponsors want to work with athletes who make good choices and stay out of trouble in public. And fans want to cheer for athletes who have a reputation for being good people in all aspects of their lives.

In this chapter, we look at two areas of decision making – **career decisions** and **off-court decisions** – and provide you some useful tips to consider. Sections in this chapter include:

- Is there a process for making big career or life decisions?
- Who can I turn to for help when making career decisions?
- How do smaller, off-court decisions affect my career?
- How does modern technology impact my off-court decision making?

We at FIBA don't want you to feel like we are telling you what to do or how you should behave. You are adults and we believe in your ability to make good choices. But sometimes it can be helpful to have a reminder or a guideline to use when you are faced with difficult situations or tough decisions to make.

IS THERE A PROCESS FOR MAKING BIG CAREER OR LIFE DECISIONS?

Making big decisions in life can feel overwhelming. To make the process more manageable, it can help to have a strategy or method for approaching the choices you need to make.

Consider using the following eight-step approach. To illustrate each point, we will walk through each step as if we were an athlete (Paul) deciding whether or not to have surgery for an ongoing leg injury (which would require extensive recovery and interfere with the Basketball season), or to use less invasive physical therapy that won't fix the injury, but may prevent him from having to sit out for part of the season.

Step 1 – Identify your objective. In this case, Paul identifies that his objective is to determine whether permanently fixing his injury is the best decision for his health and his career.

Step 2 – Do a preliminary review of your options. The options seem quite clear to Paul. 1) Have the surgery and fix the injury completely, but have to sit out part of the season. Or 2) Use less invasive strategies (physical therapy, braces, massage) to reduce the impact of the injury, but risk doing more damage that could lead to mandatory surgery and definite time away from the court.

Step 3 – Identify what is at stake. For big decisions regarding health, family, career and finances, you will want to ask yourself what is at stake and how you prioritise those values.

In this case, Paul identifies his health, career and finances as the primary things at stake in this decision. His health could suffer if he chooses not to have surgery, but his career could suffer if he has to sit out a portion of the season. Paul's finances could take a hit if he has to sit out or does additional injury to himself, which could lead his team and/or sponsors to reconsider his value to them. And any impact on his personal health or finances could have a direct impact on his family's quality of life.

Step 4 – Assess the importance of the decision. This will determine how much time and energy (and money) you invest in the decision making process.

Having determined that the stakes of this decision are quite high, Paul believes this decision to be of utmost importance. As such, he is prepared to invest significant time and energy into making the final decision because he knows it will have significant consequences moving forward.



Step 5 – Budget your time and energy. From this point, you will want to organise your decision making process and set deadlines for making a final decision.

In this case, Paul decides to consult his family, doctors, team leadership, agent and sponsors to understand their points of view relating to the decision he needs to make. This will require meetings with each group and taking time to consider what they said. (While the decision is ultimately yours to make, it can help to have the opinions of others because having more information can make you more confident in your final decision).

Step 6 – Choose a decision making strategy. Will you measure the pros and cons of the situation? Will you weigh the opinions of doctors more heavily than others? Will you trust your intuition? Having a plan on how to actually make the final decision will help you determine what is most important for you to consider.

In our example, Paul decides that he will rely most heavily on the opinions he gets from medical professionals. He will consider the thoughts of the other groups he speaks with, but ultimately his health is most important to him, so he believes that his doctors have the most relevant information for him to consider.

Step 7 – Identify and evaluate your options. As you get deeper into the decision making process, you may discover new information that causes you to view your options in a different way.

In meeting with his team, Paul discovers that having the surgery and sitting out for several weeks will cause him to lose his starting position on the team. This could lead to less exposure during the season, which could mean lost opportunities for sponsorship and other financial opportunities. But his doctors insist that the injury remains delicate – one simple fall or twist could make the injury much worse and lead to longer-term damage.

Step 8 – Make your choice...on time. With all the information in hand, now it is time to make your final decision. And do your best to honour the timeline you created in Step 5 to ensure that you take action and don't "overthink" the issue.

In this example, Paul ultimately decides to have the surgery recommended by his doctors. Despite his team's indication that it will cost him his starting position, Paul decides that the risk of doing additional, more severe damage is not worth the potential loss of exposure during the season. He decides to focus on surgery and recovery, hoping that being in better shape physically will allow him to earn back his starting position, gain more exposure and possibly secure additional sponsorship deals later in the season or next season.

Ultimately, Paul's health was his primary factor and he used that to guide his decision making process.

A WHO CAN I TURN TO FOR HELP WHEN MAKING CAREER DECISIONS?

Knowing where to turn for advice can be just as important as having a plan for making the actual decision. There are several people in your team – both on and off-the-court – who can offer expertise, experience and insight that can help you make big decisions in your life.

Before outlining who these people are, keep in mind one important point regarding advice from others. Do your best to maintain a balance between the advice of others and trusting your own intuition. You are ultimately responsible for the decisions you make, so only use the advice of others to inform your decision making process – don't rely on it as the sole basis for your final decision. The interests of those around you may not always be entirely in your best interest, so keep that in mind and make decisions that serve you best based on your values and priorities.

Following is a list of resources that may be helpful when facing big decisions, including specific areas where their insight and expertise can be especially useful:

- **Team leadership.** Your coaches and trainers can offer advice when facing tough decisions regarding your on-court performance. If you are struggling with certain aspects of your game and trying to decide how best to improve the situation, asking your coach or physical trainers may shed light on possible solutions. Their years of experience and expertise in the area of physical conditioning and training may provide you with ideas that you had not previously considered.

However, for career-oriented decisions such as possibly looking for other professional opportunities or other teams, it may not be best to confide in team leaders right away. For career-oriented advice, turning to agents or close confidantes may be more appropriate.

- **Agents.** Part of your agent's job is to provide you with advice about big decisions that can affect your career. If you are experiencing frustration with your current team or contract, or if you are deciding what to do after the expiration of your current contract, your agent can be a primary source of information, ideas and insight. He or she can provide information about the market that is specific to your needs and situation.

Being able to confide in your agent with important career decisions is key to the success of the player-agent relationship. Make sure that when selecting an agent, you consider whether he or she is someone you feel you can trust with very personal information relating to big decisions you may have to make during your career.

- **Financial and legal advisors.** If you receive financial and legal advice from someone other than your agent, you may want to consult with them before making any major life decisions. They can provide you with important information about the potential monetary and legal impact of decisions you might make. They can also serve as a useful “second opinion” to what your agent or other primary advisor may suggest.
- **Family.** Depending on your family situation (spouse, children, etc.), consulting loved ones may be an important (and necessary) element of your decision making. Family know you very well and can offer a lot of helpful insight from a personal perspective. However, they may not always fully understand the professional impact of decisions you need to make. So, always keep in mind a balance between the personal and professional aspects of your decisions. What you choose to prioritise (career, family, health, finances, etc.) will guide you, so remember that throughout your decision making process.



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HOW DO SMALLER, OFF-COURT DECISIONS AFFECT MY CAREER?

Not every decision you make will be a major life choice that requires consultation with family and close advisors. But quite often, even smaller, everyday decisions you make can have a potentially significant impact on your career.

There are countless stories of famous athletes who made poor choices and experienced extensive loss in the process. Athletes who have broken the law, abused alcohol or drugs, been promiscuous, acquired debt from gambling or gotten into altercations in public have often been front page news and lost sponsorship deals and career opportunities along the way.

There are two keys to making good decisions regarding public behaviour as an elite athlete:

- **Be very aware of your surroundings.** In today's day and age, privacy is giving way to 24-7 media coverage and instant access to information via modern technology. Even until five years ago, athletes could go out in public and not have to think about someone videotaping them secretly using a cell phone and posting potentially embarrassing events online.

While Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other websites keep us connected, they also present a real challenge to public figures trying to maintain some privacy off the field of play. You can't control these social media phenomena, but you can control your actions by making good decisions.

Before having that extra drink or arguing with someone on the sidewalk, always assume that someone else is watching. Before you act, take five seconds to consider the potential consequences of your behaviour. It may sound silly, but a good rule of thumb is WWMMT – “what would my mom think?”. If your mom wouldn't approve, you can bet someone with a phone or camera might think it's worth posting online.



- **Remember that you are a public figure and representative of Basketball.** When you chose to be an elite athlete, you also accepted that you may become a public figure. People will recognise you, look up to you and want to know more about you. It may seem unfair that you have to sacrifice some of your privacy, but that is simply part of the technological and media-driven era we live in.

And as public figures, people are watching what you do – and they are often waiting for you to make a mistake. If your mom wouldn't approve of certain behaviours, just think what your team management and sponsors might think. Your team management and sponsors will treat you as adults and assume that you understand that your actions have real consequences. They will trust you until you give them a reason not to – and poor decision making can be the fastest way to lose trust. Any behaviours that tarnish your reputation could also tarnish your relationship with sponsors and employers. Always keep that in mind – if certain actions off-the-court could lead to career or financial losses, then think twice before you carry them out.

Making decisions seems simple, but when big decisions are at stake, the process requires time and careful considerations. Smaller decisions are no less significant in terms of their potential effect on your career and reputation, especially considering that modern technology can broadcast what you say and do in an instant. Making smart choices mainly involves common sense and respect for those who may be affected by the decisions you make. The ultimate goal is staying focused on Basketball, and if you remember that your decisions can affect your performance on the court, that may be extra motivation to make wise choices off-the-court.



2.4 FAIR PLAY AND BETTING – PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE SPORT

Fair play sits at the core of sporting competition. Without fair play the essence of sport is destroyed. This is why we at FIBA value fair play, and why we hope that each and every basketball player follows a code of fair play both on and off-the-court.

Off the court, one of the biggest temptations facing sport today is the ethical behaviour behind gambling and sport betting.

As an athlete it is important to understand how betting can affect you differently than the average person. Since you have influence over games and access to information that other people do not, there are rules and regulations that must be understood in order to be protected against negative effects of betting. It's important to identify these issues ahead of time and take steps to ensure they don't affect you, your career your team or the sport as a whole.

For athletes, aside from the monetary loss, betting can damage or tarnish your career. The monetary value of lost bets is astounding in its own right, but the loss of sponsorships, and the tarnished reputation, and loss of respect from millions of fans can be far worse.

By educating yourself about the fair play principles and betting regulations you can safeguard yourself from making the same mistakes that have cost other athletes their careers.

In this chapter, we look at two areas of protecting the integrity of the sport – fair play and betting – and provide you some useful tips to consider. Sections in this chapter include:

- What is a code of conduct and fair play?
- How can I protect myself from illegal betting?
- What do I do if I am approached about illegal betting?

We want you to be informed so that you can develop your own code of fair play and protect yourself from problems associated with betting. Sometimes there can be grey areas and so the more aware you are the better you can protect yourself, your team and the sport.



WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT AND FAIR PLAY?

The concept of fair play is a fundamental part of the game of basketball. It represents the positive benefits of playing by the rules and respecting fellow players, referees, opponents and fans. Fair play is based on integrity, fairness and respect.

Fair play captures the sporting, moral, and ethical principles which FIBA stands for and for which it will continue to fight in the future, regardless of the influences and pressures there may be. The following ten golden rules not only serve as a guide for the members of the worldwide basketball family, but they also reinforce the sense of fraternity and co-operation within the basketball community. We hope these rules can inspire you and keep you true to your game.

Ten Golden Rules of Fair Play

- 1) **Play fair.** Winning is without value if victory has been achieved unfairly or dishonestly. Cheating is easy, but brings no pleasure. Playing fair requires courage and character. It is also more satisfying. Fair play always has its reward, even when the game is lost. Playing fair earns respect, while cheating only brings shame. Remember: it is only a game. And games are pointless unless played fairly.
- 2) **Play to win but accept defeat with dignity.** Winning is the object of playing any game. Never set out to lose. If you do not play to win, you are cheating your opponents, deceiving those who are watching, and also fooling yourself. Never give up against stronger opponents but never relent against weaker ones. It is an insult to any opponent to play at less than full strength. Play to win, until the final whistle. But remember nobody wins all the time. You win some, you lose some. Learn to lose graciously. Do not seek excuses for defeat. Genuine reasons will always be self-evident. Congratulate the winners with good grace. Do not blame the referee or anyone else. Be determined to do better next time. Good losers earn more respect than bad winners.
- 3) **Observe the rules of the Game.** All games need rules to guide them. Without rules, there would be chaos. The rules of basketball are simple and easy to learn. Make sure you learn them; it will help you to understand the game better. Understanding the game better will make you a better player. It is equally important to understand the spirit of the rules. They are designed to make the game fun to play and fun to watch. By sticking to the rules, the game will be more enjoyable.



- 4) **Respect opponents, team-mates, referees, officials and spectators.** Fair Play means respect. Respect is part of our game. Without opponents there can be no game. Everyone has the same rights, including the right to be respected. Team-mates are colleagues. Form a team in which all members are equal. Referees are there to maintain discipline and Fair Play. Always accept their decisions without arguing, and help them to enable all participants to have a more enjoyable game. Officials are also part of the game and must be respected accordingly. Spectators give the game atmosphere. They want to see the game played fairly, but must also behave fairly and with respect themselves.
- 5) **Promote the interests of basketball.** Basketball is one of the world's greatest games. But it always needs everybody's help to maintain its greatness. Think of basketball's interests before your own. Think how your actions may affect the image of the game. Talk about the positive things in the game. Encourage other people to watch and play fairly. Help others to have as much fun from basketball as you do. Be an ambassador for the game.
- 6) **Honour those who defend basketball's good reputation.** The good name of basketball has survived because the vast majority of people who love the game are honest and fair. Sometimes somebody does something exceptional that deserves our special recognition. They should be honoured and their fine example publicised. This encourages others to act in the same way. Help to promote basketball's image by publicising its good deeds.
- 7) **Reject corruption, drugs, racism, violence, gambling and other dangers to our sport.** Basketball's huge popularity sometimes makes it vulnerable to negative outside interests. Watch out for attempts to tempt you into cheating or using drugs. Drugs have no place in basketball, in any other sport or in society as a whole. Say "no" to drugs. Help to eliminate racism from basketball. Treat all players and everyone else equally, regardless of their religion, race, sex or national origin. Show zero tolerance for gambling on games in which you participate. It negatively affects your ability to perform and creates the appearance of a conflict of interests. Show that basketball does not want violence, even from your own fans. Basketball is sport, and sport is peace.
- 8) **Help others to resist corrupting pressures.** You may hear that team-mates or other people you know are being tempted to cheat in some way or otherwise engage in behaviour deemed unacceptable. They need your help. Do not hesitate to stand by them. Give them the strength to resist. Remind them of their commitment to their teammates and to the game itself. Form a block of solidarity, like a solid defence on the field of play.

- 9) **Denounce those who attempt to discredit our sport.** Do not be ashamed to stand up to anybody who you are sure is trying to make others cheat or engage in other unacceptable behaviour. It is better to expose them and have them removed before they can do any damage. It is equally dishonest to go along with a dishonest act. Do not just say “no”. Denounce those misguided persons who are trying to spoil our sport before they can persuade somebody else to say “yes”.
- 10) **Use basketball to make a better world.** Basketball has an incredible power, which can be used to make this world a better place in which everyone can live. Use this powerful platform to promote peace, equality, health and education for everyone. Make the game better, take it to the world, and you will be fostering a better world.

Just as athletes follow the rules in order to perform at their best on the court, having a clear vision for what fair play represents will help each athlete to succeed off-the-court as well.



HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM ILLEGAL BETTING?

The consequences of illegal sports betting, whether intentional or not, can be very serious. Aside from the risk of acquiring huge debts, there is the risk of public humiliation for not only yourself but also for your family and team. There is also a serious chance of your professional career in sports being destroyed. By educating yourself about betting laws and regulations you can make sure to avoid situations that put you or your career at risk.

Following is a list of safe betting principles that will help guide you whether you choose to gamble on sport or not:

- **Know the rules.** Ask your team, federation or athletes association what the rules on betting are for basketball in your country. Many sports and countries either have, or are developing, regulations on sports betting and you need to be aware of these- even if you don't bet. These rules should be explained to you in a way that is easy to understand, ideally through face-to-face meetings and supported by fact sheets and web based educational tools. Underage betting is illegal. If you are under 18 (or 21 depending on jurisdiction) do not access a sport betting website.
- **Never bet on yourself or the opponent.** As a professional athlete you must never bet on any match you or your team is involved in because it would be a conflict of interest. This includes betting to win, lose or draw as well as any of the different side bets which might not affect the result of the match. If you bet on yourself or your opponent you risk having your image and reputation tarnished, being banned from your sport, losing your job and you may even be subject to a criminal investigation.
- **Play it safe— don't bet on your own sport at all.** Betting on other games within your sport may also raise questions. You are likely to be friends with many other basketball players and you are therefore best advised not to make any bets on your sports to avoid potential problems. Some sports have decided that it is best to prohibit athletes from betting on their own sport. The benefit of this approach is that it is simple and easy to understand and minimises the danger of athletes inadvertently falling foul of regulations on a technicality. If in any doubt, then do not bet on your sport.

- **Be careful about handling sensitive information.** As an athlete you will have access to information that is not yet available to the general public, such as knowing that your star player is injured or that the coach is putting out a weak side. This is considered sensitive or inside information. This information is likely to be useful for people betting on your sport who want to secure an unfair advantage. There is nothing wrong with athletes having sensitive information; it's what you do with it that matters. Most athletes know that they should not discuss team tactics with anyone outside the team - the same is true of sensitive information. It looks suspicious if you repeatedly pass on information to a person, even if there is no obvious reward.
- **Absolutely never fix a competition.** Whatever the reason, do not fix any aspect of a competition. Do not put yourself in a situation which would bring you, or even force you to adversely influence the natural course of a match.

There is no such thing as a quick and easy win. If you have any concerns about anyone making offers to you then it is important to that you tell someone, either your coach, or your player association.



WHAT DO I DO IF I AM APPROACHED ABOUT ILLEGAL BETTING?

Whether it's a straight forward request to fix a game or an indirect proposition for insider information, you should always report it. If you feel that something is not quite right, it usually isn't. Trust your instincts and tell someone. Keeping it a secret will only make more problems for you later.

Report this information to your coach, your lawyer, your federation or your player association. It's important to keep a record of the incident and stop it before it can become a larger problem for you. You may find that other members of your team are in a similar situation and need support with reporting the incident.

Also, be sure to check with your team code of conduct. Some teams have regulations that require athletes to inform them immediately if anyone approaches them to influence the outcome of a competition. Be sure to check your contract for clarification on the procedure for doing this.

The police and national laws are there to protect you. Finally, if you have any questions on sports betting in your country do not hesitate to ask questions. It is always better to ask for advice than to unintentionally break the law.





SKILLS

After years of practice, you have developed elite-level skills as a player. Your shooting skills, dribbling, rebounding and overall play are first-rate and you train each day to refine them. There are also important skills off-the-court – communication skills and presentation skills – that can help you develop opportunities for life after playing hoops. By becoming a more well-rounded professional, you represent our sport more effectively and strengthen your chances for success in the future.



3.1 COMMUNICATION SKILLS – CONVEYING YOURSELF AND OUR VALUES EFFECTIVELY

Hiring managers say that communication skills are the most important factor when they make hiring decisions, according to a survey of major companies. The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh, points out that communication skills – including written and oral presentations, as well as an ability to work with others – are the main factors contributing to job success.

Think of how much you communicate as a Basketball player. Good team defense requires constant communication to defend the ‘pick and roll’ or execute full court pressure. On the other end of the court, good communication is necessary to execute your offense. Just like in playing hoops, communication is key to your success off-the-court. By becoming a great communicator, you can achieve greater success as athlete player and increase your marketability for life after hoops.

Everything you do communicates – even when you may not be trying to. A simple “Hello” or “Good morning” can say a lot about how you feeling and how open you are to communicating with others. In addition to verbal communication, there are many non-verbal messages we send to others each day. Body language, hairstyle and physical presentation can have a significant impact on how others perceive your attitude, professional demeanour and approachability. Who knew the shirt you chose to wear this morning could say so much – whether you intended to or not.

The point is not to make you sacrifice your personal style or become self-conscious of what others think. Rather, as an athlete in the public spotlight, the way you communicate and present yourself on and off-the-court has a big impact on how others perceive you. This includes team management, teammates, sponsors (and potential sponsors), media and fans. Their perceptions may not be 100% accurate about who you really are, but the reality is that their perceptions directly affect the quality and quantity of professional opportunities that come your way.

As such, it is important to be aware of your communication style and develop skills and techniques as a communicator. That way, you strengthen your marketability as an athlete and you represent our sport in a positive way on and off-the-court. In this chapter, we answer some important questions that can help you become a better communicator. These include:

- What can I gain from communicating effectively?
- What types of communication are important on and off-the-court?
- How can I make sure I communicate?

WHAT CAN I GAIN FROM COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY?

As an athlete, you may be asking yourself, “Why does communicating effectively matter to me” and “What do I have to gain?”.

It's true that your primary focus is playing Basketball and winning games, but there are many aspects of your career – especially off-the-court considerations – where communication plays a key role.

Following are two of the most important situations where effective communication can make a real difference in the quality of opportunities you have on and off-the-court:

- **Relationships.** Communication is key to all successful relationships – personal and professional. By developing strong skills as a communicator, you can develop effective working relationships with your teammates, coaches, agent, sponsors and off-court family and friends. Having healthy relationships off-the-court will help keep you focused on Basketball on-the-court.
- **Decision making.** You are likely to face some big decisions during your Basketball career. Knowing how to communicate effectively with key people in your career – agents, sponsors, team, family, etc. – can help you work through some of the emotions and stress you may experience, which will lead you to a more confident decision that keeps you focused on the future instead of being indecisive and looking to the past.

Strong communication skills are necessary for success in any profession – especially one that requires you to market yourself to develop more opportunities. If you are interested in sponsorships deals and opportunities to make more money off-the-court, then you have to demonstrate to potential sponsors and employers that you are professional, mature and serious about doing business.

The best way to demonstrate those qualities is through communication. By communicating effectively, you make impressions on others that show you can be trusted and taken seriously. Therefore, learning more effective communication techniques can be a key investment in your career in the long-term.



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WHAT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION ARE IMPORTANT ON AND OFF-THE-COURT?

The first step in developing effective communication skills is knowing what types of communication exist and the extent to which you use them. The following are the three basic categories of communication:

- **Verbal** – This includes oral communication that can be delivered face-to-face, over the phone or on the Internet (Skype, iChat, etc.). The effect of verbal communication is affected by pitch, volume, tone of voice and the speed and clarity of speech. From a professional perspective, verbal communication is a key component of negotiations, relationship-building and public speaking.
- **Non-verbal** – Non-verbal communication includes your overall body language and physical presentation. Non-verbal queues include posture, hand gestures, facial expressions, style of dress, etc. Others often see you before they hear you, so non-verbal communication is a big part of making first impressions, which are very important in developing professional opportunities and relationships on and off-the-court.
- **Written** – Emails, texts, notes, letters, memos, reports and other written documents. New technologies have greatly increased the amount of written communication, as mobile SMS and online posts such as “tweets” are all forms of written communication. The effectiveness of written communication depends on your writing style, vocabulary, grammar, and clarity of message. Unlike direct verbal communication, written communication can be amended many times before it is sent, but you may not be present when someone receives your messages, which affects your ability to determine how your messages are interpreted by your audience.

Using these types of communication will have varying levels of impact on your audience. Believe it or not, non-verbal communication has the biggest effect on the impact of your communication. Consider these statistics:

- 55% of impact is determined by non-verbal communication – body language, posture, gesture, eye contact, etc.
- 38% is determined by the tone of voice
- 7% is determined by the content or words spoken

Clearly, you are communicating messages in everything you do – even when you are not specifically trying to. As such, it is important to develop skills and techniques in the various types of communication to make sure you are making positive impressions and building a strong reputation as a professional on and off-the-court.

HOW CAN I MAKE SURE I COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY?

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, employers (sports-related and in general) place great importance on the quality of their employees' communication skills. In fact, being a good communicator can make the difference in getting a job offer, signing a sponsorship agreement or receiving a paid speaking opportunity.

To help build your skills with each type of communication – non-verbal, verbal and written – the following are some hints and techniques that can help you become a stronger communicator:

- **Non-verbal communication**

What you do before, during and after you speak can actually have a much bigger affect on how others perceive you than what we actually say. As such, here are some tips to make sure your non-verbal communication makes the right impression and sends the right message.

Before you communicate...

Present yourself appropriately. Whether you like it or not, people make judgments about you within the first ten seconds of meeting you – and those first impressions can be difficult to change. As such, present yourself in a way that makes a positive impression relative to the audience you are communicating with.

For example, if you are going to a meeting to negotiate a new contract, you will want to make sure you dress professionally to show that you are serious about the meeting. If you showed up in jeans and a t-shirt, your prospective employer would instantly think that you were not serious about the contract opportunity, regardless of how you actually felt about it. And when you enter a room or are about to engage in conversation, smile. Smiling is a very easy (non-verbal) way of setting a positive tone and showing that you are approachable and happy to interact with your audience.

While you communicate...

Be conscious of your body language. Your posture, hand gestures and facial expressions have a lot to do with how confident and prepared you appear to be. Even if you are not fully confident in the situation, certain non-verbal actions can help cover that up.

For example, offer a firm handshake (if appropriate) and sit/stand tall to show that you are prepared and fully engaged.

Be a good listener. A major part of being a good communicator is being a good listener. And the best way to show that you are listening is through non-verbal body language. To demonstrate that you are listening, nod your head and offer appropriate facial expressions when something you hear is interesting, surprising or humorous.

After you communicate...

Once you are finished speaking with someone or having a meeting, offer a handshake and smile to demonstrate you appreciate your audience's time and attention. These non-verbal queues reflect confidence and professionalism, which will help you make positive impressions and become a person with whom others will want to work and engage.

- **Verbal communication**

Of course, what you actually say is also an important part of communicating. Having set the right tone and made a positive first impression with non-verbal communication, it is important to support that first impression with substantive, confident communication. Here are some tips for making your verbal communication strong and effective:

Before you communicate...

Know your audience. To be fully prepared before communicating, you need to know with whom you will communicate. Knowing your audience will help you decide what messages you want to convey and verbal strategies for conveying them.

For example, if you are meeting with a potential sponsor, you will want to think before the meeting about how you will speak to them and what you want to say to make the best possible impression. A potential sponsorship agreement is a big deal, so being prepared will position you in the best possible place to turn a potential agreement into a real one.

While you communicate...

Be aware of your speech patterns. As you communicate, take a quick moment to listen to yourself. Are you speaking too quickly? Is your tone of voice too firm or not firm enough? By taking a second to assess your speech patterns, you can make any necessary corrections to keep the conversation moving in a positive direction and work toward a successful result.

Read the audience. One of the best ways to determine if you are communicating effectively is to look at your audience and read their facial reactions and body language. This can help you measure how well you are communicating. If your audience is nodding their head and smiling, then you are probably conveying your point appropriately. However, if you see confused expressions on their face, or if their body language suggests they are losing interest, then you may want to change the way you are speaking.

Ask for clarification. If you are not sure if you are speaking too fast or too quietly, don't be afraid to ask your audience if they are understanding your messages. Taking a quick second to ask, "Am I speaking too fast?" or "Can everyone hear me in the back of the room?", can help you determine what changes you may need to make to communicate more effectively.

Especially in multi-cultural environments where the language being spoken may not be the audience's (or your) first language, it is helpful to make sure you are being understood and what changes you can make in how you speak to help others understand you. By doing so, you demonstrate to others that you are sensitive to their needs and flexible enough to meet them – qualities that can make building professional relationships much easier.

After you communicate...

Get feedback. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to ask your audience for their feedback on how well you communicated. Getting their constructive feedback can help you refine your strategies and improve your speaking skills for the next time you communicate.

Of course, it is not always appropriate to ask for feedback in every situation. However, you don't always have to ask your direct audience for feedback. Instead, you can ask others you respect who may have witnessed you communicating with someone. For example, your agent may be with you during negotiations with your team or sponsor. He or she can offer you constructive criticism about the strengths and weaknesses of your communicating style. As individuals who communicate for a living, they may be able to offer ideas and techniques for improving your approach to communicating.



- **Written communication**

As an athlete, you may not be required to write extensive reports or research papers. However, the way you convey yourself on paper (or in email) can significantly influence how others perceive your level of professionalism and maturity. Here are some tips to consider when communicating through writing:

Before you communicate...

Outline what you want to say. Even if you are writing a short note or email, having a general structure will ensure that you convey your ideas clearly. Make sure you know what your main point is and what your desired outcome is. Use that as a guide when you actually write the note, email or letter.

Determine if writing is your best option. It is important to remember that anything you write can become an official record. Emails, text messages and other seemingly unimportant things you write can become significant later on. As such, decide if writing anything down is absolutely necessary. Many times a situation requires a written record (e.g. contracts, agreements, etc.), but other times you may be better served speaking over the phone or in person instead of writing an email or letter.

While you communicate...

Style matters. From a professional perspective, the way you convey yourself on paper or in email can affect first impressions. As such, be sure to use appropriate grammar, vocabulary and use of punctuation, especially in all business-related correspondence. Potential employers, sponsors and other influential audiences may perceive sloppy writing as a lack of professionalism or seriousness about the matter at hand.

As a general rule, try making your personal correspondence (emails, text messages, etc.) more professional and grammatically correct. It may sound silly, but by doing so, you can incorporate better writing practices into your everyday life. That way, when it is time to write in a more professional way, your style will be more natural and appropriate for your audience.

Get feedback before you send anything. Depending on the importance of what you are writing, you will want to get the perspective of someone you trust and respect. This person can read the document to make sure it conveys a clear message and strikes the right tone for the intended audience. This person can also offer ideas for more effective formatting, layout and general presentation. Your agent, lawyer or another person you trust may be able to help you in this way.

After you communicate...

Confirm that your message was received. Once you send written communication, you want to make sure it was received by the intended audience. In business, it is appropriate to contact the intended recipient within a couple of days of sending it to make sure it was received. A polite phone call or email is usually an easy way to do so. This also gives you an opportunity to make sure your audience understands your key messages. With this information, you can refine your messages as necessary moving forward.

Achieving your goals and maximising your talents on and off-the-court rest heavily on your ability to communicate effectively. And the process of becoming a better communicator never really ends - it is a continual process of learning, adapting and refining your communication style for the appropriate situation.



3.2 PRESENTATION SKILLS – PRESENTING YOURSELF AND OUR SPORT IN A POSITIVE WAY

A few years ago, a high-profile businessman was preparing a proposal for a lucrative sponsorship deal with a major international merchandising company. He spent six months developing the right combination of sponsorship activation offers, researching the competition's proposals and writing the final deliverable. The last step was to present his findings in front of the Executive Board from the merchandising company and top executives from his own firm. He stayed up night after night recalculating equations, reviewing materials and researching related topics in case there was a question and answer session following his presentation.

As the presentation date approached, he chose to rewrite parts of the proposal instead of preparing his speech. He believed that the charts he had created and all the research he had done would be enough to get him through the presentation. When the day finally arrived, he delivered his presentation as if he were reading from a book. He droned through the first 30 minutes, getting frustrated when he forgot a word, backtracking when he missed a step and listing endless statistics. After 60 minutes, the Board was confused and the executives were concerned. Despite the quality of the written proposal, the presentation was so weak that many of the Board members did not even read it. Unsure of what was being offered, the Board chose to take their business elsewhere.

Presentation skills can be decisive in many situations – job interviews, making a sale, negotiating a contract or discussing concerns with coaches and teammates. Presentations are not just about speaking in front of large groups of people. Rather, knowing how to present yourself in any situation – at the negotiating table, discussing concerns with your coach, meeting with sponsors, etc. – can help you make positive impressions that help you stand out and build stronger professional relationships.

If you have never had to make a presentation, or never thought about how presentation skills can benefit you when trying to influence or persuade others, this chapter may be especially useful. To assist you in developing your presentation skills, this chapter addresses the following three questions:

- What makes a good presentation?
- How can I use visual aids effectively?
- What presentation mistakes should I avoid?

Similar to any new skill, you will have to practice presentation techniques. Nerves and uncertainty are part of the process. With time, these skills can make a meaningful impact on developing opportunities off-the-court.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PRESENTATION?

There are many tips and techniques to help make you a better presenter. To give an effective presentation, however, there are three elements that you need to keep in mind: have a presentation plan, know your audience, and engage your audience.

- **Have a presentation plan**

Before you can deliver a great presentation, you must first develop one. As a presenter, you always need to keep the primary purpose in mind – what do you want your audience to know, feel or do when they leave your presentation? With a specific end result in mind, you will be more able to outline and develop your presentation.

When developing your presentation, there are four basic elements to keep in mind: an introduction, a key concept (the primary purpose of your presentation), supporting facts and a conclusion.

- **Introduction** – The introduction should get the audience’s attention by opening a dialogue with them or piquing their interest. Ideas for effective introductions include:
 - Making reference to recent events
 - Presenting a dramatic statistic
 - Establishing a common interest with the audience
 - Asking some key questions
 - Quoting a relevant anecdote or story.
- **Key concept** – The key concept is the primary idea or purpose of the presentation and the common link that connects each element of the presentation – the key concept must be developed before any of the other elements of the presentation
- **Supporting facts** – You should develop approximately three supporting ideas – statistics, examples, stories, etc. – for each concept. Supporting facts give the key concept credibility and make the presentation more engaging. If you include statistics or quotes, give the source so your audience knows you have done your research.
- **Conclusion** – The end of the presentation should recall the primary points of the presentation and give the audience a call-to-action.



- Know your audience

After you develop an outline of what you want to say and before determining how you want to say it, you should consider who your audience is. Effective presenters craft their remarks specifically for their audience to have maximum effect or influence.

When you give a presentation, you have to convey something of value to audience members. Your presentation should answer their unspoken question: “What’s in it for me?” On the other hand, as a presenter, you should ask yourself what you could get from the audience. Presenting information is not a one-way interaction. It doesn’t matter what you are trying to sell or what information you are sharing – the same challenge exists: connecting with your audience and getting your message across.

To better understand your audience, you should ask yourself:

- Who is in the audience (e.g. colleagues, senior management, prospective employers, etc.)?
- Why are they there?
- What are their demographics (e.g. age, gender, nationality, etc.)?
- What is their attitude toward your objective (e.g. supportive, skeptical, etc.)?
- Who are the decision makers and who are the influencers?
- What knowledge do they have and what knowledge do they need?

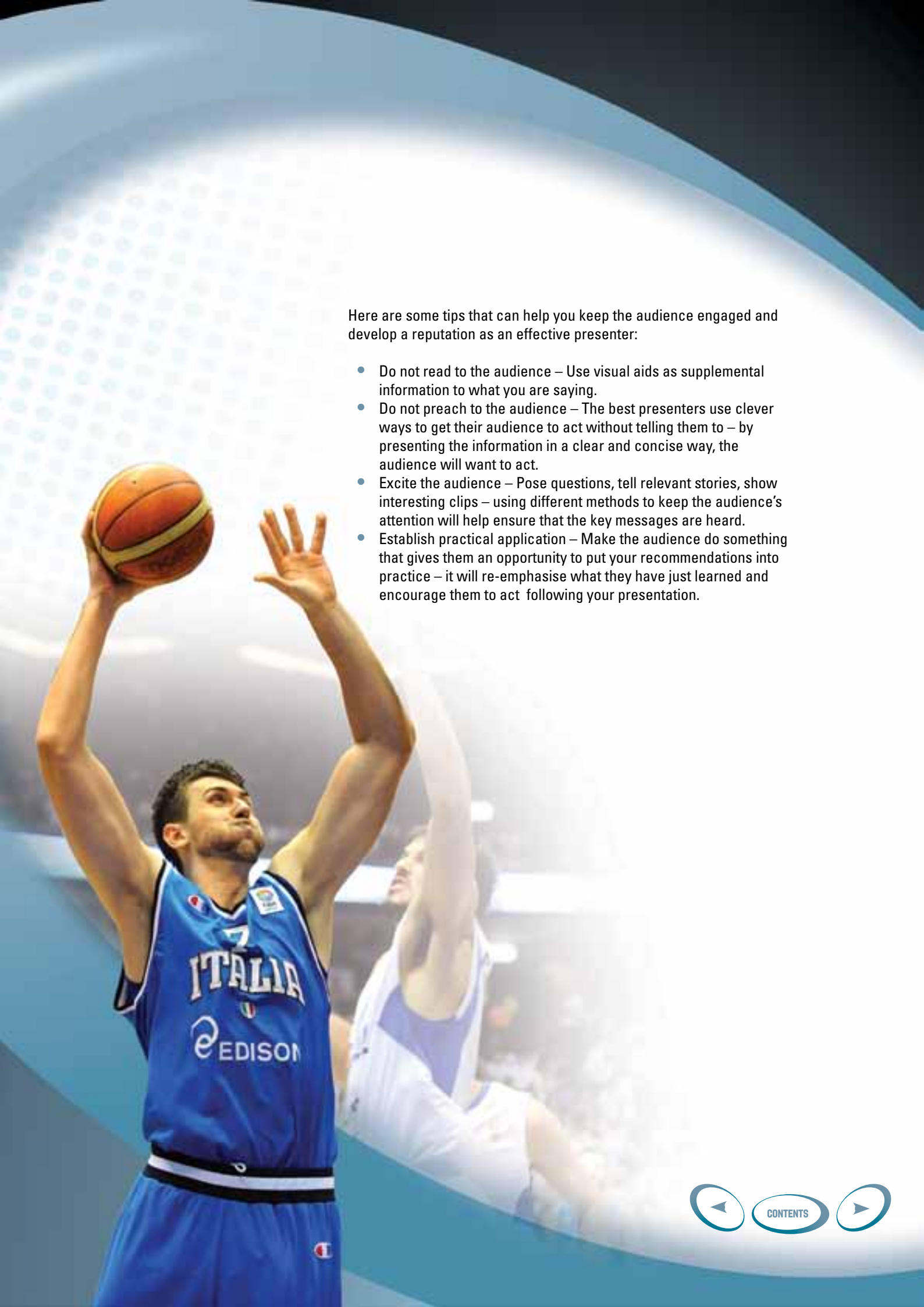
The “right” information given to the “wrong” audience limits your ability to influence.

- Engage your audience

It is extremely important to engage your audience throughout the duration of your presentation. Studies show that the attention span of today’s audience is about 16.5 minutes (13 minutes for those under 30), so keep your comments brief.

A common mistake is trying to pack too much information into a single presentation. A constant stream of information can be overwhelming. If the audience can remember one key point, you’ve done your job as a presenter.

At the conclusion of your presentation, you should always leave time for questions and comments. This includes one-on-one discussions with your peers, coaches, sponsors, etc. After listening to you, you must leave time for them to respond and share their thoughts and perspective.



Here are some tips that can help you keep the audience engaged and develop a reputation as an effective presenter:

- Do not read to the audience – Use visual aids as supplemental information to what you are saying.
- Do not preach to the audience – The best presenters use clever ways to get their audience to act without telling them to – by presenting the information in a clear and concise way, the audience will want to act.
- Excite the audience – Pose questions, tell relevant stories, show interesting clips – using different methods to keep the audience's attention will help ensure that the key messages are heard.
- Establish practical application – Make the audience do something that gives them an opportunity to put your recommendations into practice – it will re-emphasise what they have just learned and encourage them to act following your presentation.

HOW CAN I USE VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY?

Although PowerPoint and other visual aids can be used in a presentation, they are not the basis for your speech, and speakers shouldn't be too dependent on them. They should be an aid to the presentation – not the focal point of your presentation.

After all, if everything is on a slide, why not just hand it out and answer questions? If too much is on a slide, people will be reading, not listening. Write your presentation, and see where a visual aid can add value.

Here are a few tips when it comes to effective use of visual aids:

- Make sure everything is spelled correctly
- If possible, practice using the visuals on site
- Arrive early on the day of your presentation to have adequate time to set up your equipment and ensure that it works
- Make sure your power pack is fully charged or that new batteries have been installed on your laptop
- Bring duplicate copies of slides on a memory stick or CD
- Make sure your visuals can be seen from every seat
- Keep the screen to your left - since we read from left to right, this makes it easier for the audience members to see
- Be prepared to speak without visual aids, just in case something unexpected prevents you from using them

It's important to remember that visual aids should not replace your content. They are not supposed to be your presentation notes. Conversely, a visual aid is best used when it relates key points or concepts. Especially valuable are short statements or – better yet – graphics that help audience members remember and act on your messages.



WHAT PRESENTATION MISTAKES SHOULD I AVOID?

The best presentations can be ruined by a bad presenter. Here are ten of the most common presentation mistakes and ways to avoid them:

1) You don't know your topic

The scenario – Instead of knowing what you are talking about in a substantive way, you have only memorised the content. During the question and answer portion, you panic – all you know about the topic is what is written on the slides or on your note cards.

How to avoid – Know your material so well that you could do the presentation without a visual aid. Nothing will ruin your credibility faster than not having a command of the subject material. Use key words and phrases and include only essential information to keep the audience focused and interested.

2) Your slides become your presentation

The scenario – An audience member says that she can't read the slides. You kindly tell her that you will be covering everything on the slides and then proceed to do so, while looking up at the screen. Each of your slides is filled with the text of your speech. Your audience begins to question the value of your presentation when they could just read printouts of your notes.

How to avoid – Remember that you are the presentation. PowerPoint and visual aids should only be used to support your speech. Simplify the content by using bullet points for key information (no more than four per slide), and place the most important points at the top of the slide for those sitting in the back row.

3) Information overload

The scenario – You know so much about the topic that you jump around from point to point and back again talking about everything there is to know. As a result, no one in the audience is able to follow the presentation.

How to avoid – Use the K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Simple Silly) when designing a presentation. Stick to three or four bullet points about your topic and then provide additional details. Through this format, the audience is more likely to retain the information. Remember, the average attention span of today's audiences is only 16.5 minutes!



4) Poorly chosen design template

The scenario – You heard blue was a good colour for a design template. You found a really cool ocean-themed template on the Internet. Water is blue, right? Unfortunately, your presentation is about a Basketball mentorship programme.

How to avoid – Choose a design that is appropriate for the audience. A clean, straightforward layout is best for business presentations. Young children respond to presentations that have colour and contain a variety of shapes. Typically, it is smart to use less text and more diagrams when talking to large audiences. Using more text in slides can be appropriate for smaller audiences.

5) Unusual colour choices

The scenario – It was December, so, being in the holiday spirit, you choose green and red for your presentation. Unfortunately, a man raises his hand in the back and tells you that he can't read the text because he is colour blind.

How to avoid – Good contrast with the background is essential to make your text easy to read. Dark text on a light background is best for small audiences. Whereas, dark backgrounds with light text/shapes are very effective (and easy to read) when speaking with large audiences. Also, some colour combinations can be associated with holidays or products unrelated to your topic, so think about the colour combination and its associations before using it in your slides.

6) Poor font choices

The scenario – Small script fonts looked great on your cousin's wedding invitation, so you decide to use that font for your presentation, but you didn't consider the audience member sitting 200 meters away from the screen who can't read it.

How to avoid – Stick to using easy-to-read fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman and avoid script type fonts, which are hard to read on screen. Additionally, use no more than two different fonts – one for headings, another for content (or just use one font throughout). And make sure the font size is big enough so everyone can read it easily.

7) Irrelevant photos and graphs

The scenario – You figured no one will notice that you didn't do much research on your topic if you add lots of photos and complicated looking graphs.

How to avoid – The phrase "time is money" is becoming a reality in today's world. No one wants to waste his or her time sitting through a presentation with no substance. Use photos, charts and diagrams only to emphasise the key points of your presentation. They add a nice break to the material, and when used correctly, can enhance your oral presentation.

8) Too many slides

The scenario – Your trip to Germany was so great that you took 500 photos and put them all in a digital photo album to impress your friends. After the first 100 slides, half the room has fallen asleep.

How to avoid – Ensure your audience stays focused by keeping the number of slides to a minimum. Ten to twelve slides are plenty. The best way to avoid putting too many slides is to reverse the roles – how would you feel listening to a 500-slide presentation?

9) Animation overload

The scenario – You found all the really cool animations and used 85% of them in your presentation to impress everyone. Unfortunately, the audience is overwhelmed and doesn't know where to look. The key message becomes lost among all the animation.

How to avoid – Animations and sounds, used appropriately, can heighten interest, but don't distract the audience with too much of a good thing. Design your presentation with the "less is more" philosophy and keep the animation consistent (if you bring in a line of text with one animation, use that same animation throughout the presentation). Don't let your audience suffer from animation overload.

10) Technological malfunctions

The scenario – The audience has settled into their seats. You are all set to start your presentation, but PowerPoint isn't working. You didn't bother to check it out before the presentation was slated to begin.

How to avoid – Before you present, rehearse with the equipment you will use during the presentation. Also, carry an extra copy of the presentation on a separate USB in case the problem is the USB and not the equipment. If possible, also check the lighting in the room you will be presenting in to ensure the slides can be seen (and how to dim the lights if needed).

Most of the tips and techniques outlined in this chapter are especially useful for public speaking projects.

However, in one-on-one meetings with your coach, job interviews, or even a staff meeting, basic presentation principles can be applied to convey information effectively and potentially influence the actions of others in your favour. Ultimately, you can find more success and generate more opportunities in your personal and professional endeavours as you improve your skills as a presenter.

3.3 PROFESSIONALISM – MAKING POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS

You are not only a Basketball player – you are an elite Basketball player. Some amateur athletes may work outside the sport and consider another occupation their true profession, but your office is the court. As a result, your status brings with it expectations and standards for how you conduct yourself.

But what exactly does it mean to be a professional? In most occupations – banking, medicine, teaching, etc. – professional status requires specialised skills and proficiency. And Basketball is no different – you have demonstrated expert abilities and you are paid for those skills. However, due to the unique nature of professional sports and the average length of a career in hoops, it is crucial that you are constantly working to develop your professional skills outside the sport. This will be the key to lifelong success and a professional career post-Basketball.

You may be wondering what professionalism has to do with you and your success on and off-the-court. To demonstrate the impact professionalism can have on your career, this chapter addresses the following points:

Who is a professional, what is professionalism and why does it matter?

- What are professional skills?
- What are some key professional Do's and Don'ts?

Professionalism is a quality that you can carry with you wherever life takes you. You have probably never heard of a person being turned down for a job or sponsorship deal because he or she was “too professional”. But you have probably heard of a person being fired or turned down for opportunities because he or she was “too lazy”, “too unreliable” or “never on time”. That’s the difference between opportunities for success and missing out – **professionalism**.



WHO IS A PROFESSIONAL, WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A **professional** is someone that demonstrates rare abilities and common sense, and then uses these gifts in their professional life. Another major part of being a professional is being considerate towards other people and demonstrating self-control. A professional is someone who takes pride in the work that he or she does and is focused on the task at hand. They are the ones who are willing to go the extra mile to make sure that everything is done and the responsibilities of the day are complete.

Many people like to consider themselves professionals, but not all of them actually demonstrate professionalism on a daily basis. It is true that you may not be able to display the attributes of a professional all of the time, but the harder you work towards being professional, the more you will be recognised for your efforts.

If you are a professional, you are going to get ahead in your career simply because you know how to treat people. You know that people deserve respect and that to gain respect, you need to show respect to others.

Moving ahead in your career is just one reason to work towards being a professional. Being a professional can also benefit you in social settings. For instance, the more you demonstrate professionalism off-the-court, the more likely you are to be viewed as a potential leader. Being seen as a leader can lead to tremendous opportunities off-the-court and following your Basketball career.

Professionalism is the commitment to a set of values consisting of real responsibilities. These values can come from a formal code of conduct as well as the informal expectations of both colleagues and observers. Key values of professionalism include acting in the best interest of others and maintaining a certain standard and knowledge base expected of those in your specific profession.



These certain standards include ethical elements such as integrity, honour, accountability, and responsibility. In addition to skills, professionals should present humanistic qualities such as caring, compassion, humility and kindness. Professionals need to have a social responsibility and sensitivity to other people's culture and beliefs.

On-the-court, professionalism includes:

- Good sportsmanship
- Teamwork
- Respect for officials, coaches and competitors
- Showing up to games and practices on time
- Honouring exercise and nutrition plans
- Learning more about the sport

Off-the-court, similar standards of professionalism apply, including:

- Honouring commitments to colleagues, advisors, sponsors, etc.
- Being honest with agents, sponsors, etc.
- Being on time for professional appointments
- Treating others – fans, sponsors, etc. – with respect
- Serving as a role model for young people



WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS?

Professional skills fall into three categories – attitude, behaviour and presentation. The steps you take to improve in each of these areas will strengthen your level of professionalism and make more positive impressions on those having contact with you.

- **Attitude**

Attitude is everything! A positive attitude is the first step to professionalism. It begins at the simplest level – you cannot let your personal life interfere with your professional attitude. You might be able to recall a bad performance on the court, an argument with a teammate, or a disagreement you had with a family member. Did you allow that attitude to cross over into other areas of your life? Even when having a bad day, you still need to maintain a positive attitude and not take your bad mood out on others or let it affect your work.

It is easy to fall into the trap of focusing on the negative. Being a professional in any field is demanding, but if you are continually dwelling on the challenges, you will find yourself spending valuable time complaining.

A true professional focuses his or her energy in a more positive way. This calls for an attitude of assertiveness. A true professional does what needs to be done and does not leave the job for others to accomplish.

Part of a good attitude is being open to taking calculated risks. Without risk, achieving greater things is impossible. A professional should be willing to take risks and try new things. Do not settle for mediocrity or being average – continue to strive for bigger and better things!

When it comes to taking risks, start small, understand your limitations and find out what risks have the highest rewards. This will provide you with more confidence to take risks in the future.

Displaying confidence is also a professional skill, but one that is not easily learned. You must gain confidence through experience, and most importantly, learning from your experiences. There are a number of ways to demonstrate confidence:

- Join in conversations with your colleagues and engage with others
- Make eye contact with your peers when they're speaking
- Smile when someone addresses you or speaks to you directly
- When you introduce yourself to someone you have never met, always use your first and last name

Following these few principles can increase your confidence and make each of your interactions more fruitful.

Professionals set goals for themselves and know what they want to achieve, which is why a strong level of initiative is also an important professional skill to maintain. Do not wait for others to introduce you, introduce yourself to persons of interest. Allow yourself to be included in conversations and groups that could be important to your professional career.

- **Behaviour**

Numerous behaviours are associated with professionalism. Professionalism is defined not by your career choice, but by the way you perform your job.

First and foremost, be punctual. Get into the habit of being on time. Barring an emergency, it is not appropriate to be late to a meeting, function, conference, or gathering. It is an implication to everyone present that you think your time is more valuable than theirs.

Another important behaviour is your body language. Always try to use positive body language and facial expressions. Positive body language shows others around you that you are happy to be a part of the conversation. You can convey through a smile, active listening, and open posture that you are truly involved and that you are attentive to what others have to say. Body language can convey confidence and interest, two qualities that sponsors, media and other influential people in your career may consider attractive and marketable.

A professional “foul” that is common in this generation is the abuse of cell phones. Unless it is an emergency, it is not appropriate to be talking, texting or surfing the Internet while in the company of others. If a call must be answered, politely ask to be excused. Cell phone etiquette is not necessarily a skill, but it is definitely a professional courtesy in this day and age.

Being able to discern the types of topics that are appropriate for conversation is also a key professional behaviour. When speaking in a formal setting – business or otherwise – you should avoid asking personal questions. Additionally, in conversation, you should avoid interrupting others and should think before you speak. A professional is never patronising or demeaning to others, regardless of past experiences or level of education.



- **Presentation**

Like it or not, people are often judged by their appearance. A professional is expected to dress in a respectable manner and you will be judged by the way you are dressed. While the level of formality has declined in many professions, there are still certain types of clothing that are considered inappropriate in professional settings. Clothes that are too revealing, casual or sloppy should not be worn at business meetings, public appearances or events where your status as a professional Basketball player is front and centre. Body piercings, tattoos, and other bold fashion statements are often looked upon unfavourably.

When deciding what kind of dress is appropriate, there are some important things to consider. As a general rule, the first ten inches and the last ten inches of your attire are the most important to consider. This includes all accessories above the neck and below the ankles. Hair, smile, earrings, collar and/or ties should be elements of your wardrobe that should be considered carefully. These are the elements of your attire that people will likely notice first and make judgements from – they are the key to first impressions.

In general, there are three categories for attire that can help you determine what outfit might be appropriate for which events and which types of audiences. To help, these categories are detailed below, including situations where each one may be most appropriate:

- **Professional dress** – the most conservative type of business clothing. It is what you would be expected to wear in the office, at a job interview, or a formal dinner/function. For women, this means a business suit or dress and a jacket. For men, professional dress means a business suit or a blazer, dress pants, a tie and dark shoes and socks.
- **Business Casual** – a more relaxed version of “professional dress”, but this does not mean truly casual. This style is semi-conservative, usually calling for a shirt with a collar and/or a sweater, khakis or dress pants and nice shoes. Women can also wear moderate length dresses or skirts. For men, business casual is a polo shirt or button-up shirt with a collar and/or sweater, khakis or dress pants and dress shoes. No tie is required.
- **Casual** – what you would not wear to work or a social function. This is everyday wear, including jeans, t-shirts, flip flops, gym clothes, sneakers, etc. This attire is reserved for days off, after work or weekends, during which time you may not be out in public in any official capacity. When in doubt, dress one category above what you think may be appropriate – rarely are people judged for being “over-dressed”.

WHAT ARE SOME KEY PROFESSIONAL DO'S AND DON'TS?

In addition to the elements of professionalism outlined above, here are a few more professional Do's and Don'ts that can serve you well in your Basketball career and beyond:

- **Professional Do's**

Here are a few behaviours that will enhance your level of professionalism and allow you to exhibit competent professional skills:

- Offering help to colleagues if they need it – making others' jobs easier will go a long way in the workplace
- Respecting others
- Making yourself approachable
- Communicating professionally at all times – through conversation, telephone, written report, memo, or email – never deviate from your professional approach
- Establishing a high level of competence and understanding in your profession – perceptions of your level of professionalism depend on your ability to convey a deep understanding of your job – in other words, learn everything you possibly can and stay current about professional trends
- Staying positive and enthusiastic – and smile!

- **Professional Don'ts**

- Communicating informally – especially in less formal forms of communication (email, text messages, etc.)
- Emailing while angry
- Engaging in office gossip about other colleagues
- Trying to court favour with your boss or supervisors
- Procrastinating
- Being off-task during work hours

Everyone can develop professionalism, but not everyone does – and that is what separates successful professionals from everyone else. The real work comes from taking a professional attitude and turning it into practice. Professionalism takes effort, commitment, and application, but when you adopt and maintain professional standards, you feel better about your overall abilities, which can translate into greater professional opportunities.





GAME PLAN

Years ago, you learned to dribble a ball and shoot hoops. Then you probably joined a club team or played in the schoolyard. And eventually, you made the leap to elite international Basketball. Chances are you started thinking about your future in the sport long before you signed a deal with your current team. In other words, you planned for the future. It is also important to start thinking about life after Basketball. By setting goals and developing skills, knowledge and contacts to achieve them, you can ensure that your long-term career is full of exciting opportunities.



4.1 GOAL SETTING – KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE LONG-TERM

Several years ago, there was a laundry worker who was earning \$12,000 a year. In his free time, he wrote books and would send them to publishers hoping to have one published. Over and over, he would receive rejection letters that told him he would never make it as a writer.

This continued for many years until he decided to become a schoolteacher. Now making \$15,000 a year, he still wrote books during his free time. One day, he finished writing a book and decided that he should stop trying to get his books published. He threw away the book, but his wife took it out of the trash bin, read it and told him it was quite good. With his wife's encouragement, he decided to try again and sent it to one more publisher.

Six weeks later, he received a check in the mail for \$400,000. He immediately called up the publisher to say they must have made a mistake; the check should be for \$400. They told him the amount was correct and that it was an advance based on predicted book sales.

The name of the book was **Carrie** and the author was Stephen King, one of the best-selling authors of all-time.

Can setting a goal really lead to success? Can it make you a winner? Well, setting a goal is just the first step – but a necessary one to achieve real success. It is possible that you have never formally set goals for yourself. And if you have, it can be helpful to review your process and see how you can refine it to achieve bigger and better things. This chapter addresses the goal setting process, including the following key points:

What is goal setting?

How do I create goals?

What are potential goal setting pitfalls and how can I avoid them?

How does time management affect setting and achieving goals?

Goals can help you achieve in all areas of your life on and off-the-court and setting goals is the key to accomplishing a wide range of ambitions, such as learning a new skill, completing your education or taking a new step in your life. No matter what the activity is, setting a clear and precise objective gets you heading in the right direction.

WHAT IS GOAL SETTING?

The most basic level of the goal setting process is simple – goals are set, actions are taken to achieve them, goals are eventually achieved and the process begins again for a new objective.

Without having a process in place to keep you focused on achieving your goals, very often goals are forgotten, time runs out to achieve them or the goal becomes irrelevant. Research has shown that having a goal setting process can help raise productivity, clarify expectations, and increase individual performance.

Before determining how you are going to achieve your goals, you must start by defining the goals themselves. There are two types of goals:

- **Learning goals** – where the primary concern is gaining knowledge on a particular subject and developing personal competence
- **Performance goals** – objectives that, if achieved, will position you ahead of your peers in a given area

It is common practice to set short-term learning goals in order to take steps towards achieving long-term performance goals.

Learning Goals

Learning goals are the initial steps you take to achieve long-term (performance) goals. For labour-intensive, short-term tasks, it is common practice to set goals for that day. This could include cleaning the apartment, finishing the laundry or picking up the dry-cleaning. As the level of complexity increases, the number of actions and time you set aside to achieve these goals will increase.

Performance Goals

Performance goals are used to set the direction to succeed in the long-term. This is especially relevant for athletes who might be fully focused on their sport in the present, but imagine a different career path in the future and need to make sure they are taking necessary steps now to achieve long-term career goals in the future.



HOW DO I CREATE GOALS?

Take out a piece of paper. Think of some long-term goals that you would like to achieve. A quick tip to creating long-term, performance goals is to use the FISHER Method. The FISHER Method helps you to consider all aspects of your life when creating goals, as shown below:

- Family
- Intellectual
- Social
- Health/Fitness
- Economic
- Spiritual

For example, your goals could include: learning a new language (Intellectual), planning a wedding (Family), or eliminating debt (Economic) – these goals become your performance goals.

Writing down your long-term goals is just one step in the goal setting process. Next, you must consider some of the short-term actions you must take to get there. These action steps are your learning goals. For your action steps to be completed successfully, they must be SMART:

- Specific – well defined and clear to others through brief explanation
- Measureable – assessable at each stage of the goal setting process, including when the goal has been achieved
- Accepted – committed to by the goal setter
- Realistic – within the capacity of available resources, knowledge and time
- Time-bound – set within a specific amount of time - enough time to achieve the goal, but not so much time that can affect/delay performance

The SMART technique addresses key questions, such as “What? When? How much? How well?”. This approach to goal setting leaves little room for confusion or doubt about what you need to accomplish and how it will be measured.

There are many goal setting techniques that will help make your goals a reality. One such technique is to [share your goals with the people around you](#).

Many people are afraid to share what they want to achieve because they might fail. Conversely, the people that you share your goals with tend to be close relatives or friends. These people care just as much about you achieving your goals as you do. Similar to the Stephen King story, telling people close to you will give you a support system while you are working towards achieving your goals.

Additionally, sharing your goals creates personal accountability. Others will know that you are working towards achieving your goal and will be invested in helping you to get there.

A second technique is to [boost internal motivation every day](#). Contrary to the first technique that provides external motivation, you must also be committed and determined to achieving your own goals.

Therefore, you must visualise your goals and affirm them every day to motivate you into taking action. This can be as simple as verbalising your goals in the morning when you wake up and right before you go to bed at night. Another way to affirm your goals is to create lists. Checking off when you have achieved an action step (learning goal) can give you a sense of achievement and provide further motivation to achieve long-term (performance) goals.

A third technique is to [build momentum throughout the process](#). The key to achieving a performance goal is consistency. Each day at least three learning goals should be achieved. No matter how big or small the action, there must be consistency in order to maintain momentum until the goals have been achieved. For example, if your long-term goal is to shoot 80% from the free throw line, then three learning goals each day could be: 1) taking 100 practice shots, 2) reviewing video to refine your technique and 3) practicing a personal mantra to calm and focus yourself at the line.

It is easy to fall into a trap of not taking action and establishing a lazy mindset. The longer you wait, the harder it is to re-establish internal motivation.



WHAT ARE POTENTIAL GOAL SETTING PITFALLS AND HOW CAN I AVOID THEM?

Goal setting is a powerful practice that can ignite enthusiasm and provide clear direction. So why do so many people fail to set and achieve personal, career, and business goals?

The main reason is that they have fallen into one of the many pitfalls of the goal setting process. You can't eliminate pitfalls, but you can avoid them with proper planning and awareness. Here are three of the most common pitfalls that an effective goal setting process helps to avoid:

1) Goal setting becomes about the plan, not the execution

A potential downside of goal setting can occur when the amount of time, energy and creativity that goes into creating your goals outweighs the actual management of those goals.

As an example, consider organisations that spend time and energy developing a comprehensive business plan, only to have the plan sit in a drawer. While the act of making the plan was important, the follow-up is even more critical. Constant progress and regular review make the plan a reality.

Your plan must be practical and have practical elements/activities that can be tracked and monitored. Set intermediate goals that propel you toward achieving your ultimate goal and execute each action step along the way.

2) Too many goals make nothing a priority

In the highly demanding world of professional sports, it is common for athletes to juggle multiple jobs (both personal and professional). Having multiple jobs usually leads to many expectations put upon you. As a result, it is difficult to determine which goals are most important to accomplish next.

You may have fallen into this goal setting trap if you:

- Never feel as if you complete a task
- Experience difficulty tying your goal to a reward system that recognises your accomplishments
- Don't know what goal takes top priority
- Check tasks off a list without integrating those actions into a long-term plan

It is important to keep your goals to a manageable number. There should be a maximum of seven goals at a time – one under each of the seven FISHES acronym listed above. Keeping the total goals manageable, yet covering all of the foundational elements of your life, allows you to prioritise what is important without feeling overwhelmed.

3) Personal goals take a back seat

Personal goals are probably one of the most likely aspects of your life to be affected by procrastination. There are no deadlines and no coach telling you to get it done. All you have are the expectations and priorities you impose upon yourself. Your future beyond Basketball depends on setting and achieving personal goals – which are up to you to set and accomplish.

For every action there is a reaction, and this scientific principle holds true for procrastination and goals. The less you work towards your goals, the less motivated you are and the more overwhelming the tasks ahead of you will seem. Alternatively, the more you work towards your goals, the more motivated you will be to accomplish each task. Procrastinate long enough and you may never go back to the personal goals you have set for yourself.



HOW DOES TIME MANAGEMENT AFFECT SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS?

Time is a resource that most of us are always short of. Unfortunately, it is also a crucial element in the goal setting process. By making better use of your time, you can achieve your personal goals much more easily. Here are eight time management tips to help you organise your priorities in order to be more productive:

- 1) **Realise that time management is a myth.** No matter how organised you are, there are only 24 hours in a day. All you can actually manage is yourself and what you do with the time that you are given.
- 2) **Find out where you are wasting time.** Do you spend too much time surfing the Internet, reading email or making personal calls? If so, you may have fallen prey to a common time-waster. Track your activities so you can form an accurate picture of how you actually spend your time. This is an important first step in effective time management.
- 3) **Create time management goals.** Once your personal goals are established, set time management goals that change your behaviour. A good place to start is eliminating your personal time-wasters. For example, for one week, set a goal that you are not going to manage your Facebook page for more than 15 minutes per day – and stick to it.
- 4) **Use time management tools.** Whether it's an agenda or a software programme, a key step to managing your time is knowing where you currently spend your time and planning how you are going to spend time in the future. A software programme such as Outlook lets you schedule events easily and can be set to remind you of events in advance, making time management much easier.
- 5) **Prioritise ruthlessly.** You should start each day with a time management session prioritising the action steps (learning goals) for that day and setting your performance benchmark. If you have 20 action steps that still need to be achieved, determine how many of them can you realistically accomplish that day.
- 6) **Establish routines and stick to them as much as possible.** While crises will arise, you will be much more productive if you can follow routines most of the time.

7) **Get in the habit of setting time limits for tasks.** For example, Basketball activities can consume your whole day if you let them. Instead, set limits on the time you spend focusing on your sport.

8) **Don't waste time waiting.** From team meetings to medical appointments, it is impossible to avoid waiting for someone or something. But you don't need to just sit there and twiddle your thumbs. Always take something to do with you, such as a book to read, a checkbook that needs to be balanced, or just a blank pad of paper that you can use to plan your next action step. Technology makes it easy to work wherever you are – your PDA and/or cell phone can help you stay connected to the outside world and your own goal setting objectives.

Once you can manage your time and realistically predict how long different parts of your day will take, you can begin to establish clear and achievable time targets for achieving your goals. And by identifying habits that waste time and interfere with progress, you can make adjustments that drive your goals forward without sacrificing other things that you enjoy.

Setting goals is key to any form of success – professional, financial, personal, etc. Understanding the purpose of goal setting and techniques for achieving goals can make a big impact in your life on and off-the-court. With clear objectives in mind, you can map out your future and stay on course for success.



4.2 EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT – GAINING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Did you know that the average playing career of a professional Basketball player lasts 4 ½ years? Therefore, preparing for your professional life after Basketball is just as important as your current career on-the-court. The short-term nature of professional sporting careers and the uncertainty of sport (injuries, contracts, etc.) mean that education and skills training are key to achieving goals later in life.

Before deciding whether to pursue formal education or practical skills training, it is important to spend time thinking about your interests. Perhaps you are passionate about Basketball and want to find professional opportunities related to the sport off-the-court. Or maybe you think becoming a teacher or IT professional might be interesting. Identifying your interests will help you determine a rewarding career path and inform your decisions about how to make progress toward your goals. The education level of professional athletes can vary dramatically. Among your teammates, there may be high school graduates, university graduates or even PhDs. If you have not completed some form of higher education (post-high school), it is important for you to consider what type of education best fits your personal goals.

There are many options to consider, and the responsibilities and commitments unique to your life – family, finances, etc. – will factor into any decisions you make about what educational opportunities are best for you. In fact, there are so many options that the entire process can feel overwhelming. This chapter gives you an overview of some of your options and the best way to pursue them. Topics in this chapter include:

- What are my current options?
- What full-time education options do I have post career?
- How can I use my Basketball career for future opportunities?
- How do I pay for educational opportunities?

Education and skills training may not seem very important as your main focus right now is your life on-the-court. But before you became a professional Basketball player, you probably made investments years ago to help position yourself for opportunities in the sport (training camps, youth leagues, etc.). Keep that in mind as you start thinking about life after hoops – investments you make now and shortly after your playing career ends can lead to greater professional and financial success for years to come.

WHAT ARE MY CURRENT OPTIONS?

Below is a list of some of the formal education and skill development options available to you. Whether you are working toward a university degree or expanding your knowledge in an area of interest, these four options will get you started in the right direction.

- **Part-time or night classes.** Depending on your current location, you may have the opportunity to take part-time or night classes at a local university or college. These classes provide flexibility you may need considering the demands of a professional sporting career.

The first step is to investigate institutions that are within a reasonable distance of your residence and offer courses and training in areas that interest you. Next, contact the admissions office to gather more information on part-time or night class options and specific programmes that may be enrolling students.

Do not be discouraged about the length of time it may take to reach your dream. Instead, keep in mind that making steady progress toward degree requirements is better than doing nothing at all. Remember, you did not become a professional athlete overnight – you had to spend time training and developing skills to get to where you are. The same is true for other professional goals.

- **Online education.** The fast-paced nature of today's world has opened up a variety of online educational options. Online education gives you greater accessibility and flexibility to work toward a degree during your busy Basketball career.

Similar to the search process for part-time or night classes, online education is typically offered through two- or four-year institutions. Additionally, there are exclusive online educational institutions. Not surprisingly, the Internet is the best place to research online education opportunities.

- **Computer programmes.** Another option for those requiring a flexible education schedule is commercially available computer software. Today, hundreds of companies produce at-home education programmes for Mac and PC operating systems.



Although this option will not result in receiving a formally recognised degree from an accredited institution, it can provide you with basic knowledge that you can use to develop further in certain career fields. These programmes can also help you develop specific skills that you can apply in many careers, including foreign language training, computer skills and software training, math skills and other forms of training that most employers will find helpful and marketable.

Additionally, if you are still debating on which career path to follow, these programmes can help you make more informed decisions about your future education investment and will give you a head start once you begin formal coursework.

- **Professional/self-help books.** Similar to commercial computer software, professional/self-help books are another useful option. Books that cover certain trades or pre-professional programmes such as health administration or automotive repair can shed light on the fundamental details of your area of interest. Search online or at a local bookstore for these resources.



WHAT FULL-TIME EDUCATION OPTIONS DO I HAVE POST CAREER?

If you determine that full-time university education is the path you want to take, there are several different options you can use to acquire formal education. Here are six recognised educational options for you to consider:

- **Trade schools.** A trade school provides vocational education and focuses on teaching you the skills you will need to perform a specific job, with unique emphasis on the practical application of your newly acquired skills. The defining characteristic of trade schools is their application-intensive nature – they give students more hands-on experience in their specific trade than any other form of education.

In general, trade schools are less expensive to attend than a four-year university and provide graduates with useful skills after only one or two years of coursework. After completion of coursework, students are certified and eligible to take any required examinations to acquire a formal license to practice their trade.

Job placement services are often a key selling point for trade schools. However, the job market can become compacted in popular trades and your range of options can be limited. But if you are passionate or highly skilled in a certain area, these programmes may be a perfect opportunity for you.

- **Online education.** Online education, also known as distance learning or e-learning, differs from traditional education because students are not required to visit an actual classroom and listen to an instructor face-to-face. The convenience of online classes has a direct correlation with its increasing popularity, as they eliminate time restraints in your day. It also means you would be able to:
 - Learn at your own pace
 - Benefit from more one-on-one instructor interaction
 - Speed up the traditional course experience and potentially earn a degree in less time

One area of caution is to make sure you enroll in an accredited institution, as fraud in online education is a growing concern. Contact potential online institutions and discuss your future education with them before signing up.

On the costs side, online education is typically similar to university programmes, as you are paying a premium for the convenience and flexibility of scheduling courses and completing them.

- **Two-year institutions.** Traditional two-year institutions, also called community colleges, are most prevalent in the United States, but do exist in similar forms throughout the world. These institutions are considered the less expensive than four-year universities and typically offer three types of programmes:

- 1) **Career education** – students receive an Associate's degree and directly enter the workforce
 - 2) **Industry training** – students' employers pay for training and education in specific areas that help the student/employee develop more skills in their job
 - 3) **Transfer credit** – students receive credit for courses taken with the plan of applying that credit toward a four-year, higher-level degree
- **Undergraduate universities.** This may be the most traditional form of higher education. Four-year institutions offer degrees in a wide variety of areas. Different institutions provide expertise in different degree areas, so doing some research is important when looking for the right school to reach your goals.

Costs vary considerably, depending on whether the institution is publicly or privately funded. Costs for attending a public institution are considerably less than a private institution. After completing your degree, you receive a Bachelor's degree and diploma. Students who receive this degree either enter the workforce or pursue higher levels of education in their field of study (Master's or Doctoral programmes).

- **Post-graduate or Master's programmes.** Master's programmes are typically reserved for students who already have a Bachelor's degree. These programmes tend to be more expensive because the level of training and research is more specialised. However, students working towards a Master's degree can often subsidise part of the costs by working in their vocational area, earning money to pay for their education and gaining valuable hands-on experience.
- **Doctoral programmes.** Similar to a Master's programme, Doctoral programmes are exclusively available to those who have previously attained a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Doctoral programmes are research intensive by nature and represent the highest level of formal study in most countries. As such, Doctoral programmes are the most expensive form of higher education, but again, opportunities to subsidise tuition and living costs are available through grants, scholarships and assistantships.

It is important to note that the system of education varies from country to country. Therefore, some of the different levels of education described above may not be available in a specific country, or may be part of another form of education. For instance, in Germany, the Bachelor's and Master's degrees are combined, everyone works toward a Master's degree, whether introductory (Bachelor's level) or advanced (Master's level).

Be sure to research the educational system in the country where you want to pursue your education. Doing so will help you understand your options and the unique aspects that various systems offer that may or may not be well suited to your goals and priorities.

HOW CAN I USE MY BASKETBALL CAREER FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES?

Have you ever considered that the passion you exhibit on-the-court could be your key to a successful career off-the-court?

The reality is that you have demonstrated the discipline, focus, and competitive spirit that many employers want their employees to have. As such, you may want to factor in your experience as a professional athlete when choosing an option for education or skills training. You have a unique opportunity to leverage your current position in the next chapter of your life.

To be a successful athlete, you possess qualities and personal traits that are rare and very attractive to most organisations. These traits may include being:

- Confident
- Results-driven
- Team-oriented
- Mentally tough
- Coachable
- Able to overcome adversity

When making educational and professional choices, lean on your individual attributes and let your previous experiences and personal strengths guide you.

Although statistics show that former athletes tend to gravitate toward careers in sales, management and general business, the unique skill sets that professional athletes develop give you certain advantages for establishing successful careers in many different professions. These include sports-related careers such as physical education, athletic training and coaching.

While it can be wise to continue on a professional path that allows you to work in sport, do not be afraid to try your hand at something new – your playing career will serve you well wherever your next career takes you.



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HOW DO I PAY FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES?

Education can be expensive, so planning ahead can be very useful (and necessary) to making long-term professional goals become a reality.

There are three primary ways to help subsidise the cost of your education:

- **Scholarships.** These are awards given to students based on prior achievement and indicators for academic success. Many scholarships are available through public and private sources from diverse industries, civic organisations and research institutions. The Internet is the best place to search for scholarship opportunities, as well as scholarship and financial service offices at educational institutions you may be interested in attending.
- **Grants.** Grants are often awarded based on financial need. These awards do not need to be repaid and students may receive them from the institution they receive, a government-sponsored programme or private research institution or business entity.
- **Federation/State/Private financial aid.** Many public and private sector bodies provide access to educational loans. Federal, regional or state governments may have loan programmes that offer students financial support during their education and that money must be paid back (with interest) in the years following completion of your degree.

Private banks and other lenders also provide loan opportunities. These opportunities vary among financial institutions and interest rates may be higher than government-sponsored loans.

While financing your education may seem like a challenging task, it should not become a barrier (or an excuse) to not pursuing your goals. There are abundant opportunities available to students. With some research and thoughtful planning, you can make sure that money does not interfere with your professional goals.

Similar to the financial considerations described in FIBA's Financial Handbook, your education is an investment – it is an investment in your career, your personal development, and your future. Starting to invest in (or save for) your education now will set you up for success after your Basketball career has ended. Research your options, factor in the financial commitment, and determine what the best option is for you.

4.3 NETWORKING – DEVELOPING CONTACTS TO HELP YOU IN THE FUTURE

Have you ever heard the following expression: “80% of jobs are never advertised”? Believe it or not, it’s actually true. 70-80% of jobs openings are filled by a pre-selected candidates, which makes a formal job posting unnecessary. So how can you compete in the job market when so many jobs are filled without a formal application process? The secret is networking.

Networking is consistently cited as the best way to get a job. Every day, people are recommended (and typically hired) to fill well-paying jobs without having to submit resumes or interview dozens of times. These recommendations usually come from personal and professional contacts who can attest to the candidates’ skills and aptitude for the job. Although they may not know the candidate personally, hiring managers trust the opinion and recommendation of respected colleagues in their industry.

And the power of networking doesn’t only pertain to jobs. Networking can also help you find the right schools for your kids, join influential social organisations, find a religious community or meet new friends. As an athlete, your main focus should be playing hoops and winning games. Fortunately, however, basic networking requires little effort. In other words, the rewards of building a network far exceed the investment of time and energy.

You can even incorporate networking into activities you might already think are fun – having a drink with your friends or playing a pick-up game at a local court. You can also network in more mundane situations – going to the grocery store or visiting the gym and chatting with the newest trainer.

Networking is not complicated. With the right attitude and approach, you can create a network that supports your personal and professional success for years to come. So how can you start building a network or growing a network you already have in place? This chapter addresses those concerns and explores the following questions:

- What is networking?
- What are some different types of networks?
- How can I use my current network?
- How can I prepare for networking?
- Should I network online?

The idea of networking may seem uncomfortable or intimidating. But truthfully, once you learn the basics, you may be surprised by how easy (and beneficial) it can be. Just remember that it is all part of positioning yourself for the best opportunities possible following your playing career.

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is the art of building alliances. It's not just contacting everyone you know when you are looking for a new job and asking if they know of any job openings. Networking starts long before a job search and is an activity you may already do more than you realise.

Whether you know it or not, you are networking when you:

- Attend professional meetings or conferences
- Talk to players, coaches, trainers from other teams and leagues
- Volunteer for charitable events
- Visit members of social, civic or religious organisations
- Talk to your teammates and coaches
- Strike up a conversation with someone else while waiting in line at the grocery store
- Post messages on social networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Talk to spectators/fans after the game

While networking is very common and occurs in most every social outing, there are some misconceptions about what networking actually is. To clarify, here is a short list of some of those misconceptions. Networking isn't:

- **Making cold-calls to people you don't know.** It's talking to people you do know and asking them to introduce you to others.
- **Carefully choreographing meetings and greeting people insincerely.** Networking is much more effective when done more casually.
- **Just for your benefit.** Networking is a two-way street and must benefit both persons to be truly effective. So, when you ask your network for help, be prepared to return the favour.



WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF NETWORKS?

On a daily basis, you experience many different interactions with colleagues, friends and even strangers, and these interactions present unique opportunities for networking. Here are four types of networks that define different types of relationships used in the networking process:

- 1) **Personal networks.** These include family, friends and close associates. You usually choose these types of networks through mutual interests or connections. Personal networks are more social than other types of networks and are based on an exchange of help and support.
- 2) **Organisational networks.** These include project groups, committees and councils. These networks are focused on whom you need to know to achieve objectives within a specific time frame. They are typically based on power, knowledge and influence.
- 3) **Professional networks.** These networks are comprised of colleagues and peers. Professional networks are based on common professional interests. They can be internal or external, meaning they can exist within a place of business or outside the office as part of an industry in general. For example, your current team would be an internal professional network, whereas FIBA would be an external professional network.
- 4) **Strategic networks.** These include external contacts and connections. Strategic networks can be established by making alliances with individuals from social, political, civic, or religious organisations or other groups with whom you may have regular contact.



HOW CAN I USE MY CURRENT NETWORK?

You may have already started thinking about how you can expand each of the four networks described above – new groups you could join, meetings and conferences you’d like to attend, new people you’d like to talk to, etc. However, it is important to remember that the people you already know could be the most influential people in your network.

Bob Beaudine, the pioneer of the networking concept “The Power of Who”, makes the following claim: “You already know everyone you need to know to get anything you need in life.”

Beaudine says that we have specific people in our lives that can help us in ways we have never imagined. These people are not just happenstance acquaintances, but strategic relationships that will be actively involved in helping you fulfil goals throughout your life. People that you may have never considered able to provide strategic assistance in achieving your professional and personal goals – your third grade teacher, your mom’s best friend, your dentist, etc. – may just know the person who could.

Regardless of whether you are planning to meet new people to expand your networks or talk to the people you know to see how they can help you achieve your goals, you still need to understand what to communicate to maximise your networking efforts. This is where preparation is key.



HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR NETWORKING?

An important skill for effective networking is the ability to clearly and succinctly articulate who you are, what you offer, and what you are looking for.

For example, imagine you were considering changes to your training programme. Instead of asking for general recommendations from people you know, it may be more useful to be specific about your needs. In this case, you may say that you want to develop a faster sprint or increase your vertical leap. By stating your goals/needs more clearly, people in your network can offer more specific advice or connect you with others in their network who may be able to provide specialised knowledge or support.

You have probably had to explain at some point in your life who you are and what you want to achieve. As a job applicant, athlete looking for a team or student applying to school, you have been a prospect at some point and had to answer these basic questions. And you will have to do it again as your career develops beyond Basketball.

During the networking process, prospects that can introduce themselves confidently and explain clearly what they are looking for will rise to the top. One way to show this confidence and clarity of purpose is by creating and practicing a 30-Second Elevator Speech:

- **What it is** – A 30-second elevator speech is a short “pitch” or sound-byte designed to pique the interest of a group, company or individual. It is a brief description of yourself, the skills and experience you offer, and any special or unique information related to your interests – which can be expressed easily in 30 seconds, the amount of time you would have if you were on an elevator with someone.

It is not a life story. Your goal is to get your audience to ask additional questions, look at (and not just file) your resume, or take a general interest in learning more about you.

- **Why it is important in networking** – The market for the most desirable jobs, social positions, educational institutions and teams is competitive. For example, all job seekers at a career fair will have a resume, a suit, a business card and an interest in securing multiple interviews. The “30-Second Elevator Pitch” is an opportunity for you to quickly and succinctly highlight particular skills or characteristics that are interesting and help you stand out. It’s all about gaining a competitive advantage.

- **What it should include** – The pitch should demonstrate how you are unique. It should include a brief introduction and what you can offer the group, company or team. The best pitches contain two or three important skills or abilities related to the group you are speaking to backed up by illustrative examples.
- **What it should sound like** – Imagine you were interested in becoming a Basketball coach after your playing career. At a sports conference, you meet a very successful coach from a prestigious Basketball league. Your 30 second elevator speech may sound something like this:

“My ultimate career goal is to become a professional Basketball coach. Having led my team to two national championships and representing my country at the Olympic Games, I have developed strong leadership skills and international experience that I can apply to coaching professional athletes. I am interested in exploring coaching opportunities and I am wondering what type of training opportunities or assistant-level positions may currently exist.”

This brief speech states a clear goal, examples of your suitability, unique skills and experiences and offers the listener the opportunity to respond with additional questions or ideas to consider. The elevator speech is a “first-step” and can get conversations moving in your favour.



SHOULD I NETWORK ONLINE?

With the growing popularity and influence of online social networking, the Internet can be a great way to begin informal relationships that turn into great networking opportunities. One benefit to online networking is that it eliminates the need for face-to-face interaction, which can alleviate some of the anxiety of making new connections.

However, it is very important that you begin these types of relationships in the right way. Since you can't use your voice or body language to express yourself, you must make sure the words that you use and the way they are presented properly represent your intentions.

There are a number of advantages to online networking:

- There are thousands of discussion groups and community forums covering a wide variety of subjects
- You can "break the ice" before meeting someone in person
- You can listen, engage or be as engaged as you wish because no one is watching you in person
- Many recruiters are using the Internet to find potential candidates on sites such as LinkedIn and other industry-specific forums

On the other hand, there are also some disadvantages to using online networking. These include:

- Networking online is just as difficult as networking in person! In fact, it may be even harder because you can't really establish a true personal relationship online
- First impressions count even more – be very careful with your first public posting
- Your online behaviour matters more than you think – don't try to use sarcasm when networking over the Internet because it is likely to be misinterpreted

Mailing lists, chat rooms, web forums, and social networking websites are all types of online places where networking can take place. They can be used for discussing recent developments in an industry, discussing trends in the job market or gaining advice on interviewing with specific companies. Examples of online networking opportunities include:

- **Chat rooms and web forums** – The level of formality and professionalism on these sites varies greatly. Web sites and online services such as www.vault.com and AOL's People Connection offer you the opportunity to create your own virtual meeting space.

- **Social networking websites** – These types of sites can list who you are, who you know and what you know. Some social networking sites are casual, such as Facebook. Others focus on developing professional connections. LinkedIn and Networking for Professionals are two primary examples.
- **Mailing lists** – Academics and research professionals are more likely to take advantage of these types of websites. Mailing lists still operate via email instead of web interfaces, so you must have a personal email account to participate. To find mailing lists that might be relevant to your industry or profession, search the CataList maintained by L-Soft or Yahoo! Groups.

Effective networking can be extremely beneficial to you – personally and professionally. It begins with a flexible plan – a simple introduction and explanation of your goals along with a list of current and potential friends and acquaintances that may be able to help you achieve your objectives. Your networks may change as your goals evolve, but the message stays relatively the same.

And don't be afraid to ask others close to you how they network. In particular, your agent makes a living from developing contacts and working with them to explore, create and maximise opportunities. By taking what you know and what you want to accomplish, and combining that with who you know, you can create a powerful network that helps you achieve your goals and experience success for many years to come.





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