

Published on ImagingBiz.com  
February 22, 2012

## THE SUPER BOWL OF RADIOLOGY SUCCESS

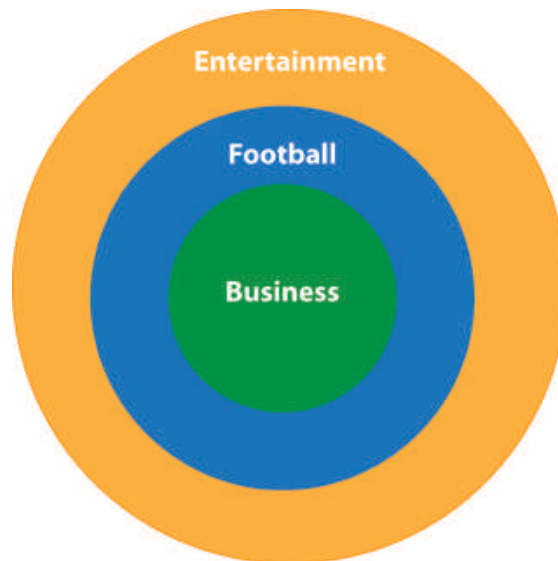
BY: MARK F. WEISS, J.D.

Did you notice that the Super Bowl was all about radiology group success?

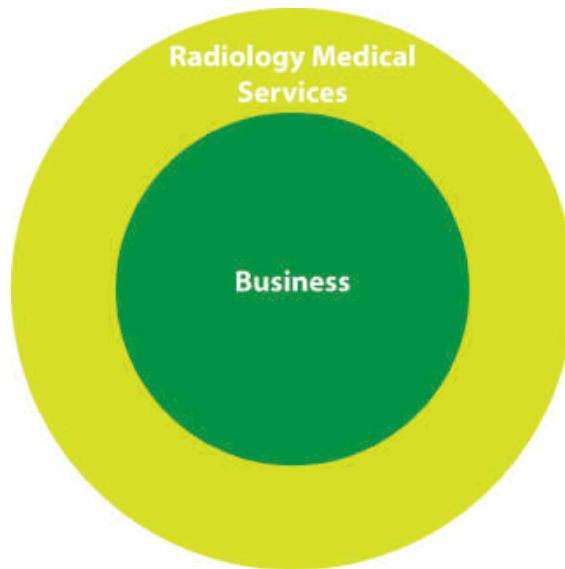
Let's look at the lessons from the big game.

First, the Super Bowl isn't really about football, it's about business: the two teams and, even more so, the NFL.

Sure, the players are playing football and it's expected that they perform at the top of their ability. But what's really going on at the Super Bowl is a business, wrapped in football, wrapped in grand scale entertainment. There's another element, too, which we'll get to in a bit.

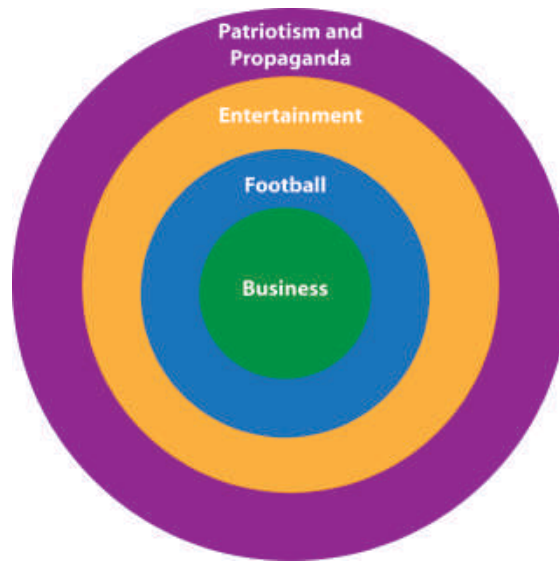


Similarly, and even though it's expected that the members of your group provide diagnostic and interventional radiology services at the highest possible level, from an economic perspective, what's really going on is a business wrapped in radiology medical services. And, just like in professional football, there are some other elements involved, too, which we'll get to in a bit.



Second, and it was hard not to notice, the Super Bowl has a final, “outside” wrapper: a mix of patriotism and propaganda.

Propaganda sounds like a bad word, but I use it in its truest context: persuasion. All of the trimmings, from the preposterous puffery of the opening announcer’s monologue to the singing of the national anthem, to the game as an allegory for good versus evil, for triumph and victory, combine to remind the spectators that they’re not actually watching a game, they’re participating in the quest for greatness, the quest for their own identity. “*We won!*”



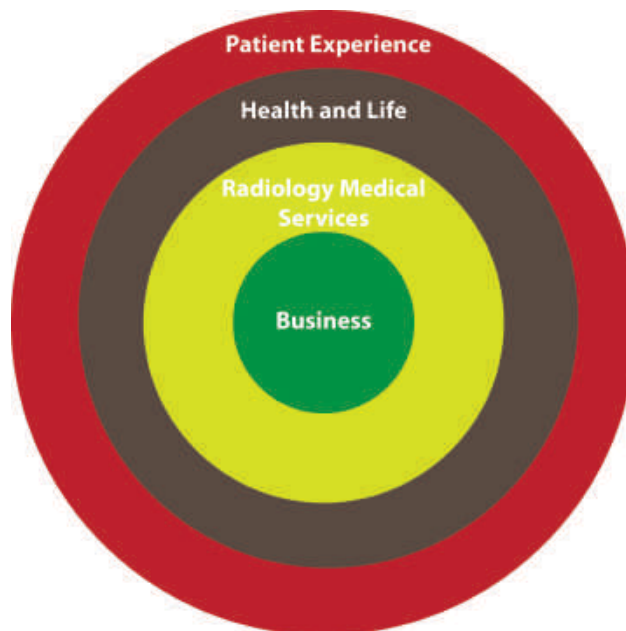
So what's the lesson here for radiology groups?

Well, it's clear: This is exactly the creation of what I mean when I describe an Experience Monopoly™, an experience that transcends the simple delivery of radiology services -- the simple playing of the game -- and wraps it in an experience that is so unique that your competitors, even if they could figure out what is going on, would never understand how to duplicate it.

So, as to the facilities at which you provide services and your referring physicians, the experience focuses on their needs and expectations, which adds the final wrapper:

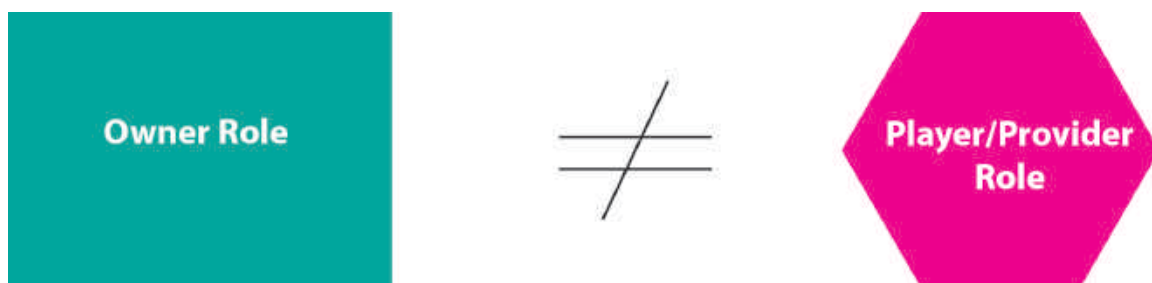


And, as to your patients, the experience focuses on *their* needs and expectations, which adds two additional wrappers, health and life, and the entire patient experience.



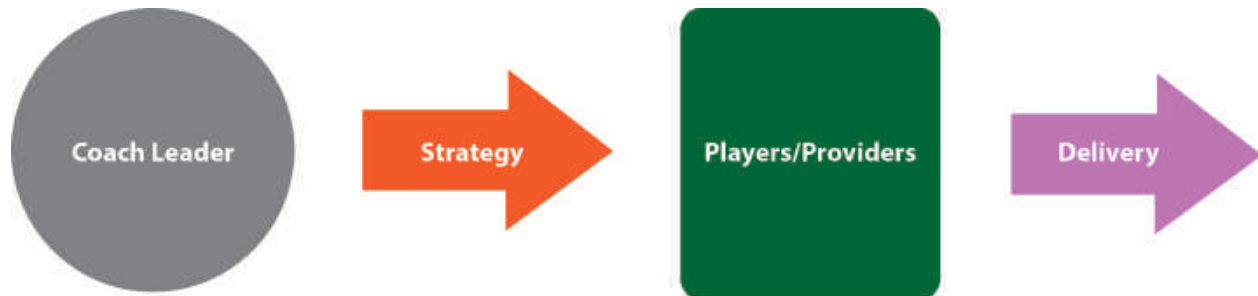
Third, the Super Bowl also provides lessons in radiology group organization and governance.

Although in football, owners aren't also players, ownership as a role is kept separate from the role of delivery of the "product:" the game. In your group, it's more likely that the owners are also providers, but the point here is that not all providers are owners and that when providers are wearing their "owner hats," they must be performing owner responsibilities and owner duties, not simply engaging in patient care. They must set aside time to devote to those responsibilities and duties. And, the group must reward them for it or it will not get done.



Fourth, the Super Bowl demonstrates that teamwork is required.

But the team is supervised by the coach. The owner may have selected the coach, but it's the coach who develops and selects the team's strategy. Your group's leaders must be allowed the independence to set group strategy and to lead the group in executing it.



On the team itself, not all players are equal: some are stars, and are treated as such, and some are journeymen, although all are professional level players and each is valued for his unique ability. Some are given more responsibility for executing team strategy, such as a quarterback is given leeway to choose from among plays selected by the coach for certain situations. And some are given additional compensation for the value they deliver to the team.

This philosophy is directly transferable to your group. Compensation plans must take into account individual contributions – contributions on various levels. For example, plans which simply divide the pie disincentivize, not because they're not "fair," but because, due to human nature, they end up creating cross incentives to do less on an individual basis. And plans which simply recognize personal productivity such as RVUs, don't provide compensation for the vital work outside of the realm of unit production that is essential for your group's success.

The Super Bowl also demonstrates that although people are motivated by money, as in bonuses to the players for their Super Bowl performance and victory, they are also motivated by other factors, some of

which may later be monetized and others which never can be: the trophy, the ring, the acknowledgment of their performance.

This is directly applicable to how you manage your team of physicians. It's not just what you pay members of your group, it's how you treat them, how you reward them, how you recognize them, how you give them responsibilities commensurate with their skills and interests. An increase in compensation is remembered only until the next increase in compensation. Recognition can last a lifetime.

Go team!

---

Mark F. Weiss is an attorney who specializes in the business and legal issues affecting radiology and other physician groups. He holds an appointment as clinical assistant professor of anesthesiology at USC's Keck School of Medicine and practices with The Mark F. Weiss Law Firm, a firm with offices in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, Calif. He can be reached by email at [markweiss@weiss.com](mailto:markweiss@weiss.com) and by phone at 310-843-2800.

To receive complementary copies of our articles and newsletters, opt in to our emailing list at [www.weisspc.com](http://www.weisspc.com).