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Entrepreneurship Lessons from 2010 World Cup

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2010 FIFA World Cup

I enjoy taking business lessons from non-business niche. This time, I take a reflection and philosophical look at 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa.

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Of course, I enjoy the football/soccer games, but I also enjoy the wealth of lessons I can benefit from for my entrepreneurial journey.

2010 World Cup is full of surprises. Check out how New Zealand (#78 FIFA world ranking) can hold the all-powerful Italy (#5, 2006 World Cup Champions) to a 1-1 draw. Also check out how USA toys England for a 1-1 draw. How about France's defeat to a weaker Mexico team 0-2?

Lessons for entrepreneurs

Here are the lessons I take during the 2010 World Cup so far:

1. The world is catching up – keep yourself competitive

Brazil defeat Korea DPR (North Korea) 2-1. The win itself is already foreseen, but it's shocking for such legendary footballing country (#1 FIFA world ranking) wins by a minimal margin against the Korea DPR team, #105 in FIFA world ranking.

Starting and running a business, regardless of how difficult they are, are even more challenging today. More established countries – business-wise, such as the United States shouldn't overlook how China and the rest of the world are catching up to grab their share of pie in global business.

I understand that the US is pride itself as franchising behemoth – but never procrastinate, as the world is catching up! In South East Asia, Philippine is establishing itself as a successful country in franchising. India is also catching up (India ALWAYS catching up – just consider how many US businesses outsources to India.)

Never forget the power of Internet; it virtually eliminates geographical boundaries and lower barrier to entry for global businesses to compete with each other. With the ever-increasing in importance of Internet-based business strategy, there will be more successful business people from all over the world that are competitive incorporating Internet into the core of their business.

2. Manage your ego, look for a collaboration to better your business

Strong football (soccer) countries, such as England and France, comprise of multi-talented and world's best players that often come with 'better than thou' ego. To get the players to play as a team is a real challenge. Players from weaker football countries, such as New Zealand, are most likely to be more than willing to put their ego aside and think team-working above anything else. From what I've seen so far, teamwork does beat talent.

"I can do this myself" is no longer a valid business strategy today. With the growing importance of social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, for businesses, DIY (do-it-yourself) in entrepreneurship is no longer effective.

You need to collaborate with others to keep yourself competitive. Conferences and Expos are great, but today you need to set up a 'cell group' for business or a business club, in which members can help each other out to grow their business, instead of competing with each other; a place where you can share business 'secrets' and best practices you know and receive the same in return – take and give in its purest form.

3. Your business might be small, but your impact is huge

New Zealand might be a 'weak' country in football, but the team performance inspires others – the small guys CAN do something big in the biggest stage of global football. Others can say, "We might have a chance to make it!"

Owning a small business is probably the coolest "job" ever. In whichever part of the world you are living right now, you – a small business owner – are one of the agents of change – you, along with the other small business owners, are the real driving force of your region's economy – you create jobs; you better your local community; all in all, you add value to the community.

Are you a football (soccer) fan and an entrepreneur? If so, have your say!

Ivan Widjaya
Soccer fan
Image by Shine 2010 – 2010 World Cup good news

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