

Ms. Laura McGoldrick
Research Associate
The University of Toledo
laura.mcgoldrick@utoledo.edu

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WANT SOME GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE ECONOMY?

The Best Business and Football Two-Minute Drills of 2008: *Rapid Improvement is the Name of the Game*

Well, the football season is finally over and corporate earnings reports have been posted from a very tough 2008. Amidst hard times, a number of enterprises had “hall of fame” performances combining *speed, execution, teamwork, technology* and *great leadership to get better results*. **America’s Leaders in Rapid Organizational Improvement** at twominutedrill.org announced **The Best Two-Minute Drills of the 2008 Business and Football Seasons!** Judges selected this year’s “*high performance winners*” in the following categories of outstanding performances in the business world and on the football field:

Biggest Comeback

Pittsburgh Steelers, 27 - Arizona Cardinals, 23: Super Bowl XLIII – After falling behind with 2:37 left on the clock QB Ben Roethlisberger led his Pittsburgh Steelers on an 8 play, 78-yard scoring drive to win the Steelers’ unprecedented sixth Super Bowl title! Roethlisberger hit wide receiver Santonio Holmes for the winning score on a perfect throw and circus catch which pundits are already calling “one of the greatest plays in Super Bowl History!” A post-game medical checkup revealed “Big Ben” played the game with two fractured ribs, a sure sign of dedicated leader.

Minnesota Diversified Industries-St. Paul, MN: A non-profit plastics manufacturing company employing disabled workers had an amazing turnaround in 2008 after facing extinction in 2007. MDI was losing money and laying-off the very workers they were supposed to be helping when they replaced top management, refocused its long-term strategy, restructured and refinanced debt. These rapid changes transformed the company from a \$6.6 million loss to a \$1 million dollar profit in one year allowing them to continue and expand their noble mission.

Handling the Pressure

#6 Texas Tech, 39 - #1 Texas, 33 - Trailing #1 Texas by 3 points with 1:29 left, Texas Tech senior QB Greg Harrell led a 6 play, 67-yard scoring drive culminating with an amazing 28 yard touchdown throw to All-American wide receiver, Michael Crabtree, with 0:08 on the clock. This play was recognized by ESPN as ***the best play in college football 2008!***

Metzger’s Printing-Toledo, OH: President Joe Metzger quarterbacked his team’s execution of an effective growth strategy resulting in a 23% increase in sales in an industry that is under exceptional competitive and technological pressure. Founded in 1976 as a typesetting

company, Metzger's has transformed itself into a team-based, high speed, full service printing, mailing, data mining, and web and e-based enterprise and is recognized this year for excellent performance under pressure.

Staying On Top

#3 Texas Longhorns, 24 - #10 Ohio State, 21 Fiesta Bowl: Leading most of this BCS bowl game, Texas trailed the Buckeyes 21-17 with 1:58 left in the game after a late OSU scoring drive. Heisman Trophy Finalist Colt McCoy led his Longhorns on a pressure packed 8 play, 73-yard scoring drive for a come-from-behind win. The key play of the drive was a 4th down and 3 yard conversion that set the stage for McCoy's 26 yard winning touchdown pass to WR Quan Cosby with 0:16 left on the clock.

McDonald's Corporation - Oak Brook, Illinois: CEO Jim Skinner led his McDonald's Corporation through a big 2008, implementing the "McDonald's Plan to Win" which placed strategic focus on menu choice, food quality, value, and enhancing the customer experience in global operations. Team McDonald's delivered double digit growth in operating income and increased the number of customers served to more than 58 million a day by consistently executing their game plan from the bottom, up.

Find a Way to Win!

Iowa, 24 - #3 Penn State, 23: Unheralded and unranked Iowa Hawkeyes scored 10 unanswered fourth quarter points to defeat the undefeated #3 Penn State Nittany Lions. Trailing Penn State by 2 points, Iowa QB, Rickie Stanzi, led his team on a 16 play drive which put backup place kicker Daniel Murray in position to kick the winning 31 yard field goal with 0:06 in the contest. Murray, who had been demoted earlier in the season, hadn't made a field goal since the opening game!

Family Dollar Stores, Inc.-Charlotte, NC: CEO Howard Levine executed a rapid new technology implementation allowing FDS to more efficiently manage inventory while creating a real-time communication network connecting 6,600 stores. This allowed for rapid inventory adjustment to minimize the risk of keeping products that weren't selling and maximizing opportunities on "hot products". This strategy had an immediate impact on organizational, sales and stock performance and equipped FDS for tough times ahead in the struggling retail industry.

It's About Execution

Arkansas 31 – LSU Tigers 30: First year head coach Bobby Petrino's team had lost three previous close games because of misques before senior QB Casey Dick hit wideout London Crawford for the winning 25 yard TD on a critical 4th and 1 play. The Razorbacks executed a nearly flawless 11 play scoring drive to close out their season with a big win over an SEC rival.

TRUFAST-Bryan, Ohio: At a time when domestic manufacturers are moving overseas, President Brian Roth, a former banker, and his team have developed a winning manufacturing game plan for the production of world-class fasteners for the commercial roofing market. TRUFAST effectively executed its diversification strategy and strict adherence to process controls and continuous improvement leading to record sales and profitability in a down 2008 market.

Twominutedrill.org is an organization dedicated to the research and practice of rapid performance improvement and turnaround. Many of their extensive research findings are documented in their book, **The Two Minute Drill: Lessons on Rapid Organizational Improvement from America's Greatest Game** (Jossey-Bass, 2007). For additional information visit ***twominutedrill.org*** or contact Dr. Clinton O. Longenecker, Stranahan Professor of Leadership and Organizational Excellence at the University of Toledo: 419-530-2368 or at Clinton.longenecker@utoledo.edu.