

Rule 1

You're the Driver of Your Bus



*In a time and world where we deal with so many negative things and people,
The Energy Bus beautifully articulates the power of positive energy and attitude.
The book will change your life and teach you how to be the driver of your bus.
Buckle up and ENJOY the ride!*

—Dabo Swinney, Head Coach, Clemson University Football Team

Becoming the driver of your bus is the first rule for the ride of your life, and it is where you need to start. You have to take responsibility for your life to drive in the right direction toward your goals and dreams. When you take control of your bus, you gain the ability to take it where you want to go. The problem today is that people often feel like they have no say in where their bus is going or how it is going to get there. The first step in the Energy Bus process is to become the driver of your own bus, because, without this step, you won't be the one driving and charting the course for success. Becoming a driver is your choice. It is a decision that you make, and it is one of promise and purpose. The decision to become a driver is what sets you on the road to your personal goals. It is one that I have taken and it is one that I've seen many others take as a start to an incredible new future.

This rule is the first step because, without a driver, you cannot go anywhere at all—and when you choose to be the driver, all things are possible. This decision is empowering, and it is an immediate catalyst to create positive energy. As a driver, you take the wheel, set the course for the road ahead, and begin an amazing journey.



Who Is the Driver of Your Bus?

Complete the questions below.

1. What does being the driver of your bus mean to you?

2. What qualities do you think make a good driver?

3. Can you recall a time when you weren't a driver and blamed others for the circumstances of your life? How did it feel?

4. True or false? I can take responsibility for my life and have the power to create the life that I want.

5. How will making the decision to be a driver impact you, the people around you, and your work?

6. What are some actions you can take to demonstrate the role of driver?

A Team of Drivers

To create a successful life, you must realize that you are the driver of your bus, and to create a successful team you must have a fleet of drivers. It's important to have each person on the bus and also to be driving the bus forward. This goes for work teams as well as family teams. We have heard from many families that have become drivers together, and the results have been exciting and transformative. If you want to bring

The Energy Bus to your family or team, you must help them understand that they play an essential role. Their attitude and actions are crucial to success. They need to become a team of drivers.

To start developing a team of drivers, I recommend sharing *The Energy Bus* with your team and giving them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the 10 rules. You can get a book for each team member or get a few books to share. A few members of the team can read them, sign their names inside when they finish, and then pass the books on to the next group of team members. Once everyone has read it, then you can do a few team-building exercises to bring Rule #1 to life.



You're the Driver: Team-Building Activities

Drivers Wanted Advertisement

If you had to create a “drivers wanted” ad for your team, what would it say? Design the ad on a poster board and share it with your team. Explain the choices you made. This can be an excellent individual or team activity. Get a group together and hand out small or large poster board. The team can work together as a whole or work in small table groups. Ask them to make “drivers wanted” ads that contain the characteristics drivers need. The individuals or groups can share their work and discuss what matters most to the team.

Driver Interview

Ask your team to find a partner. This activity asks the participants to interview one another for a bus driver position. What questions would you ask? What qualities and competencies would be important? What type of driver would you look for to motivate you and bring the right kind of energy and culture to your team? Is a driver a leader? Why and how? At the end of the interview activity, the different pairs report out to the group on the questions they asked, the qualities they were looking for, and why those characteristics would be important for team and organization success. The facilitator makes a master list of qualities and questions. Then the facilitator asks the group “should anything else be added to our list?”

Some companies and teams have used this activity to evaluate the questions team members come up with and consider how these questions may be important in the hiring profile of new teammates or new members of the organization. The resulting list is a great resource to evaluate the type of culture needed for team success and to further refine the hiring profile for talent scouts for the team.

Bus Driver Scavenger Hunt

Give each person on your team one or two bus driver cards containing the Energy Bus rules. Bus driver cards can be index cards that say “Bus Driver Scavenger Hunt” on one side, and have one of the 10 rules of the Energy Bus on the other side. Each person also gets a bus driver roster. This is a piece of paper with two columns. One column has the 10 rules from *The Energy Bus*, and the other column is blank. To complete the scavenger hunt, each person must complete the blank column, using the process that follows.

Tell everyone in the room to get up and move among the different people in the group, asking each other what rule they have on their bus driver card and what it means to them. As the attendees do this, have them complete a full bus driver roster. As people talk to others in the room, they write each person’s name next to the rule he or she has on their bus driver card. The participants also learn about what each rule means to the person carrying it. The bus driver roster must have a person’s name next to each rule to win the scavenger hunt. The first person to get all 10 rules on their roster wins the Bus Driver Scavenger Hunt. After the activity is complete, ask the team what they noticed during the scavenger hunt. What stuck out to them about what their team members said about the rules? What new insights did they have personally that related to the 10 rules? Does the team feel like they have a better understanding and knowledge of the 10 rules? Are they ready to become drivers?

Or you can do this one:

Rule Presentation

Break up the team into pairs and assign each pair one or two of the rules, depending on the size of your team, and have the pair present the rule to the rest of the team. You could make a song, commercial, poem, rap, short speech, or other creative piece to share the rule. This activity gives your team the opportunity to start getting used to driving. They are starting to set the tone for how the rules in the book can be applied to team success.

An Organization Filled with Drivers

As I mentioned in the beginning of this guide, one of my goals with this field guide is to share best practices of how people and organizations have utilized *The Energy Bus*. Regarding Rule #1, You're the Driver of Your Bus, having an organization of people who understand their roles in creating a positive organization and are willing to act as a foundational component to organizational success is essential to a culture filled with drivers of positive energy and positive outcomes. The more your teams embrace the idea of becoming positive drivers, the stronger your odds of accomplishing your goals.

The case study, "United Parcel Service of America," includes a few ideas of how entire organizations have created drivers. I've also included various best practices of various organizations as well.



Case Study: United Parcel Service of America

The Energy Bus was implemented at UPS. To get started, the book was given to 1,000 leaders. Nancy Koeper, President of the UPS Northwest District, said, "I was looking for something to unify and connect the workforce. A colleague suggested *The Energy Bus*. After reading it and feeling energized, I couldn't help but feel this would help me accomplish what I needed to. I personally distributed a copy to each person on my team and wrote a note in each book. I asked them to read it within the month and send me a note to share their thoughts on how they were going to begin incorporating the book's concepts into their lives and [those of] the people they lead. We have seen improved morale, performance, ownership of results, increased discretionary effort, and more inspired leadership."

To further evaluate results, at the start of the program, engagement, absenteeism, and morale were measured to establish the baseline. Once the program was launched, the concepts in the book were reinforced through a consistent communication plan via email, video, and job aids.

After the program and concepts of positivity in the book were implemented, absenteeism went down, engagement went up, and morale improved significantly. This all started with asking everyone to begin with Rule #1.



Best Practices

Launch Events

I have learned that companies have had a lot of success by introducing *The Energy Bus* with a launch event. For example, some organizations have called the launch event “Positive Drivers Wanted.” Some organizations give out the book at the launch event, and some provide the books in advance. Some companies buy a few books and create a shared library for everyone to check out the book and return it for others to use. Another reference for your launch event could be the free resource poster with the 10 rules on it, found in the Driver’s Kit that is available at www.theenergybus.com/kit.html. The critical step in launching an Energy Bus program and gaining alignment is to expose the team to the content and the rules and have them make the decision to become a driver.

On the one hand, I’ve worked with companies that said, “Just read the book” to their teams, and did nothing to reinforce the concepts. On the other hand, some organizations really embraced the book, reinforced the principles, and engaged in the types of activities I’ve included in this field guide. The organizations that took the time to communicate consistently, create alignment, and reinforce through activities and messaging are the organizations where I have observed the most impactful success. Those teams and organizations are the ones that became filled with positive drivers that moved the program forward. Those groups made the rules come alive through their events, messaging, and activities. Again, their results are why this field guide exists.



Case Study: Energy Rally

One organization held an Energy Rally to launch their program. People came to a vibrant meeting in the company’s event center and got an overview of the 10 rules from the book. Then they were asked to break into small groups and talk about the value of positivity in their workplace and share real-life examples of ways they could bring more positive energy to their own teams. This was a simple approach, and it worked very well.

Drivers of Weekly or Monthly Meetings

You might consider launching an Energy Bus program in your company by having one member of the team share and facilitate a discussion around one of the rules each week or month. For the first meeting, share an overview of the Energy Bus, and then you can begin with Rule #1. This practice can also be reinforced on a broader scale with monthly emails to the entire organization, highlighting a rule and the leader's thoughts about how the rule is valuable and impacting the team in a positive way. Store these weekly/monthly messages in a shared location for the team's ongoing use.

Drivers as Future Leaders

Some companies created teams with each team having a driver over certain portions of the road map for success. These drivers became leaders in the talent succession pipeline and grew and developed significantly through the process.

You may want to consider assigning a team of people to each rule in the book to make sure the energy and focus stay alive for each rule as the program moves forward. There could be a driver for each of these Energy Committees, and this position could end up being a leadership opportunity as well. The drivers of the Energy Committees work together through collaboration and communication to help integrate the rules for maximum overall program success. If you decide to take this approach with your program, you can ask people to volunteer for the Energy Committee driver roles, or you could assign this opportunity to up-and-coming mid-level leaders.



Case Study: The Planes Companies

John Sabatalo, President at The Planes Companies, decided to launch an Energy Bus program at the same time the leadership team had been working on an initiative to redefine the company's vision and core principles. The team had been meeting weekly for close to three months, and after much deliberation, established a new set of core principles centered on the acronym of TEAM: trust, empowerment, accountability,

mesh. With the core principles decided, the conversation turned to the question: What would be the most effective way to launch the new core principles to the organization? After a series of discussions, they decided to launch a monthly leadership series for department leaders and above. The leadership series would focus on the new core principles of TEAM and use *The Energy Bus* as a type of curriculum tool to bring a much higher level of energy, purpose, and vision to the organization. John made it clear that he wanted to see employees embrace the principles, particularly the concept that they were drivers and had to make that decision for the program to be a success.

The complete case study of the Planes Company is included in the Additional Case Studies section of this Field Guide.

Chief Energy Officer (CEO)

While launching the program and recruiting drivers, another important step many teams and companies have shared is to make sure that the top leader of the team or organization believes in the program and will stand behind it in words and actions. Positive leadership at the top is a critical component to success.

Chief Energy Officer, Ken Fisher, CEO of Fisher Investments, said, “The concept of the chief energy officer teaches us that attitude alignment isn’t just linear but a non-linear leap that makes the ultimate difference between abundance or lack of happiness, success, performance, motivation, ability to be team oriented, and our reality of achieving our personal goals in all parts of our lives.”

The president, coach, principal, CEO, parent, or whoever is the head of the organization is a very special kind of driver. This person is usually designated as the CEO (chief energy officer) and is responsible for helping to reinforce the rules in the book by embodying them through their own leadership behavior. You do not have to make the company president or head of the team the chief energy officer, but I do recommend reading the sample job description and considering how the leader of the organization or team will consistently communicate the vision, reinforce the rules, and fuel the team with positive energy. There is a sample chief energy officer job description to use in your program planning included in the resource section of this field guide.

