PHOTO: BRAD SWONETZ/REDUX

The online shoe company Zappos offers new hires their pay earned plus $2,000 to quit after one week of an being hired. On the surface, this appears to be an insane way to run a business. However, It is this kind of forward-thinking that has turned Zappos into a company that is known for their superior customer service. The idea is one of pragmatism: A job with a company as reputable as Zappos is far more valuable than $2,000 to most people. The type of employee that would accept that package is somebody that Zappos probably does not want working for them in the first place.

I bring this up because we do not live in a black and white world. Sometimes it makes sense to give up free money if it will get you a bigger return for the foreseeable future. The same can be said for a basketball team that is lacking enough talent to contend that chooses to rebuild and at the expense of winning games.

Now that Anderson Varejao is likely to be injured past the trade deadline, the popular debate among Cavs fans is whether or not the team should “tank.” Again, this is not a black and white issue as many people would like you to believe. I have been accused of not being a real fan because I am willing to sacrifice wins during this season in exchange for a better draft pick. I like to consider fans like myself to be more like the Zappos employee who can foresee the future payoff as opposed to the cheap thrill of a win in February of 2012 that will not matter whatsoever in November of 2012.

As fans, we put a lot of energy and time into supporting our favorite teams. Nobody in their right mind would “cheer” for their team to lose. When the Cavs were contending, I always had a sick feeling in my stomach after a particularly bad loss. Now that they are not, I find it important to find the best way out of this current situation that the team finds itself in. The NBA incentivizes teams who are elite and teams that are bad. The idea of knowing this and stubbornly refusing that incentive is doing the team and its fans a disservice.

It is important for everybody to understand that fans of the Cavs all want the team to do well. While some fans are eager to win regular season games and sneak into the playoffs, other fans are more interested in bypassing that and putting off the playoffs until the team can contend.

The Cavs have struck gold and appear to have an incredible player in Kyrie Irving. This year and the next are going to be very important in being in a position to retain his services long-term. The last thing that we should want as a fan base is to have to listen to analysts discuss how Irving had to leave Cleveland because he didn’t have enough help. If the Cavs are in the lottery for the next year or two, it is imperative that they get some quality teammates for Irving. If they win too many games and select later in the lottery, Irving leaving the Cavs will practically be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Nothing is guaranteed, but this is a very important time for the Cavs to build for their future. If the Cavs had not gotten the 9th seed in 2004 and 2005, history could be completely different.

Nobody hopes that their team will lose. The fact of the matter is that a lot of fans see the situation that the Cavs are in and are looking for the quickest way out of it. This does not make anybody a “bad fan,” it makes us realistic. When is the last time that any Cavalier fan reminisces about the six game win streak that the team had in November of 2004? The bottom line is that it doesn’t matter right now but the team may still be feeling the long-term effects of it.