Good afternoon, everyone—thanks for sneaking away from the pipeline long enough to pack the 12th-floor café.

We're here to celebrate Karen Mitchell—Coach K to the Northeast crew—who somehow made 22 years feel like a master class and a sitcom at the same time.

Karen started in 2004 as an Account Executive, and by 2010 she'd been promoted to Sales Manager—the year the rest of us learned that "friendly accountability" is a thing and, yes, you can be coached and smiled at simultaneously.

Under her watch, our Northeast team rattled off eight consecutive quota-beating quarters. Eight. That's not a streak; that's a personality trait. She launched the mentorship pod in 2016—pairing veterans and rookies like it was the draft—and along the way she racked up seven President's Club trips without once mentioning it… unless we needed motivation, in which case there was a tasteful slideshow.

If you want to understand Coach K's values—accountability, optimism, coaching, fairness, and customer obsession—just remember the Snowpocalypse Conference. Flights canceled, city shut down, and Karen turned the hotel lobby into a pop-up sales boot camp. We did napkin role-plays between the ficus trees, and she produced an actual bell from her bag—ding for every closed renewal call. We walked out with deals and a suspiciously motivated concierge.

Accountability? Karen never asked for a status update she wouldn't give herself. I've seen her circle back on a follow-up she delegated… to herself. Optimism? Her line in choppy quarters: "We're three conversations away from a turnaround." Coaching? She didn't fix your deck; she taught you to tell the story. Fairness? The lead distribution spreadsheet was as sacred as the

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Constitution—color coded, yes, but never biased. And customer obsession? She'd call a billing contact at 7 a.m. to make a small problem smaller before it became our problem.

Now for the roasts—gentle, I promise. First: the color coding. I once saw a forecast doc so highlighted it gave my monitor a sunburn. Second: pickleball. If you've played with Karen, you know she will both crush you and give you precise, encouraging feedback about why you were crushed. It's… inspiring and humbling at the same time.

Outside of work, Karen sails on Lake Winnipesaukee, tears through the New York Times crosswords, plays pickleball like it's Q4, and bakes lemon bars that somehow taste like "we're getting renewals." I maintain those bars violated our gift policy. I also maintain we should keep violating it.

Coach K, you taught us that fairness builds trust, optimism fuels effort, and obsession with the customer keeps the lights on. You built a team that knows how to win without losing its soul.

As you step into this next chapter, may your calendar invites be for brunch and boat launches. May your only escalations be from "light breeze" to "perfect sailing weather." And may every puzzle—crossword or otherwise—click into place.

Fair winds and following seas, Coach K. We'll keep the bell handy, the mentorship pod running, and the spreadsheet color-coded in your honor.

And if anyone wants a copy of these words—or, let's be honest, Karen's lemon bar recipe—email me or send a note to cto@kuchventures.com.

Thank you, Karen, for the wins, the standards, and the way you made us better. Now cast off and enjoy every mile.

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