




Unexpected Business Lessons from the Olympic Games

The Olympics offer valuable lessons for business leaders. Here are four insights to inspire your team and drive engagement.


1. RELAXATION UNDER PRESSURE

Olympic athletes know that "tension is the enemy of speed." Those who succeed are able to relax, even under immense pressure. This applies to business as well. Lightening up tense situations with humor or positivity can improve work performance and team cohesion. Leaders should aim to be the calmest person in the room, walking slowly and speaking quietly to reduce stress.

 **Business Lesson:** Remove tension and pressure while motivating your team. Use humor and positivity to improve performance and reduce stress. Show genuine interest in your team members to foster a positive culture.


2. USE OF CUES TO BUILD CONFIDENCE

Athletes and coaches use specific words and phrases to reach a flow state, allowing them to perform automatically under pressure. These cues provide clarity and confidence.

 **Business Lesson:** Leaders can use conscious cues to shape culture and act consistently. Develop simple, powerful phrases that define your team's values and provide clarity during high-pressure moments. Experiment and refine these cues to drive high standards.


3. TEAM CHEMISTRY

At the Olympics, team chemistry goes beyond skills. It's about cultural contribution—experience, positivity, humor, and support. Coaches often make roster decisions based on team dynamics.

 **Business Lesson:** Invest time in shaping team chemistry. Recruit based on cultural fit and dynamics, not just skills. Regularly shift team members to foster relationships and growth. Evaluate and experiment with your team's chemistry to keep it dynamic and effective.

4. SIMPLIFY FOR SUCCESS

Olympic success often comes from simplicity. Before the London Olympics, the Australian team chose to simplify their training plan, focusing on what truly mattered. This approach led to gold medals.

 **Business Lesson:** Look for improvements through subtraction. Simplify problem-solving by focusing on the core issue. Ask yourself what can be automated, what efforts yield the most results, and what can be eliminated. Simplify your processes to achieve better outcomes.

Discussion Questions

1. How can we apply relaxation techniques to reduce workplace stress and improve performance?
2. What cues or phrases can we use to instill confidence and clarity in our team?
3. How can we improve our team chemistry to enhance collaboration and support?