



Are you fit for the Sales Olympics?

The recent European Athletics Championships have focused attention on the athletes who are likely to make their mark in the fast approaching London Olympic games of 2012. It also made us consider the similarities between business development activity and sport, similarities that go beyond the mere fact that we talk of winning instructions and winning races.

Successful rainmakers are like Decathletes.

In athletics the decathlon for men and the heptathlon for women are seen as the premier events in any major championship. The winners of these events are rightly regarded as the supreme competitors of the games. Not for them the almost instant success of the 100 metre runners, victory comes from two days of gruelling competition, with the outcome often decided in the very last event, with a margin of just a few strides or just a few seconds.

To succeed the athletes need a wide range of skills covering all the disciplines of running, jumping and throwing. To emerge as the victor they need to perform to the highest standard in every single event. Having a poor result in just one discipline can result in failure, no matter how well they perform in all the others.

Successful rainmakers need skills in all disciplines.

Successful rainmakers have much in common with successful decathletes or heptathletes. They too need a wide range of skills covering all the disciplines involved in a major sale:

- Exploring and developing the client's needs
- Developing the client's understanding of the value their solution will bring
- Building a strong competitive position
- Writing persuasive proposal documents
- Making professional, persuasive pitch presentations
- Negotiating clear, mutually acceptable, agreements
- Handling client concerns about committing themselves to the agreement.

Every rainmaker needs all these skills to win a major sale; what's more they need to know exactly when to apply them, to help them progress to the next round, in a contest every bit as competitive as any major sporting championship.

There are no medals for coming second.

Just as poor performance in any discipline can cost an athlete the winner's medal, poor performance in any part of the client development process can cost the seller the sale. And for the professional services seller there is no medal and no consolation prize for coming second.

The professional athlete has a coach to help them develop the broad range of skills needed to win at the highest level. Between now and

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2012 they will be hard at work honing their skills to perfection in their desire to collect the winners medal.

Do you think you might benefit from some coaching to bring all your skills up to gold winning standard? If so why not contact us at info@huthwaitefleming.com or download our article '[Coaching - the key to lasting performance improvement.](#)'

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