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The 2010 Winter Olympics held in Vancouver, Canada were a resounding success for the host nation. Having previously hosted the Olympics, both winter and summer, Canada had yet to win gold as the home team. With a medal haul of 26, 14 of them gold, they not only achieved a personal best, they also became the record holders for the most gold medals won by a host nation at a Winter Olympics.

Winning Ways

This remarkable achievement is in no small part due to an initiative devised by the Canadian Olympic organising committee called the 'Own The Podium' programme – "a sport technical initiative designed to help Canada become the number one nation in terms of medals won at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games."

The programme's resources were channelled into providing training and equipment for athletes with medal potential. What the organising committee recognised was that Olympic preparation required more than physical training and financial support was provided to allow athletes access to the very best in mental training.

Think Like Champions

The mental training skills learned by champion athletes in the sports world can be applied equally well to the business world. The key techniques are:

Goal Setting

To achieve success, you have to know exactly what constitutes success. Goals

Go For Gold

create focus but you can't get to where you're going if you don't know where that is. What is it you want; what are you aiming to achieve? The Canadian men's ice-hockey team set its sights on becoming the first country to win the Olympic title at home since 1980 – they succeeded. Learning how to goal set effectively provides both focus and motivation. With a specific target in place, an action plan of stepping-stone goals can be developed to build confidence and keep you and your business resolutely on track to success.

Understanding Motivation

Top class athletes develop a powerful understanding of what motivates them. Canada's long wait for gold on home soil ended with a win in the men's mogul event. The winning athlete had been motivated to succeed since childhood – "It's been a dream since I was a kid." Without motivation, an athlete would struggle to commit to the years of dedicated training required to achieve Olympic success. The same applies in business. Not everyone is motivated in the same way so it's important to understand what motivates each team member individually. A motivated workforce is an inspired, efficient and productive workforce.

Understanding Mindset

Mindset describes an individual's view of who and what they are. An athlete with unlimited physical ability can still only achieve limited success if their mindset prevents them from realising their full potential. With a 'fixed' mindset, an individual holds the belief that they are what they are and they're stuck with it for good or bad. With a 'growth' mindset, an individual believes that irrespective of who and what they are now, change is always possible. It takes a growth mindset to be open to learning new skills; to be adaptable, and to progress through an ability to embrace change. Mindset can be changed. Imagine the possibilities of a business with a growth mindset? Go for gold. ■

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