

#GoForGold - Five qualities of Olympic athletes junior PR pros can learn from

 By [Jillian Penaluna](#)

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Most of us will never compete in the Olympics. However, while your career path may not have you running 400m in under 45 seconds or somersaulting your way to eternal Olympic glory, there are certain qualities you can learn from Olympic athletes that will help you pole-vault your way up the corporate ladder.



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Here are five qualities of Olympic athletes worth applying to your own career as a PR professional:

1. Practise, watch and learn

Olympic athletes spend hours practising, studying their competitors, watching videos of their performances and refining their technique. The same goes for the world of PR; you are never too old to learn or improve your skills. Adopting an Olympic athlete work ethic will definitely stand you in good stead for your career. Watch and learn from your colleagues, keep your finger on the pulse when it comes to news and current affairs, and your nose to the ground when it comes to new business opportunities. Above all, remain open and flexible to new ideas or ways of doing things.

2. Adopt an Olympic athlete mind set

Olympic athletes always maintain a positive and empowering attitude. They believe they can win a gold medal, smash their personal record and make their country proud – and many of them go on to do exactly that. They are disciplined and constantly challenge themselves to do better and achieve more. As a result, they successfully condition their minds into believing they are fully capable of achieving their dreams. Don't doubt or underestimate yourself in the working world. Think like an Olympian and you will achieve anything you set your mind to.

3. Listen to your coach

Olympic athletes almost always have a coach who has a few years of experience behind them. Just look at the great grandmother who is credited with helping our very own Wayne van Niekerk bring home gold for our country. With help and guidance from their coaches, Olympic athletes are able to improve, stay focused and, most importantly, learn from their

mistakes. Having a mentor or role model in the PR world, especially in a junior position, is so important because a lot of the work you are expected to do for clients requires a few years' experience. Proper guidance and mentorship will help you grow and succeed in your role.

4. Embrace constructive criticism and be accountable

For Olympic athletes, failure is an opportunity to learn and grow. When they run into a challenge or obstacle, they push forward. They know that facing adversity or criticism is part of their journey to success. They are also accountable for their mistakes. If they fail to train or adequately prepare for a race, they know they will have less chance of success. The PR world is similar. You can't succeed if you fail to prepare for a meeting or follow up with a journalist or a client. It's ok to fail to prepare for a meeting once – just make sure you fail forward and learn from your mistakes.

5. Think big. Be bold. Fear... less

Most Olympic athletes don't go into a race or competition hoping to come fifth. They aim for gold or a spot on the podium, at the very least. Don't be afraid to let your voice be heard in meetings, and don't sell yourself short. Also, don't be afraid to speak up if you have a big idea for a client, even if you aren't sure it will work. Be fearless and focused on bringing home the gold for yourself on your own career path, as well as for your agency, with the work you bring to the table.

What other Olympian traits do you think PR professionals should have to succeed in their own careers?

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