



## 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 selling and sport, similarities that go beyond the mere fact that we talk of winning sales and winning races.

### Successful sellers 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 salespeople need skills in all disciplines.

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

Every salesperson 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 sales process can cost the seller the sale. And for the seller there is no medal and no consolation prize for coming second.

#### Further reading

[Coaching - the key to lasting performance improvement](#)

#### News

[Click here for the latest news from Huthwaite International](#)

#### Previous issues

[View previous issues](#)

#### Interested in Huthwaite Open courses?

[For small companies or Individual bookings](#)

#### Contact us

Hooper House,  
Wentworth,  
South Yorkshire  
S62 7SA.  
Tel: +44(0)1709 710081  
Fax: +44(0)1709 710065  
[insight@huthwaite.co.uk](mailto:insight@huthwaite.co.uk)  
[www.huthwaite.co.uk](http://www.huthwaite.co.uk)

#### Unsubscribe

[To unsubscribe please click here](#)

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 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@huthwaite.co.uk](mailto:info@huthwaite.co.uk) or download our article '[Coaching - the key to lasting performance improvement.](#)'

---

**Change Behaviour. Change Results.™**



For details of Huthwaite's privacy policy and user conditions, please [click here](#)  
© Huthwaite International 2010

The information in this e-mail message and in any attachments is intended for the addressee only. If you are not the intended recipient please advise us by return e-mail and delete the original message. Although we try to ensure that attached files are virus-free we cannot accept responsibility if this is not the case. We do not execute contracts via the internet. Registered in England & Wales under company name Huthwaite Research Group Limited, number 2043016