

Published TMG Articles

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CHAMPIONS TEACH US ABOUT ENTHUSIASM, DETERMINATION

On a recent Saturday, two important events occurred in the world of sports. These two events are similar and yet, vastly different. In the first, a seventeen-year-old Russian girl, Maria Sharpova, won the Wimbledon Women's Singles Championship in her first-ever Grand Slam Tournament. On the same day, American Lance Armstrong began his quest for a record breaking sixth-straight victory in the challenging and grueling and premier bicycle racing event, the Tour De France. In the first, a young, relatively untested athlete capitalized on training, talent, and a focused effort to accomplish her win; the other has won five times before and now faces the intense challenge and pressures not only of repeating the win but breaking the world record for back-to-back victories in this renowned event.

Sharpova described herself as being very surprised to be in the famed Wimbledon Centre Court as the winner. She said it was a totally unexpected and breathtaking experience. Prior to the Tour De France, Lance Armstrong recalled that his first tour win was nothing compared with the last four victories. He said that he had "no idea" what it meant to win the Tour when he won it the first time. However, in every Tour de France since then, he has "felt the weight" of experiencing yet another win. Perhaps we would best call this 'the pressure', 'the expectation'. Once he'd won the race, the expectation (at least in his mind) was that he could win it again. Multiply that pressure times six, and you'll better appreciate the pressure he's feeling this year.

Many businesses get started without expectations (like Sharpova). Taking a good idea, implementing it well, along with some hard work, and, suddenly, you have a succeeding, new business. After the initial success, you are then faced with the challenge of maintaining that level of performance (like Armstrong), or even bettering it (that sixth win Armstrong is now working towards). Once your customers have experienced your product or service, they'll expect the same (or perhaps even a better result) consistently. There's the pressure, the expectation.

Your business needs the raw enthusiasm of a young athlete combined with the steady performance of a seasoned pro. Both are critical. Keeping this critical combination in place is an important secret for growing your business. The combination will make your business a true champion!

Two ingredients make the difference:

Effective Planning: Evaluating strengths, weaknesses, trends, customer needs, etc. This is stopping long enough to determine where you are; where you intend to go, and how you'll get there. This is one of the hallmarks of a mature, lasting business.

Consistent Implementation: Doing what you do best, the same way (or better), and with predictable results, every time. This is the focused performance of a champion.

Two athletic performances: one young, unexpected, yet glorious achievement. The other the consistent, duplicated effort of a seasoned professional, who's been on the top of podium, and knows how to return to it. Combine the lessons to be learned from these two champions, and use that knowledge to build your business into a long lasting winner.