

# from the **CEO'S** OFFICE

2013 proved to be one of the most difficult trading years in the history of the hpc, but certainly one of the most promising and rewarding years when it comes to the performances of the athletes in the world wide sporting arena. Looking forward to this year and bearing in mind that it is a huge sporting year with the Commonwealth Games, Youth Olympic Games, various world championships and the All Africa Youth Games; one can see that it is a big year in terms of the athletes measuring their performances against some of the best in the world.

On a trip to the US Olympic training centre in Colorado Springs some years back I was struck by the simple yet powerful message that was emblazoned around the facility. It read: "IT IS NOT EVERY FOUR YEARS.... IT IS EVERY DAY!"

This epitomises what the hpc at the University of Pretoria stands for and what we impress upon our athletes every day and is the major reason why we delivered 50% of South Africa's medals at the London Olympics in 2012. Mediocrity is something that we do not tolerate and it is every day that we expect our athletes to be up to the challenge and to make sure that they are utilising every available source at the hpc to ensure that they perform at the peak.

The high performance environment that we wish to create is merely the framework – i.e. **the skeleton on which to hang a winning culture.**

**To be successful in sport you need both:**

- **the high performance environment** which provides the opportunity to perform to a high standard;
- **The winning culture which drives the standards and**

**behaviours and** that take full advantage of the high performance environment.

**A high performance environment** provides the potential for success: **a winning culture turns potential into victory.**

To put this into perspective, just take a moment to reflect on the fact that Elite Athletes:

1. Must perform under conditions of intense pressure.
2. Must understand that numbers drive everything.
3. Are constantly under pressure from ambitious new competitors on a daily basis.
4. Realises that last year's record becomes next year's baseline.
5. Constantly need to grow and reinvent themselves in order to stay at the top.
6. Are subject to brutal accountability: you win or you lose – there is nothing in between.
7. Must have a sustainable drive, or achieving performance goals becomes very difficult.

These prerequisites and requirements of the elite athlete are the underlying mechanisms which orchestrate world-class performance and are enshrined in a winning culture. (Steven Carver Win Win Group)

If one looks in the dictionary at the meaning of the word "Sport" then you will see that it is: "An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment". The last thing a high performance athlete would think when competing in sport would be that it was merely for entertainment as at the hpc the meaning of sport is so much more. For the hpc it is imperative that to achieve the seven medals that we want to win

in Rio in 2016 we continue building on the **winning culture** that we have been endeavoring to create for the past 11 years. For the athletes, Sport is about winning, achieving their goals, but most importantly it's about testing the limits of their body, mind and soul, and persevering when the body says no.

The exciting part of the journey that the hpc has travelled over the last 12 years is yet to come and whilst we acknowledge what we have achieved we also understand that the world of international sport is an ever changing world and that there will always be areas where we can improve on. Sport Science and technological advances are also evolving at an alarming rate and if we are to stay abreast of these advances then we are more likely to achieve the success we are striving for, but need the assistance of Corporate South Africa to get behind our athletes and the hpc and assist us wherever they feel that they can through corporate sponsorship. I would like to challenge Corporate South Africa out there to get behind the hpc athletes and in so doing assist these talented and professional athletes so that they can follow in the footsteps of Bridgitte Hartley, Caster Semenya and our Oarsome Foursome in owning their spot on the podium and making the Country proud by coming back home with a well-earned medal.



*Toby Sutcliffe*