

# Can you Answer This Question?

Published 16/01/18 by [Nick Ruddock](#)

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I'm always encouraging my clients to invest time in deep reflection about their program.

Asking ourselves great questions is a fantastic way to do just that, and although there is an extensive list of questions I would ask, I'd like to take this moment to get you to think about one key, yet often challenging one.

So here it is ...

## ***What is your competitive advantage?***

It's pretty normal for me to be met with blank, puzzled faces when I ask that question as it's not something that's easy to answer.

For us in the high performance community, we are in the business of trying to win competitions and medals, and that could mean winning them at major international events such as Olympic Games, World and European Championships.

To win a medal at one of those events, you would need a competitive advantage, something that gives you the edge on the day. To win consistently, you certainly need an advantage, something that separates you from the rest of the competition.

Team USA for example, have numerous competitive advantages within their WAG programme, which is why they have been the prominent force in WAG for some time, and most likely will be for some time to come.

In the spirit of 'controlling the controllable', competitive advantages must be specific to your athletes or team. They are not linked to your competitors.

For example, if a rival team falls on beam, that is lucky for you, but a disadvantage and stroke of misfortune for the opposing team. It is not something that you can (or should) rely on occurring again.

When responding to this question, coaches often share that their work ethic is their advantage. But how do you know? How do you really know that you're working harder and faster than your opponents? Work ethic may be a quality of your team, but must be superior to your competitors in order to be considered an advantage. And that of course is assuming that the hard work is spent on the right things, in the right way, at the right time.

Don't be opportunity rich yet strategically poor.

If you can't identify your competitive advantage then you most certainly don't have one that will help you produce sustainably superior performances.

I encourage you to sit down with your team and gain clarity on what yours is. Set aside an hour or two, in a place where you can get the creative juices flowing, and chew the fat around the question.

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consistently win medals.

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It will be the most valuable use of time you can find.

Good luck.

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tags : questions, reflection, competitive-advantage