



Go, Team NVP!!

So, there you have it. The Olympics. Over for another 4 years and I for one think it was the most amazing two weeks of sport I've ever seen. I did go to see both the football (to watch Team GB get knocked out on penalties – it was just like watching England!) and to the Taekwondo. Both were superb events and the atmosphere was truly amazing, as I'm sure it was at every other Olympic event.

But now that we've had the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee, where does that leave us? After all the celebration, what next for Team GB?

Well, I'm certainly not keen to go back to the pre-celebration news stories; phone hacking, the Euro crisis and the recession. What the last few weeks has shown me, if nothing else, was that positive thinking is a powerful thing, and to see the whole (or the majority of) the UK all pulling together to get behind something, is a really powerful force, which can have very positive effects.

Now of course we can't solve the Euro crisis with positive thinking, as this is a real and tangible problem that needs to be resolved by positive action from Europe's politicians. It's a problem that is far too entrenched and complicated to be solved by us all being a bit more cheerful! Here we have a case of too many people with vested interests to do the right thing.

But there is an argument that says our latest financial woes in the UK, which, whilst primarily down to some extreme actions by the banking sector, are not helped by the constant doom and negativity that's played out in the media. The negative stories had, I think, many in the country believing that their situation was about to take a huge downturn, even if they'd not experienced any hardship at all to date. This will of course be true for some but, for most, they will go through this recession with little or no change to their circumstances.

A study by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has found that 1.31 million people have been made redundant during the recession so far, or 4.4% of the working population before the recession began. It is widely accepted that this level of redundancy is much less than first feared, and much less than expected given the level of contraction in our economy to date.

Therefore 95.6% of the working population have so far been unaffected. I know from first-hand experience how devastating redundancy can be – during my working life I've been made redundant twice and come close to it a third time (which is one of the reasons why I started New Vision) – so I'm keeping all of my fingers and toes crossed that this number of redundancies doesn't grow further.

I know I run the risk of sounding like a politician here, and one redundancy is one too many, but a small part of the downturn is of our own making. Most businesses are robust enough to withstand a contraction and those that can't, without wishing to sound too Darwinian, probably weren't as fit as they should have been. If we were more positive, and willing to accept that our fate is in our own hands, then perhaps we could in turn stimulate a more positive business environment. Naïve? Possibly. Optimistic? Definitely, but perhaps we could all take the optimism shown during the past two weeks by our heroic sportsmen and women and turn it into a real-life legacy for the country (woops, nearly came across as a politician again!).

So I'm going to take a 'Team GB' approach to the rest of 2012 and 2013. We're going to remain positive and keep investing in our design studio and continue to work with new, low-cost supply routes to offer our customers new opportunities. Reducing costs and increasing our service level are two important ways that we're trying to help our customers stimulate interest and growth in their businesses.

We're developing ever-closer relationships with some of our existing customers, which is benefiting both us and them, and together we can succeed where, perhaps apart, we may not. We've got to keep pushing, working smarter and harder to create business, rather than waiting for business to happen to us.

So it's 'Team NVP' for us – I'm hoping we'll win Gold, Silver and Bronze in the Sales Marathon!! We reject the naysayers and doomsday theorists, and I urge you all to do the same.

BR
Steve