

Lewis's Team Selection based on the following key criterion:

1. Vision
2. Attitude: Optimistic realists
3. Passion
4. Skill: The best at what they do
5. Team work: Operate as part of a team
6. Sense of Humour: It is vitally important that all the team members have a sense of humor.
7. No Regrets: I know so many people who have given up on their dreams, their goals, their mission, their aspirations... and they regret it for the rest of their lives. This was not an option for me, or for the members of the team.
8. Belief in a common goal. Everyone is there to support the enhanced awareness of the serious affects of global warming on the Arctic and on the rest of the world, including the plight of the Polar Bears.

Training based on the following key criterion:

1. Getting the body right: Painful, chip away, a little bit more, a little bit more
2. Getting the mind right: two of Great Britain's mind coaches

The mind is like an iceberg: 10% (above water) are conscious thoughts, 90% (below water) are subconscious thoughts... that is where we operated on, the 90% below water... the subconscious

The Experience:

The Environment: was incredibly beautiful: including the Icebergs; the Polar Bears; Pristine and unspoiled.

“The Test Swim was the worst experience of my life. This five-minute test swim in the frigid, black arctic waters... The cells in my hands and feet froze, expanded and burst. It was incredibly painful. Even when I got into the warm shower it was very painful. I lost feeling in both hands. I wondered if I would ever recover. I began to contemplate the risks I was taking to prove that I could swim at the North Pole. I could actually lose my life with this endeavour. The next morning I had a bit of feeling in one hand and still could not feel the other hand.”

**The 5th Discovery Vitality Fitness Convention: 28 February – 1 March 2008,
Vodaworld, Johannesburg**

Key Note: Swimming at the Geographic North Pole, Lewis Gordon Pugh

“I had an inspirational father. His stories about the Arctic and Polar Bears and Icebergs and Adventures contributed greatly to my dream... that one day I, Lewis Pugh, was going to do something significant in the Arctic or in the Antarctic. This dream never died, it just continued to grow in my mind and as it grew, I become more and more convinced that I could do it, even though all the scientific evidence said that it could not be done.”

Approaching the North Pole in a Russian IceBreaker: The demon of self doubt sitting on Lewis’s shoulder... The Coach then walked Lewis to the front of the ship, saying, “I need to have a heart to heart with you ... There are *three anchors* that I want you to think about before you make your decision about whether you will do this swim.:

Anchor One: Think about the people, every person, on this icebreaker ship, on this team, who has sacrificed so much for you... I am going to place a flag at every 100 metre mark in the swim. Three will be flags representing each country that the members of the team are from.... Norwegian, Swedish, Russian, UK, SA... There are 10 countries involved, so there will be 10 flats. Swim from flag to flag to flag... for each 100 metres think about the people, every person on the team who has sacrificed so much for you... Break the swim down. Think about a 100 meter swim, no more and no less. Approach the 1000 meter swim, step by step... 100 meters at a time.

Anchor Two: Think about the days when you used to sit with your father and talk about the great explorers. Think about all the training, the research, the experimenting and all the swims that you have done to get here today, on this Russian Icebreaker, heading to the North Pole with the entire team!

Have the courage...

Anchor Three Walk all the way to the end of your life, ask yourself why you are doing it... think about the big companies who think they can pollute the world... the world leaders who have their heads in the sand. Squeeze out all negative thoughts! Then work out whether something is possible.

The Adventure Continues:

Two days later, the ship arrived at the geographical north pole. Professor Tim Noakes laid out the flags representing each country at the 100 meter mark. Professor then strapped the equipment onto Lewis, to measure temperature, to track the physiological responses of Lewis’ body while he swam in the frigid arctic waters. Tim’s job was to keep Lewis safe.

The Moment Before the Swim:

Lewis stood at the edge of the ice... the water was black, big chunks of white ice were floating everywhere, the wind was blowing, and there were huge cracks in the ice they were standing on.

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Lewis thought: There are two ways to get into this water:

1. The hard way... dive in – need aggression, attitude, three second count down by coach
2. The flipping hard way... touch your toe into the water and slowly entire the extremely cold arctic water.

Lewis dove in after a count of three. He was wearing a swim cap, a speedo and goggles. Within a second, he was gasping... He could barely breathe. His goggles were stuck, frozen to his face. He tried to pull the goggles off, wasting valuable time, increasing the danger of his exposure to the extreme cold. Lewis said to himself, forget stuffing around with the goggles, forgot your fear of black water, forget how painfully cold this is... Just swim, do the job you came here for... Lewis swam as fast as he could to the Norwegian flag... on land, someone was cross country skiing next to Lewis to urge him on and to let him know how far he had to go to the next flag, to keep him on track and focused and to keep him going...

Lewis explains, “Swimming in cold water... you are absolutely burning, your whole body is on fire. It is extremely painful. You feel your limbs shutting down, from the finger tips, through the fingers to the palms of your hands, through the wrists and up the forearms, over the elbow joints and through the upper arms into the shoulders. Your limbs begin to fail and feel like they are moving in slow motion.”

“I was trying to show the world that the ice is melting, but I was freezing. It was such a bizarre juxtaposition.”

At the 500 metre mark, the coach exclaimed, “Lewis, well done, you are half way.”

Lewis said to himself as he pushed forward through the deathly cold water, with chunks of ice floating all around, “I am half way, let me just get to the 750 meter mark.”

When he got to the Australian flag, Lewis thought, “No way am I going to “jack here”, next to the Aussie flag.” The coach had set up the flags strategically, playing on nation wide rugby rivalry between the Aussies and South Africans.

Lewis continues, “From the 750 mark to the end of the 1000 meters, I do not remember much of it... all that I wanted to do was get out of the water. The only time I actually knew I could make it was when I was pulled out of the water. The first thing I said was “Get these goggles off my face.”

(In fact, Professor Tim Noakes had added 10% distance to the swim, so Lewis actually swam 1100 meters. This was to ensure with absolute certainty that Lewis had swam the full 1000 meters. GPS equipment was used to scientifically measure the distance.

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The Swim Completed: Now What?

Where do you go, after a swim like this ... the earth has lost more than 23% of sea ice in the Arctic in the last few years. The rate of melting is escalating exponentially.

How can I convey my message to world leaders? How can I make a difference? How can I stop global warming and ultimately the destruction of the Arctic?

Branding:

Lewis Gordon Pugh brand... what am I?

- a swimmer
- an adventurer
- an environmentalist

What am I thinking?

- Sea ice will have melted and there will be no more polar bears.
- We need to protect the arctic because our very survival depends on it.

For every penny, I spent on the expedition... I spent two pennies on PR.

To secure sponsors what do I need to be?

- Rougher?
- Colder?
- Sexier

How do I Secure a sponsor

September 11, 2001, was a turning point where I realized that I need to diversify the financial base of the company to make sure that all my money does not come from one sponsor.

Questions to ask yourself, to get on track, to stay on track, to meet your goals and to fulfill your dreams:

1. In your company do you have a clear vision?
2. Do you visualize it?

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3. Have you disseminated your vision to all levels in your company?
4. Have you got a fantastic team around you, or do you have the cynics, the pessimists, the ones that lack skills.
5. Can every single person on your team put up their hand and say, “I am well trained, I know what I am doing, I understand my job, I know the vision and believe in it.”
6. What is the performance level of your people, do they come in with the right attitude? If not, get rid of them and fast.
7. Absolutely nothing is impossible in this industry of fitness, coaching, wellness, biokinetics exercise physiology, personal training, sports science..

What we learned:

Assumptions were and are made: All of the following assumptions... are not true. Lewis and his team proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that all of the assumptions, were just that, assumptions and not the truth!

1. Need to have a huge amount of body fat
2. Go in slowly
3. Keep head out of water to be successful.

For this polar swim I needed the physiological preparation and mental preparation.

How do you raise funds?... Investec, the bank put in a substantial amount of money for this project.

Remember that companies invest in the person, not in the expedition.

Where are you going from here?

When they are young they have not dreamt.

What my team, including myself had... Passion and aggression... determination and aggression... balance between passion and aggression – self control... and all of this comes with experience and a dream and an unshakeable belief with a vitally significant dream and vision.