

WHY WRESTLERS MAKE THE BEST EMPLOYEES

[Steve Cooper](#) Contributor

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

[Entrepreneurs](#)

I share my love for business through my business about love.

Two wrestlers fight for a takedown. Within that takedown are many lessons that can translate into the boardroom. (Photo credit: Available_Light)

"More enduringly than any other sport, wrestling teaches self-control and pride. Some have wrestled without great skill—none have wrestled without pride." ~ Dan Gable

Today's workforce is extremely competitive. When comparing resumes it's easy to get lost in all the bullet points of software literacy and past responsibilities. If you really want to separate two seemingly qualified employees, bring them in for an interview and ask a simple question, "Have you ever participated in sports at an elite level?"

"Current research indicates that individuals who have competed in elite level athletics, i.e., collegiate, international, or professional level competition possess higher levels of emotional intelligence than their non-athlete counterparts," says Richard Mendelson, I.O. psychologist and founder of [Dynamic IO Consultants](#), a consulting firm specializing in human capital management and other services.

In 1996, [Dr. William Brad McGonagle](#), associate vice president for administration at Texas A&M University wrote his dissertation [studying](#) how former athletes transfer the skill set they developed through athletics to the workplace. He found that an employee with prior athletic experience was able to transfer the lessons of being a team player and also noticed strengths in accomplishment-based skills, discipline, and communication.

In 2002, professors Daniel Gould and Kristen Dieffenbach published a study in the [Journal of Applied Sport Psychology](#) which noted that Olympic champions display higher levels of specific attributes directly linked to success, in particular emotional intelligence. Their research showed that these elite athletes displayed high levels of stress management, interpersonal skills, and self regard.

The conclusion of all this research could be seen during the 1972 Olympic [Games](#) in Munich, Germany, when American wrestler, Dan Gable, won the gold medal without giving up a single point! This is perhaps one of the greatest Olympic performances of all time. And while this level of performance would be hard to duplicate on any stage, can you imagine this same type of focus and determination on display in your office?