

Building a grand slam business

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As an avid tennis player, I always enjoy watching the annual Wimbledon tennis tournament. This year's event reminded me of some strange analogies between master builders and elite tennis players.

It is extremely rare to get a master builder who is a top-class tennis player and vice versa, despite dreams to the contrary. It's hard enough to be at the top of one game or business, let alone two.

Grand slam tennis tournaments like Wimbledon capture the imagination of millions of keen tennis fans and television viewers, but so too do the best builders – in glossy magazines, TV programs or in their own special way. Let's look at some of the analogies:

Preparation and training

Champion tennis players don't just appear overnight. Neither do the best builders. It takes years to grow your business after completing your education and training, obtaining your builders' registration ticket and establishing your credentials and reputation. You never stop learning or improving your knowledge in any field. Practice makes perfect as they say. Like

a tennis player's coach, Master Builders provides up-to-date information, advice and support to its members.

Competitive market

It's extremely competitive to be amongst the qualifying 128 players in a grand slam tennis tournament. Similarly, in WA's current economic climate it's very competitive to win work, as we are building 4000 less new homes this year than we usually do.

Like tennis players who specialise in singles or doubles, builders generally focus on their strengths, identify a niche market and try to differentiate themselves from their rivals. This often means having to do a deal to win the business. The competition has now attracted players/builders from all over Australia and the world.

Quality of performance

Maintaining a consistently high level of performance requires a lot of focus, good systems and excellent personnel, including support staff. Winning one match or building one brilliant home or renovation isn't enough. Endurance, consistency and a will to win (to complete your project on time, on budget and to your client's utmost satisfaction) are all important.

Regrettably, along the way there are bound to be errors made, injuries incurred and inclement weather experienced. These can be costly, will affect the duration of the construction project (or contest) and the likely outcome. Needless to say, the best players learn quickly from their mistakes.



The champions

The outcome of any final or building project is impossible to predict. There can only be one winner, even though the competitors are first class. The same applies to the entrants across all categories of the Master Builders Bankwest Housing Excellence Awards. We have judges just like the tennis players have an umpire and linespeople to adjudicate.

The building industry also has a number of regulators, like the Building Commission, WorkSafe and local government, to ensure our industry plays by the rules. Likewise in tennis there are the referees and tennis authorities.

Both the sport of tennis and the housing industry have many supporters who enjoy seeing the stars in action. Invariably, most clients go away amazed with what they see and are happy with their final purchase. Because you're only as good as your last game, even the elite performers can't afford to be complacent and need to keep working hard to keep new competitors at bay to win the next prize.

Running a successful building business can be tough, just like being a seeded tennis player who tries to entertain the crowd with their prowess. But winners are grinners because they have mastered their craft, have built an enviable reputation and have learnt to manage their risks.