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Context to the nugget

In this nugget, Viren describes the OGQ model what they do, the sports they are involved with and the athletes that they are working with. Their youngest athlete is 8 years old and they have committed to working with that athlete for the next 8-12 years to win an Olympic Gold medal. In a world that is running faster and faster and 1 year plans are hard to execute, it was refreshing to hear an organization that describes their 2020 plan as a short-term plan.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Maybe a good place to start is the Olympic Gold Quest, the organization where you are the CEO. What is OGQ and more specifically, how could people contribute to OGQ?

Viren Rasquinha (VR): Olympic Gold Quest is a not-for-profit organization. It was founded by two of our sports legends, Geet Sethi and Prakash Padukone, who need no introduction. The mission of OGQ is a very sharp one: it is to help Indian athletes win Olympic gold medals. We are very proud to say that in the last two Olympics, at London 2012 and Rio 2016, five out of the eight medal winners for India which is Gagan Narang, Vijay Kumar, MC Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal, and now this time in Rio, PV Sindhu their training was supported by Olympic Gold Quest. And when I say the training was supported by OGQ, this is in terms of helping provide the best coaches for them, the best training facilities for them, ensuring they have the best equipment. We have put together a team of world class doctors, physios, nutritionists, mental trainers, everything in the back-end to ensure that these athletes have the best possible support. Because if we expect our athletes to win Olympic medals, everyone working behind the scenes also needs to be world class. We can't expect Mary Kom to win an Olympic medal with an average coach or average physio. So, everyone needs to perform their role to the best of their ability, everyone needs to be the best at what they do. And that's part of the journey to helping us winning Olympic medals.

It's not that it is not happening currently, but there's scope to do much better. OGQ supports some of the best young talent in the country. Currently, we support the training and preparation of 93 athletes across eight different individual Olympic sports. These sports are badminton, boxing, shooting, athletics, archery, wrestling, swimming, and table tennis. These are the sports that we have identified where India has the potential to win Olympic medals. When resources are limited, generally, you must create priorities. So, looking at historical data, our relative strengths and weaknesses against the best in the world, sports where we have the best talent and potential, that's how we have narrowed down on these sports. Out of those 93 athletes, around 42 are senior athletes, 20 years and above, who are preparing for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Around 51 are junior athletes, 19 years and below, who we are grooming for 2024 and 2028 Olympics. So, there are short-term plans, now for Tokyo 2020, as well as long-term plans for eight years and 12 years for the

remaining Olympics. Incidentally, the youngest athlete we support is an eight-year-old girl; she plays badminton.

DJ: Any thoughts on how people could think of being a part of this journey with you?

VR: I wanted to mention one more point. Even PV Sindhu, who won the Olympic silver medal this time, not many people know that OGQ has been supporting her training since the time she was 14 years old. In fact, when she was 15 years old, Olympic Gold Quest had sent her for five international tournaments. At that time, she wasn't in the Indian team. Her parents could not afford to send her for international tournaments. That time, we incurred the expenditure of almost 15 lakhs to send her for the tournaments with her coach or her parent or her physio, etcetera. So, we have been supporting her since then. The journey with Sindhu, to win an Olympic medal, was seven long years. That's what makes it really fulfilling, to be a part of the journey. Generally, in sport, people only see the final destination, but the journey is something that has given us a lot of pride and pleasure.

We would love for more and more people to be a part of this journey. As I said, Olympic Gold Quest is a not-for-profit organization. We raise funds only through donations. Currently, many companies as well as HNIs support us. So, we have both the 50% tax deduction as well as 100% tax-deduction certificates. We are CSR-compliant, so companies support us through CSR as well. We also have many individuals supporting us with donations as little as 500 or 1,000 rupees. The eventual dream is for the masses to support an organization like OGQ. I think, every contribution counts. We believe that sport is something that cuts across all barriers. If you watched Sindhu's final at Rio, you would have felt proud on TV as an Indian that an Indian athlete is toe-to-toe with the best in the world. We want people to contribute towards that and make a difference. Very often, people want to support sport but they do not know how to. OGQ wants to be that platform where people can support and we can ensure that the support goes towards an organization that is credible, that is accountable, that is transparent and showing impact. As I said, we look after the training of the best of the best young talent in the country. These are the talented athletes who can potentially eight, 10 years down the line, go on to win Olympic medals for India. We want a million people to be a part of that journey.

DJ: To make it tactical, what's the easiest way for people to contribute? Is there a website?

VR: Our website is olympicgoldquest.in and you can log on to our website, simply click on 'Donate Now' and you can make an online donation via credit card, debit card, NEFT, whatever mode you prefer. So, there are three options for donating. It's as simple as that. It'll take a maximum of two minutes to do that.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I must confess that given the velocity of change in the world we live in, it was very interesting to hear a 2020 plan as a short term plan in the context of the work OGQ does. It was fascinating to see how OGQ partners with athletes on a journey which lasts several years all the way to the podium. It was great to realize that common men and women like myself could be a part of this fulfilling journey. I am reminded of the Chinese proverb "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years back. The second best time is now". Just to remind you of the link once again. It is olympicgoldquest.in.

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End of nugget transcription

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Viren Rasquinha - Nuggets

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive’s / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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