

# **Devon Harris**

**Speaker at Devon Harris & Associates**

Congers, NY, US

Original Jamaican bobsledder who teaches people to Keep On Pushing in order to live their best life.

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## **Biography**

Born on Christmas Day, 1964 and raised in a violent ghetto environment in Kingston, Jamaica, the greatest gift Devon Harris ever received was the belief that a positive attitude and a never say die philosophy would carry him farther than a sense of injustice and a heart filled with anger. A graduate of the prestigious Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in England, Devon received a Queen's Commission in December 1985 and served in the officer corps of the Jamaica Defence Force until December 1992 when he retired as a Captain. At the heart of Devon's message are the lessons he has learned of the power of persistence over all sorts of obstacles in order to live one's best life. His mission is to bring this message of how everyone can keep on pushing and working for their dreams every day of their professional as well as personal lives. Encouraged by his commanding officer, Devon tried out for and was selected to the first Jamaican bobsled team which competed in the 1988 Olympic Games in Calgary, Canada. Their exploits inspired the Disney blockbuster movie Cool Runnings. Devon also competed in and was captain of the 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville, France and the 1998 Games in Nagano, Japan. The Keep On Pushing Foundation which he founded in 2006 aims to support and enhance the education of kids in disadvantaged communities around the globe by providing practical solutions to the challenges that are preventing them from getting educated. Through the Keep on Pushing Foundation, Devon also works with Right to Play as an athlete ambassador, supporting Right to Play's efforts in using sports and play in refugee camps around the world to enhance child development and build community capacity. As an ex-serviceman, Devon understands the commitment, sense of duty and sacrifices made by those who volunteer to serve. As a private citizen he is cognizant of the fact that the freedoms he enjoys are paid for by the courage and sacrifice of these men and women. As a result he has also devoted time to visit the troops serving in the Persian Gulf. He is the author of the motivational children's book, Yes, I Can! and the semi-auto-biographical motivational book Keep On Pushing: Hot Lesson From Cool Runnings.

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## **Availability**

Keynote, Workshop, Host/MC, Author Appearance

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## **Industry Expertise**

Financial Services, Military, Corporate Training, Sport - Amateur, Professional Training and Coaching, Non-Profit/Charitable

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## **Areas of Expertise**

Teamwork, Diversity, Overcoming Obstacles, Pursuing the Dream

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## **Sample Talks**

### **Out of many; One: An Olympic Athlete's View of Diversity in the Workplace**

A fresh look at how diversity in the workplace is not just a legal mandate or corporate ethic - it is fundamentally practical, and brings the best teams to the playing field. Devon brings a creative and inspiring look at how at work, as in the Olympics, what really matters is performance, attitude and teamwork. Devon delivers a compelling message to groups of all sizes about how to be more bottom-line successful by embracing and applying the innate strengths of a diversity philosophy.

### **Keep On Pushing?: An Olympic Athlete's Message of Persistence**

Devon brings his entertaining and effective message of how to 'keep on pushing', how persistence is a key catalyst in any success formula. Devon's presentation blends the need for every part of an organization to have the ability to persist, but not without good doses of wisdom, preparation, talent, teamwork, humor, passion, hard work and smart planning. Devon illustrates his presentation with his improbable story of a road that took him from the violent ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica; to Sandhurst; to the Olympics; to the hit Disney film Cool Runnings. With humor and compassion and real-life how-to guidance, Devon inspires the audience to 'keep on pushing' - his distinctive phrase when asked how he gets that bobsled down that run.

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## **Event Appearances**

### **Keep On Pushing Through Diversity**

Janssen Pharmaceutical Global Regulatory Affairs

### **Keep On Pushing**

Keep on Pushing

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## **Education**

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

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## **Accomplishments**

Three-Time Winter Olympic athlete

Original member of the Jamaican bobsled team

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## **Testimonials**

**Mary Ann Alberry**

Thank you so much for your inspirational keynote presentation, "The Power and Magic of Teamwork" that you so eloquently delivered at the IBM Information on Demand 2006 global conference in Anaheim, California last month. Your presentation was exciting, motivating, captivating and your delivery was flawless. It set the stage for the rest of the day; enabling an open environment to discuss, to plan and to strategize together as one team. It was also commendable that you researched our conference and customized your story to fit within our theme of "Take Back Control."

**Tony Vernaci**

We have had guest speakers in the past, but none have delivered a message of such significance as yours. It was simple and pure but at the same time profound and extremely moving. Your words motivated and inspired all of us to focus on our dreams and that giving up should never be an option. I personally have your five key principals (Dream, Motivation, Discipline, Faith and Perseverance) embedded in my mind and on my heart. They are applicable in any area of life. You are an example of someone who has taken your role in life seriously and uses it to help others along the way.

**Donna Wachter**

I want to personally thank you for your polished and incredibly motivating presentation at our annual meeting. People were mesmerized by your stories and your flawless delivery. I was totally captivated by your ability to deliver a message that was so vivid I felt like I was living your life. The way that you wove our organization's mission and challenges into your presentation was uncanny and the large crowd that gathered for your autograph was an indication of the impact you had on our audience.

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