

Mastering the Ski Slopes



Jean-Claude Killy is a former French World Cup alpine ski racer. He dominated the sport in the late 1960s. A triple Olympic champion, winning the three alpine events at the 1968 Olympics, he became the most successful athlete there. He also won the first two World Cup titles, in 1967 and 1968.

How did he achieve all that recognition? Talent would be one ingredient, but his success also required another element. Read on ...

When Killy made the French national ski team in the early 1960s, he was prepared to work harder than anyone else to be the best. At the crack of dawn, he would run up the slopes with his skis on, an unbelievably grueling activity. In the evening, he would lift weights, run sprints – anything to get an edge.

But the other team members were working as long and as hard as Killy was. He realized instinctively that simply training harder would never be enough. Killy then began challenging the basic theories of racing technique.

Each week, he would try something different to see if he could find a better, faster way down the mountain. His experiments resulted in a new style that was almost exactly opposite to the accepted technique of the time.

It involved skiing with his legs apart (not together) for better balance and sitting back (not forward) on the skis when he came to a turn. He also used ski poles in an unorthodox way – to propel himself as he skied.

The explosive new style helped cut Killy's racing times dramatically. In 1966 and 1967, he captured virtually every major skiing trophy. The next year, he won three gold medals in the Winter Olympics, a record in ski racing that has never been topped.



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Killy learned an important secret shared by many creative people: Innovation doesn't require genius – just a willingness to question the way things have always been done.

To say that the parameters of health care and hospitality have expanded rapidly over the past several years would be an understatement. To keep up, and to excel, will demand our best.

And for us to *be* the best – attracting customers to us – will require innovation. Are we up to the challenge?

How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver
(Proverbs 16:16 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter

