Nearly 37 years ago and with little more than a smattering of English, a fistful of money, 21 inch biceps and the American dream, Arnold Schwarzenegger arrived in the United States. He would fulfill that dream and in so doing turn his hand to a range of leadership challenges, all of which have so far proven successful. Schwarzenegger’s approach to leadership reflects some of his early lessons as a professional bodybuilder, characterized by discipline and training but also with what some have viewed as an overmasculinized and Machiavellian spirit of competition. Perhaps as much as anything, an objective view of Schwarzenegger’s career reveals a man capable of developing himself as a leader in ever escalating circumstances.

As illuminated by some lessons from Schwarzenegger’s brilliant sporting career, this chapter examines the future of work, sport, and society and provides the basis for organizations and managers to understand the essential aspects of leadership in the future. Sport thinking helps in several ways toward fruitful consideration of the future needs of business leaders. First, it encourages leaders to be comfortable in uncertain environments. If the right management philosophy is in place, there is more room for experimentation and the potential emergence of genuine
innovation that could not have been forced or prescribed. Secondly, the
sport metaphor demonstrates the importance of constant research, devel-
opment, and innovation in training and practice as a key to success, even
when training time far exceeds that of the time spent in actual perform-
ance. The chapter also highlights how sport is at the forefront of tech-
nology and innovation, in order to stay ahead of the game. It concludes
with a summary of aspects of leadership development that arise from the
sport metaphor.

Born in 1947 in Thal, Austria, Schwarzenegger grew up in a household
without modern amenities. Like many Austrian boys, he played soccer but
found the sport unappealing, chiefly because he valued personal glory and
gratification, the opportunities for which were too few in team sports.
Trying his hand at field events in athletics, Schwarzenegger inadvertently
discovered the weights room, on the suggestion of a coach advising him to
strengthen his legs. In the gym Schwarzenegger found his calling. Here he
learned the lessons that would shape his career. Seeking respect and admi-
ration, bodybuilding gave Schwarzenegger a platform to bolster his self-
esteeem, his confidence inflating with his muscles. By the age of 16,
Schwarzenegger was clear about his path in life, and that path would lead
him to the United States, where bodybuilding was beginning to find a
niche in the sexually charged 1960s.

By 19 Schwarzenegger had enlisted in the Austrian army, but denied
permission to attend the Junior Mr Europe bodybuilding competition in
Stuttgart a year later, he was forced to go AWOL in order to compete.
Although jailed for a week on his return, the trip had been worth it,
Schwarzenegger having been awarded the title despite having to learn how
to “pose” properly on the run. The following year he won the Senior Mr
Europe title, and, after finishing second in 1966, went on to win the Mr
Universe contest in 1967. Realizing his deficiency was a lack of training
and nutrition knowledge, Schwarzenegger decided that the only way
forward was to train with the best bodybuilders in the world, which meant
moving to the United States.

The move to the United States in 1968 proved to be a defining one. In
Santa Monica, California, while working briefly as a road worker,
Schwarzenegger spent as much time as he could with his idol, legendary
bodybuilder and strongman Reg Park. With an improved knowledge of
nutrition and access to the latest training techniques, Schwarzenegger won
the Mr Universe title again in 1969, and suffered his last defeat ever in the
highest bodybuilding competition in the world, Mr Olympia, at the hands
of Cuban giant Sergio Oliva. Schwarzenegger was later to recall that it was