



The Sprinter's Leadership Mindset

What engineering leaders can learn from the track

Speaker: Ugo Anomelechi

Event: LeadDev LDX3 London 2025

English Schools Championships

2nd

Heat



2nd

Semi-Final



4th

Final Ranking



- Under 17s – Intermediate Boys
- Strong season, but not the favourite
- Coming into the final, ranked fourth on paper



Locked In & Took a Breath



I didn't need to
beat everyone off
the line
I was locked in



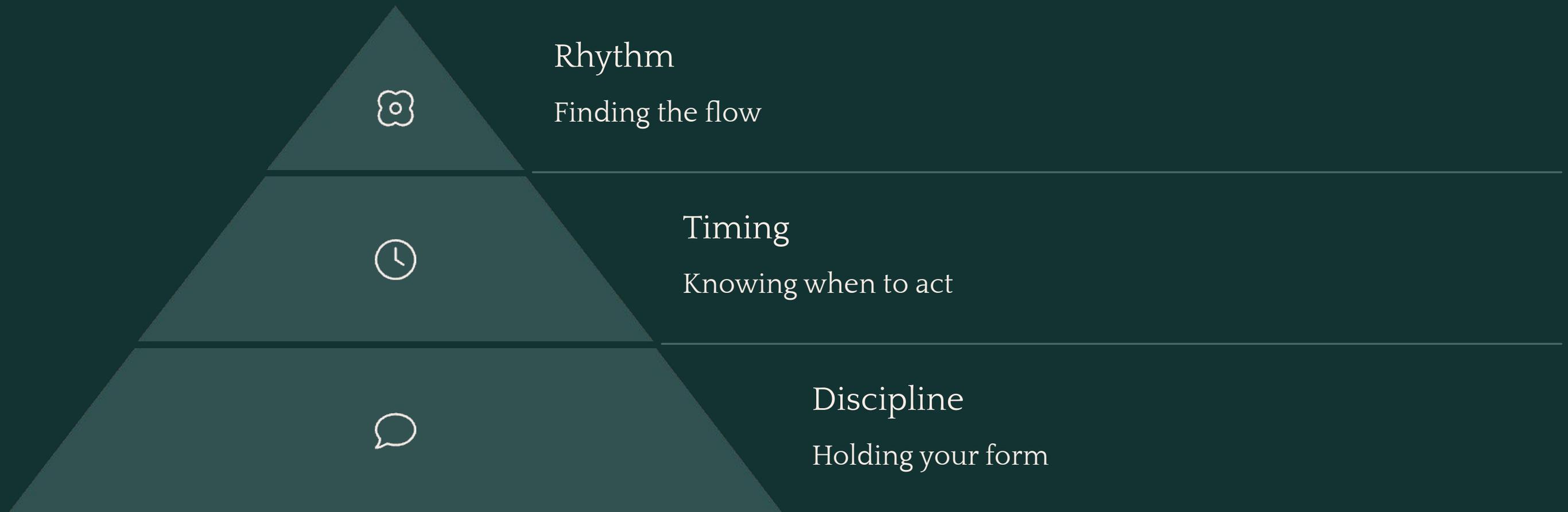
I trusted my
pickup
I just needed to get
out clean



I trusted my
finish
I took a breath



The Core Insight



Speed is not just running

It's knowing when to explode – and when to stay composed.

Phase by Phase

Leadership in Motion

■ Start - Out of the blocks

Getting the timing right

■ Drive - Building momentum

Speed with control

■ Transition - Maximum visibility

Pressure at peak

■ Finish - Composure at max effort

The breath

It maps (coincidentally) to how I lead teams today



Early Phases: Start & Drive

■ Out of the Blocks - Getting a Timely Start

Principle: Timely > Perfect

Don't wait for perfect context. Make the first move count to build momentum.

Illustration - Platform Centralisation:

- Took timely action to consolidate a few early systems
- Started with a simple plan to minimise disruption
- Kept the blast radius low and made the work visible
- Moved forward intentionally, not rushed

■ Drive Phase - Building Speed with Control

Principle: Trust & Rhythm

Building momentum requires sustainable speed and discipline, not burnout.

Illustration - Frequent Check-ins:

- Scheduled monthly on-site visits to Berlin
- Used these trips to break down uncertainty and build team rhythm
- Fostered open communication and collaboration
- Celebrated small wins and pivoted decisively when needed

Later Phases: Transition & Finish

■ Transition - Top-End Speed under Pressure

Principle: Stay Composed

High visibility equals high tension. Stay fluid when under pressure, don't tighten up.

Illustration - E-commerce Platform Launch:

- Helped the team stay focused on what mattered most
- Shielded them from distractions and noise
- Maintained composure to keep the team on pace
- Delivered the launch successfully despite the pressure

■ Final Phase - Composure at Max Effort

Principle: The Breath

That moment of composure under maximum strain provides clarity and gives an edge.

Illustration - That Moment:

- Paused to take a breath and avoid panic
- Delayed a launch to protect quality and composure
- Demonstrated leadership by maintaining clarity
- Enabled the team to perform at their best

Three Leadership Takeaways

■ 1. You don't need a perfect start. You need a plan. Projects wobble, teams shift. Don't waste energy on the false start.

Instead, reset, recover, and nail the next phase.

■ 2. Hold your form, especially when the pressure hits. Speed's useless if your form breaks down. Your team watches how you move.

If you stay calm, they stay calm.

■ 3. Know when to breathe. That breath near the finish? It wasn't just physical – it was clarity.

Breathing is an integral part of performance.

So yes – I did win that final



pos	no	name	team	time	std
1	77	Ugochi Anomelechi	Surrey	10.93 ns	
2	49	Rikki Fitton	London	10.94 ns	
3	13	Peter Vickers	Cleve	11.04 ns	
4	53	Devlin Williams	Midd	11.12 es	
5	1	Lloyd Rice	Avon	11.12 es	
6	54	Clive Turner	Midd	11.13 es	



Pos	Name	Team	Time
1	Ugochi Anomelechi	Surrey	10.93ms
2	Rikki Fitton	London	10.94ms
3	Peter Vickers	Cleve	11.04ms

What stuck? Not the win, the moment of calm

Now: I try to lead in the same way

So What Now...?

So if you're leading a team right now, ask yourself:



Where do you need to start in a timely manner?



Where might you be tightening too early?



And where do you need to breathe – so you can finish strong?

That's the sprinter's mindset.

And it's not just for the track.



Ugo Anomelechi



Let's chat afterwards!

