



## Cultivating a HR Olympic legacy

How can organisations help to ensure the Games delivers a long-lasting legacy for their employees and the UK economy?

**“In 2012 there is only one place to be. With the Olympic and Paralympic Games coming to London next summer, the greatest show on earth is about to arrive in one of the world’s greatest cities.**

**“We are determined to make the most of this unprecedented opportunity to ensure we deliver a lasting economic legacy that will benefit the whole country.**

**“This campaign is simple. There are so many great things about Britain and we want to send out the message loud and proud that this is a great place to do business, to invest, to study and to visit.”**

These were the words of Prime Minister David Cameron discussing the lasting economic legacy that the government hopes the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will have on the

whole country, boosting investment, jobs and growth. But for organisations supporting and celebrating the Olympics, how can they ensure this provides a legacy for their employees and the economy?

For Olympic supporter Cisco, the legacy of engaging employees and reinforcing the strong sense of company pride within the business was key. With this in mind, Cisco’s Head of HR for the UK & Ireland, Phoebe Leet, launched an HR strategy based on the Olympic rings, to promote fun, pride, health and global awareness in the workplace.

By encouraging employees to take part in new sports such as fencing, sailing and riding as well as holding an Olympic inspired ‘bring your children to work’ day where around 500 children were on the site, the company is using

the Games as a way of promoting wellbeing and engagement, bringing people together in physical communities.

“When we started with this sponsorship we didn’t want it to end in the closing ceremony of the Paralympics. It’s been very clear that Cisco wants this to form part of its legacy within the country. It’s helped us formulate a framework and an infrastructure that we can utilise and replicate again and again around this high engagement,” says Leet.

For Cisco, a lasting economic legacy is an important part of London 2012. In a recent meeting between David Cameron and Cisco CEO John Chambers, an agreement was made where Cisco pledged \$500million (£320m) to help foster an environment of entrepreneurship within the UK.

The result is the British Innovation Gateway (BIG) initiative, an idea that enables future generations to make use of the technology Cisco is contributing to the Games. In doing so, Cisco will create two networked innovation centres that will showcase technology and transform local businesses and communities.

“We’re amazingly proud,” she adds. “We’ve awarded Olympic tickets, Paralympic tickets or financial rewards to those people who have really stepped up.

“But the employees that led this have said it’s definitely been a lot of work - for some people this has been an evening job for a period of time, but they would do it again tomorrow. They’ve met people they would never have met before; they had a huge amount of fun along the way. We’ve seen pride increase in Cisco which is>>>

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Laura Whyte,  
Personnel Director,  
John Lewis





### ArcelorMittal's Olympic Legacy

"Our commitment as a sponsor and official steel provider is proof that we do believe that the Olympics will deliver a lasting economic legacy for the whole country.

Organisations can work to ensure this happens by working with the legacy companies that have been set up to take on this responsibility once the Games are over. We are doing this by working with the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) – the company that will develop, promote and deliver physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and surrounding area. LLDC wants the ArcelorMittal Orbit to become one of London's top visitor attractions, offering views across the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and London skyline.

The Orbit has a huge potential to contribute to the economy, with estimates of up to one million visitors to the Park every year. It has a great source of pride for ArcelorMittal employees and a lasting contribution to London, the Olympic movement and the world of art.

We believe legacies should be lasting – which is why we have invested in a lasting visitor attraction for London, in the form of the Orbit."

*Brian Callaghan,  
Vice President,  
Leadership Development,  
ArcelorMittal*

fantastic, particularly in these times, which are not always the best economically," she adds.

As well as Cisco, other organisations should be taking the opportunity to use the Olympics to maintain high engagement among employees, as David Smith, Sector Leader – Public and not for profit at Hay Group, points out: "If organisations build fun and supportive environments then there is that opportunity to build heightened levels of engagement and help them to retain their best people," says Smith.

"It's an opportunity to make leaders more visible and develop these levels of engagement. So, the challenge for leaders and HR departments is in using, not losing, the good feeling created from the London Olympics. Supporting leaders to create fun, flexible, creative and supportive environments will pay dividends in terms of greater productivity, performance and engagement long past the closing ceremony," he adds.

As well as using the legacy of the Olympics to ensure a more engaged workforce, using the approach of an athlete to drive employee performance is also something organisations can learn from, and this goes well beyond encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle, according to Keith Hatter, CEO of performance coaching firm K2.

"If the legacy of the Games is about leading inspiration and facilitating for athletes for the future, for organisations it's about how we leave a legacy of high performance inspired by the Games that lasts for generations to come. We need to hard-wire it into the DNA of the business," says Hatter.

Hatter believes that bringing elements of sport into the work environment will drive performance and engagement in organisations. "The Games provides a real opportunity to not only watch athletes do extraordinary things, but to analyse how their tools, techniques and mindset apply in different working environments," says Hatter.

"Everyone knows that sport is really competitive; everyone knows it's a tough environment but we still talk about playing sport, no one talks about playing work - yet it's still competitive, all the characteristics stay the same.

"If we thought about work as a game, we would want to be really good at it or be the best we could be. It will begin to generate a very different working approach and I think the Games will inspire us all to do just that."

For the John Lewis Partnership, embracing sport is key for both their employee engagement levels and transferring skills into the workplace. The firm launched 'John Lewis Partners in Sport', a programme that enables John Lewis employees



John Lewis' Partners in Sport programme

to engage in sport, celebrate London 2012 and generally have a healthier lifestyle.

The programme has trained over 600 employees to qualify as sports coaches in their local community. To date, over 20,000 employees have actively been involved with the programme since its inception in 2008 – almost one quarter of the entire workforce. For many, the programme has inspired the development of employees' own coaching skills, to then have the pleasure of relaying their knowledge to those they teach.

"It is important that the momentum behind London 2012 is utilised and continued by us as a business," says Laura Whyte, John Lewis' Personnel Director. "From our Partner sports coaching programme, over 80% of partners engaged in sports coaching stated they have been able to transfer the skills they have learnt in the coaching environment to the workplace."

Transferable skills are something that Mindi Cox, Vice President, Culture (People & Great Work Team) at O.C. Tanner believes are important for the legacy of the Olympics. "What a great opportunity to identify strengths that you may not have seen or to identify interests when the employees come back to work," says Cox. "I encourage managers and leaders to meet with employees, ask what they liked about the

experience, what they did that was new and what things they learned that they could bring back to the organisation."

Cox emphasises that the Olympics should not be treated as a completely separate experience from the working environment. For organisations with employees involved in the Olympics, employers should recognise the strengths that their employees are demonstrating in their Olympic involvement and bring them back into the organisation.

With the commitment that so many employers have to ensuring a positive legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we can only hope that it really does have a lasting effect on the economy, with not only jobs, employee engagement and performance, but also in ensuring that the experience is not forgotten.

"Our Olympic experience here in Salt Lake City was ten years ago and yet it is kind of surprising that it has been so long, as it's still such a warm memory," says David Sturt, O.C. Tanner's Executive Vice President, Marketing & Business Development. "The media moves on and yet the memories are still there. There's a lot of value in keeping some of those symbols, such as photographs, and having them in your company and environment for people to always remember." **HR**