London 2012. Are you ready?

Lessons learnt from the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games

As the UK gets ready for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, BT Global Services conducted research into the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games focusing specifically on the impact on local organisations. Insight gained from the research suggests that if UK organisations do not act quickly, they could miss out on the opportunities – and profits – available from London 2012.

1. What did we find?
• Nearly three quarters (73%) of organisations with operations in Vancouver saw the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games as an opportunity to gain business.
• Two thirds of organisations prospered during the Winter Games – the sectors that prospered most were Media & Leisure with 86% seeing an advantage, closely followed by Retail where 80% of firms benefited from the Games.
• The survey’s findings have big implications for the UK. London 2012 shines out as a unique opportunity for organisations to show the world what they can do but it will also bring challenges. Organisations must be ready to respond – particularly to meet the needs of an influx of visitors whose first or even second language is not English.
• The message is clear – organisations need to act fast to ensure that they do not miss out on the benefits the London 2012 Games will bring. These benefits will persist long after the Games are over, so organisations should take a long-term view of any investments they are asked to make.

2. What opportunities did the Vancouver 2010 Games bring?
• 40% of those businesses surveyed reported increases in sales of between 10-25% during the Vancouver 2010 Games.
• While demand fell once the event was over, 73% said their firms were continuing to enjoy higher sales.
• 27% attributed this to an increase in business from overseas. In all, 60% of respondents reported lasting benefits resulting from investments made in the run up.
• 20% said their organisation was more efficient with 27% still benefiting from flexible working arrangements introduced to help staff avoid congestion caused by the influx of visitors.

3. Fail to prepare, prepare to fail...
• 38% of private sector companies recognise that they could have taken fuller advantage of the business opportunities presented by the Vancouver 2010 Games.
• 23% of organisations experienced issues with their network capacity during Vancouver 2010 due to a surge in demand from employees and/or customers.
• 30% would have improved their flexible working facilities for existing staff in retrospect.
4. Preparation is the key
- On average organisations gave themselves just under 18 months to prepare for the Vancouver 2010 Games. Nearly one in five companies did no preparation at all, while the same number prepared more than three years in advance.
- There is a strong correlation between organisations that spent longer preparing for the Games and those that seen the most benefit.

5. Scale – Scaling up to meet the demand
- One third of organisations experienced shortages of network capacity as a result of surges in demand from employees and/ or customers during Vancouver 2010 Games.
- A fifth increased network capacity in preparation for the games however 20% wished their firms had increased the capacity of their contact centres in the run up. 33% said more should have been done to improve flexible working facilities.

6. Service – Maintaining a high level of service
- 42% of those interviewed experienced a higher than normal volume of calls during the Vancouver 2010 Games, yet less than a quarter increased their call centre capacity. Over half of respondents who increased their call centre capacity saw an increase in sales post the Games 2010.
- 58% of organisations took steps to prevent staff absenteeism ahead of Vancouver 2010, although 28% still experienced higher levels of absenteeism than normal. With hindsight, 30% would have improved their flexible working facilities for existing staff.

7. Sustainable - Leaving a legacy after the Games
- Two thirds of companies prospered during the 2010 Vancouver Games; the sectors that prospered most are Media & Leisure with 86% seeing an advantage, closely followed by Retail with 80%. More than two thirds of respondents from public sector and health said they prospered.
- 29% benefited from higher sales than before the Games and 10% of business still continue to enjoy sales between 10-25% higher than before.
- A fifth benefitted from upgraded technology brought in for Vancouver 2010 and a further one in five continued to appreciate the flexible working facilities brought in for the Games.
- 14% were still benefitting from flexible working arrangements introduced to help staff avoid congestion caused by the influx of visitors while 29% reported enduring performance improvements resulting from upgrades to networks and IT systems.

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