Building an Olympic Legacy

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Why were the Olympics relevant for us?

- We don’t really do sports science as an academic discipline
- No high profile alumni participants
- No high profile teams on campus (or so we thought)
- No specific communications strategy in relation to the Olympics
- Was this a missed opportunity?
We were participating

• Our experts in sports and exercise medicine at Barts and the London were treating athletes (but because of patient confidentiality we couldn’t talk about it)
• We did have high profile athletes on campus (but didn’t find out until after they left)
• Over 1000 staff and students volunteered as ‘games makers’
• The location made the Olympics a key event for us
We were participating

• Our experts in sports and exercise medicine at Barts and the London were treating athletes (but because of patient confidentiality we couldn’t talk about it)
• We did have high profile athletes on campus (but didn’t find out until after they left)
• Over 1000 staff and students volunteering across the Games
• The location was key – the Olympics were on our doorstep
Before the Games

• Securing Olympic jobs and the London Living Wage

• What can we learn from past Olympic and Paralympic Games? – a series of public lectures looking at the social, cultural and political aspects of the Games

• 1000 staff and student participants and their stories

• The ‘Olympic Torch’ journey
During 2012

- Tackling the ‘East London Diabetes Belt’
- Queen Mary and High Street 2012
- The Olympic Regeneration in east London (ORiEL) Study
- Improving athletes’ performance
- Helping athletes to heal
Ongoing

• The Olympic Regeneration in east London (ORiEL) Study
• Improving athletes performance
• Helping athletes’ to heal
• Keeping the Olympic and Paralympic legacy alive
• Queen Mary sports clubs to train at Copper Box Arena
Timing is everything

• **Before** the opening ceremony concentrated on locality of Olympics and impact on our communities

• **During** the Games our own staff and student participation – difficult to compete with much bigger news

• **After** – legacy of Olympics and our role in that
It’s not just about medals…

Your strategy should reflect your university’s interests and values. For QML this was:

- A focus on our locality and the impact of the games on regeneration and employment
- Longitudinal studies with a focus on health – both population and athletic
- Cultural, social and political aspects of the Olympiad
- Ongoing access to world class facilities
Fundamental part of our personality
Conclusion

• You don’t have to follow a traditional narrative to make the most of the games
• Authentic story telling from your organisation’s own perspective more important than trying to conform to a traditional role
• Even if you are relatively late to the games you can still build a legacy
Conclusion

• When planning your communications decide where you can and can’t have influence
• Look around the events – focus on where your strengths lay
• Integrate your communications across a variety of platforms
• Make your story unique to you
What would I do differently next time?

• Develop an integrated, whole University, communications strategy further in advance; what difference do we want the games to make for us?

• I’d know when Mo Farah was on campus