

P&G: An Olympic Impact



Back in July 2010, consumer products giant **Procter & Gamble (P&G)** confirmed a ten year global sponsorship of the Olympic Games. >>

The subsequent marketing campaign, which had been trialled earlier that year at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, focused on promoting the P&G corporate brand to the world while uniting its portfolio of products for the first time. At the heart of the campaign were the "Proud Sponsor of Mums" and "Thank You Mum" slogans which, following the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games, are now ubiquitous. Since 2010 P&G has worked alongside the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as well as various national Olympic Associations around the world, sponsoring over 150 athletes and launching multi-brand, in-store promotions that have reached around four million stores worldwide. Andrew Openshaw caught up with James Williams, a P&G spokesperson, to talk about P&G's role at this summer's Olympics, the impact it has had on the business and its brand portfolio, the power of 'storytelling' and the legacy they hope to have created.

As a Worldwide Olympic Partner, how did P&G work alongside the International Olympic Committee and the British Olympic and Paralympic Associations to ensure it made a positive contribution to the games while guaranteeing its investment returned the desired rewards?

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P&G worked very closely with the British Olympic and Paralympic Associations, leading up to the Games, and took the time to really consider how we could help them and the athletes in the best way possible.

We conceived the idea of being the "Proud Sponsor of Mums" as our products typically help Mums in and around the home, and also with their health and personal care. Our products don't really have any direct association with sport as such, so instead we chose to focus on telling stories about the family support structures behind the athletes, and most notably the role that Mums and our products play, in raising athletes and helping them to be the best in their chosen sport. We also wanted to extend this to Mums in general and the instrumental role they play in raising children; this was a natural extension of our campaign.

We made a point of engaging with the athletes themselves and asking them how P&G could contribute to their Olympics. What emerged from this engagement were various concerns

held by the athletes that their families would not be adequately looked after during the games; in terms of having somewhere to stay, getting tickets and access to events or not being able to meet up with them easily before



and after competitions. This engagement process began about 18 months before the games and involved road shows around the country, meeting up with the athletes and their families and getting ideas about how we could support them as well as providing guidance and advice on what to expect in the summer and how to handle things like interest from the media.

This became the 'nearest and dearest partnership' and the outcome was that we were able to provide the families of the athletes with tickets to the opening ceremony and the first round of competitive events. We also set up two 'nearest and dearest' zones – one in Stratford where Team GB were based and one in Hyde Park – where athletes could spend time with their friends and families in comfort, away from the glare of the media. Building up to the games and also during it,

we presented a series of films on our YouTube channel telling the stories of our athletes, like Sir Chris Hoy, Jessica Ennis and Victoria Pendleton, through the eyes of their mums. Bringing the mums and families of the athletes together in this programme meant that they really felt part of Team GB too – they were the nearest and dearest team. They subsequently became champions for P&G, as did the athletes, because of our efforts to make all of this happen.

How difficult was it to integrate P&G's identity as well as the identity of its brands with the Olympics?

The top level of our overall strategy was to bring the P&G brand to consumers, this was the first time we had ever done this in the UK. Today, people want to know more about the

companies behind the brands and this was our opportunity to tell our story and create a strong, positive association between the P&G brand and our products. The nearest and dearest partnership was instrumental in achieving this in the UK and we had similar activations all around the world to achieve the same goal. We also brought our individual brands together in our advertising for the first time, for example at the end of TV commercials.

Thirty of our biggest brands were also given their own Olympic themed campaigns, with their own athlete ambassadors. Each campaign highlighted what the brand does for consumers but also how it contributes to the world of sport. For example with Gillette – our most 'sports resonant' brand – we went with the 'Great Start' (with Sir Chris Hoy) slogan which we tied in with 'a great start to the race.'



Sir Chris Hoy

We then developed this further with 'a great start in sport' and sponsored coaching grants and got other existing Gillette ambassadors like Roger Federer and Jonny Wilkinson involved.

Jessica Ennis was the perfect ambassador for Olay. She used the product already and was happy to talk about how she performed better when she looked and felt better. It was the same for Victoria Pendleton and Pantene. Jenna Randle from the UK synchronised swimming team became our ambassador for Braun and woman's razors on the premise that smooth skin is essential for a perfect performance in the pool. And with Head & Shoulders we named Mark Cavendish and Michael Phelps as our ambassadors who talked about how using the product gives you 'winning confidence.'

In store, we set up multi-brand promotions where all P&G brands were displayed together – Gillette, Oral B, Fairy, Ariel etc. and used our ticket allocation to highlight our big campaign idea of thanking mums by offering Mums who buy our products the chance to win tickets to the Olympics.

What tangible impact has the Olympics had on P&G and its brands, globally?

It's too early to provide the results. After Vancouver in 2010 we delivered \$100m in incremental sales and this time our target was \$500m. In terms of brand awareness, again in Vancouver we achieved some double digit improvements in brand scores, trust in company etc. and we hope to make similar gains again.

The "Proud Sponsor of Mums" campaign has obviously been central to P&G's London 2012 marketing strategy, what steps is the business taking to ensure this campaign continues to be effective, post-Olympics?

We are a global sponsor for the next ten years. So we're already looking ahead to the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 and Rio in 2016. We will continue to use the same campaign idea building up to these events, focusing on what P&G does for consumers and Mums,



everyday. In the UK we set up the 'Champion Mums Foundation' and donated £150,000 which Mums could apply for and use to make a difference in their communities. Our global legacy programme was also launched at the Games. We announced a commitment to provide \$25 million to Youth Sports over the next decade.

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Why was the power of storytelling so successful in delivering excellent results for P&G?

Human emotions, insights and experiences are the greatest tools a storyteller has. People were hungry for stories about the Olympic athletes and even more so about the Paralympians. We knew that behind every amazing athlete is an amazing mum, family

and support structure, so we chose to focus on the stories behind their rise to success – What was Chris Hoy's first bike? Why did Liam Tannock start doing the backstroke? Who got Jessica Ennis into running? – and it worked beautifully. The athletes and their families were so happy with how we told their stories that they actually wanted to tell ours. In the nearest and dearest zones not only did, for example, Paula Radcliffe's Mum and Jess Ennis' Mum become great friends but our employees became great friends with the athletes and their families too. It was Team GB and Team P&G.

We were also able to orchestrate some iconic moments at the games. For example, when Irish Paralympian Michael McKillop won his second gold medal, we arranged for his Mum to present it to him. The reactions of the families across the whole games when their sons, brothers, sisters etc. won medals were all seminal moments for us. A personal highlight for me was watching the Hoys celebrate when Sir Chris won his sixth Gold.



Marc Pritchard, Global Brand Building Officer

What other initiatives is P&G promoting to ensure it remains synonymous with the Olympic legacy?

Again in the UK, we have joined Boris Johnson's 'Capital Clean-Up' initiative, which involves removing graffiti off walls and generally giving London a good sprucing up. At a global level, we have committed to provide \$25 million to support Youth Sport across the next decade. We're working with Olympic Committees around the world to decide how and where to invest in the best way possible to encourage sport and healthy living at home. This will be different in each country – some will invest at school level, others at club level – but the objective is to help each nation make a real difference in the lives of young people through sport.

London 2012 has been labelled the first 'social media' Olympics and by all accounts P&G has been at the forefront of innovation in the channel – gaining the biggest increase in its Wildfire score – how significant was this channel to P&G's Olympic success overall?

It was a huge part of our campaign. We utilised YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and coordinated the whole campaign during Games-time globally. Social media enabled us to tell the stories of the athletes and their families, and what P&G does to help them everyday, in real time, and coordinated around the world. This is what Marc Pritchard, our Global Brand Building Officer, calls the 'perfect storm'. Some of our biggest global adverts which were launched on social media before TV received in excess of 20 million YouTube views and were some of the most watched ads during the whole games. We doubled our Facebook and Twitter followers by being creative in what we posted via the sites. For example, during the opening ceremony, P&G brand ambassadors Sir Chris Hoy and Katie Taylor were both flying the respective flags for their countries and we were simultaneously posting images and videos of this happening to our social media sites as well as photos of their mums looking on; generating thousands of 'likes' and 'retweets'. With more than 30 brands activating across more than 200 countries with over 150 athletes, it was a Herculean effort.

What does P&G hope to be remembered for most following its involvement in London 2012?

This was the first stage in a decade-long, global partnership with Olympic Games. But, for the UK and London 2012, I think we will be remembered for the nearest and dearest programme. This was the first time there was a dedicated support and performance programme for the families and friends of our GB athletes and we're very proud of what it achieved. We set out to help the nearest and dearest of Team GB's Olympians and Paralympians to be the best supporters they could be – and I think we did that. We have some amazing memories and stories to share with colleagues around the world as the Olympics (and our partnership) move to Russia, Rio and beyond. Moreover, this was a performance programme by design and I'd like to think that we—in our own way—played a part in the success of our Olympic and Paralympic athletes at London 2012.

Nigel Wright News >>

The Nigel Wright Medal Challenge

To celebrate the Olympic Games Nigel Wright launched an Olympic themed competition for its customers. The Nigel Wright Medal Challenge ran for the duration of the games and Nigel Wright employees as well as clients and candidates who signed up to the competition could score points by predicting the medal winners for thirty separate events.

Over 300 people took part and the overall winner, a UK based HR Director, was given an iPad. There was also an internal competition between Nigel Wright employees and Nigel Wright teams. Dave McCartney, a senior consultant in the Consumer UK Division won the individual competition while the London Office was the Nigel Wright team with the most points at the end.