

## OLYMPICS AND YOUR BUSINESS

If you'll be watching the Olympics this month, think about a possible connection with your own business. This concept is not as far-fetched as it may first appear. Remember that some flooring contractors, distributors, manufacturers and retailers already sponsor local clubs and individuals or a particular event, as well as raising money for good causes and charities with health and recreational aims.

The Olympics every four years generates enthusiasm for competitive activities. It must be admitted that Beijing is a controversial venue. Many regard China as a repressive and cruel regime which deserves to be denounced, not applauded. However deeply felt, this animosity should not detract from the positive virtues and ideals of the Olympics.

Budding young sports stars, viewing images of world class athletes in action, will be spurred to achieve their own dreams of representing Britain at the London Olympics in four short years. Companies can make a contribution towards British success in a variety of ways. For example, you can champion amateur teams or deserving bodies or promising youngsters.

Involvement in the wider community is a central principle of the new and rapidly growing business philosophy known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

CSR is no less relevant to small companies such as flooring contractors run by a couple of people than it is to the major multinational conglomerates employing many hundreds.

In a nutshell, CSR means understanding the overall impact of your business, including assessing how your undertakings

affect the locality in which you operate. It encompasses the way you deal with your suppliers and how you treat your staff. And it covers any damage that your operations may have on the environment and how you can reduce pollution and waste.

And before you ask, CSR does not in any way hinder your efforts to run a profitable company. On the contrary, it can actually help you improve your business performance.

By keeping an eye on 'the bigger picture' you'll be ready to cope with new laws and restrictions. You can also improve the goodwill of your business while building a laudable reputation as a responsible company, and that will help to set you apart. Your employees will be more motivated and more productive.

Fostering good relationships with local authorities puts you at an advantage when tendering. And making your distribution and delivery network more efficient is another 'must' (which is especially sensible with the current high fuel prices).

Most importantly, you can win over increasingly demanding customers. Win is the keyword. So with the Olympics in the news this month, think about how your business can embrace some of the elements of CSR and you too can be a winner!



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