

## Background

# No ordinary project

In 2012 the Olympics arrive in London, bringing a £6 billion pound **boost** to the local economy and providing up to 38,000 jobs for Londoners. The **public face** of the London Olympics is Lord Sir Sebastian Coe, the former athlete and politician who was also **credited with** bringing the games to London. But the man charged with the day-to-day responsibility of organizing the games is less well known.

Paul Deighton was the Chief Operating Officer for Goldman Sachs in London before seeing an advert for the post of CEO of the London Organizing Committee in the *Economist* magazine. With encouragement from his wife he applied for the position, despite it meaning a large pay cut. He was interviewed along with 300 other people and eventually he was offered the job.

The London Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympics Games (LOCOG) is responsible for preparing and staging the games and Deighton is charged with **the nuts and bolts** of the organization. He is responsible for sponsorship, marketing, ticketing and even the torch relay. He also oversees the annual budget and recruiting the staff needed to run the games, which will eventually rise to over 100,000 workers and volunteers. In fact his first task was to put together a top team for the organizing committee. He has already **headhunted** some of the top names in business such as Jean Tomlin the HR director,

who came from the BBC, and Chris Townsend the commercial director, who previously worked for Transport for London. Deighton now believes he has a superstar team in place to ensure successful running of the games.

One of Deighton's other responsibilities is to work closely with the Olympic Development Authority (ODA) who are responsible for developing and building the venues and the Olympic Park. He is very pleased with the relationship he has developed with them and is convinced that everything is on schedule and that London will be ready for the Games on time and on budget.

Deighton has also had to build working relationships with the other **major stakeholders** in the Olympic process, for example, he has to report to the Government who provide much of the funding, the Mayor of London's office who are determined to get the best out of the games for the ordinary Londoner, and the British Olympic and Paralympics committees.

The post of Olympic CEO is not exactly a **stable** job – Sydney had four, Athens had even more – but Deighton is confident he can survive and more importantly deliver. 'I have 27 July 2012 tattooed inside and outside my head,' he says. 'I am absolutely focused on the opening ceremony, and, with our team and stakeholders, intend to deliver the most stunningly successful Olympic Games ever. You can **count on** it.'

## Exercises

### 1 Read the first two paragraphs quickly and answer these questions.

- 1 Who is Paul Deighton?
- 2 What is his job?
- 3 What sort of things do you think he will be responsible for in this job?
- 4 What experience, skills, and qualities do you think he will need?

### 2 These numbers all appear in the text. Read the text quickly to find out what each number represents.

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| 1 2012      | 4 300     |
| 2 6 billion | 5 100,000 |
| 3 38,000    | 6 27      |

### 3 Read the text again and answer these questions in your own words.

- 1 How did Paul Deighton find out about the job?
- 2 What made him apply for it?
- 3 Why was it important to get a 'superstar' team in place first?
- 4 What does the ODA do?
- 5 Who does Deighton have to report to?
- 6 What is Deighton confident about?

### 4 Match the words and phrases in bold in the text to the correct definition 1–8.

- 1 people or companies that are involved in a particular organization especially because they have invested the most money in it: .....
- 2 an increase in something: .....
- 3 the basic practical details of a subject or an activity: .....
- 4 to depend on something / somebody: .....
- 5 when somebody has been said to have done something: .....
- 6 to find somebody who is suitable for a senior job and persuade them to leave their present job: .....
- 7 something that doesn't change much and is not interrupted: .....
- 8 the person who people associate with a company or organization: .....

### 5 Work with a partner. Use the words and phrases in 4 in sentences about the company you work for.

### 6 Look back at the text and choose three words that you could use in your day-to-day work.

### 7 Would you like to manage a project as big as this? Why / why not?

### 8 Look at what some people have said about the Olympics being held in London. Work with a partner. Discuss whether you agree with their opinions.

“ I think it's terrible that £6 billion is being spent on the games when there are so many people living in such poverty around the world. ”

“ It is great to host the Olympics, it's fantastic. Everyone who criticizes it is miserable! I can't wait for the Olympics, I don't care how much it costs – just pay it and make them the best ever. ”

“ Is it worth spending billions on the London Olympics for the potential benefits it could bring? No, of course it isn't, why can't the money be spent on education and health care? ”