

thenewmanpartnership

COACHING CASE STUDY

Bid Committee for the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games

Background

Following an unsuccessful bid to host the 2016 Games, which were won by a high energy, passionate and emotional bid from Rio, Tokyo decided to submit a follow-up bid for 2020. With a strong field of candidates, Tokyo needed to make a case for its candidacy which was both pragmatic and emotionally resonant.

Gap Analysis

Tokyo remains a compelling destination for major events. Its infrastructure, wealth, exceptional levels of personal safety and almost zero crime, together with its record for delivery and detail, are well understood around the world. Furthermore, in a world where doping scandals are rocking the credibility of sport, Japan has an exceptionally clean record.

All of this made Tokyo an extremely serious candidate, and therein lay the problem: was Tokyo too serious? The trains would run on time, but would it be the kind of popular explosion of enthusiasm, the truly global festival atmosphere, of a London 2012 or a Rio 2016?

Coaching Programme

The programme focused on detailed preparation and rehearsals for a grueling, 18 month campaign of presentations, briefings, press conferences, and informal diplomacy, across every continent, all ultimately aimed at securing the support of the approximately 100 voting members of the International Olympic Committee.

At the outset, we established with our client a core 'target attribute' for the bid: this was summed up in one word, 'shining'. With this 'attribute' signed off, we could then begin to work with the team as a whole, and with each individual team member, on helping them understand the gap between their current impact and a target impact that would truly 'shine'. Alongside respected senior politicians, we strongly encouraged putting young people forward as a fresher face of Japan. We constantly filmed, played back, and critiqued each rehearsal and interaction, encouraging the bid team to see and close the gap for themselves. We worked in minute detail on body language, gesture, vocal inflection, facial expression, and the use of camera angles.

Result

A strong global campaign culminated in a final pre-vote presentation to the IOC in Buenos Aires, where the sheer passion and emotional energy of the bid team was widely perceived to have played a central part in winning the day.

The Newman Partnership offers confidential personal coaching for leaders and their teams, with UK and international clients across the worlds of business, politics and sport. Based in London, we also have representation in Tokyo and Beijing.

Martin Newman, who heads the partnership, is also Director of The Leadership Council (www.theleadershipcouncil.co.uk), a nonprofit UK based network of senior leaders which regularly researches and publishes on topical issues around leadership.

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