

Top 10 tips to run an effective service desk during London 2012

One support function likely to experience higher demand before and during the London 2012 Games is the law firm IT service desk. With less than 300 days before the start of London's biggest ever sporting event - is your IT service desk fit to win?

Intelliteach's parent office is in Atlanta, GA and home of the 1996 Summer Olympics. We remember the traffic chaos; athletes who'd trained for four years getting lost or stuck in traffic jams and missing their events; some spectators endured a 7 hour delay to get out of the stadium and onto the public transport system. We know from personal experience that businesses underestimate the level of impact, and end up scrambling last minute to assemble an actionable and realistic business continuity strategy.

London 2012 is the biggest sporting event ever to be held in London and expects to welcome 17,800 athletes and team officials as well as 22,000 media personnel, before we even consider the spectators – remember 8.8M tickets have been sold! The Paralympics will be the second biggest sporting event ever attracting 8,000 athletes, officials and media personnel. Paralympic ticket applications surprised Games organisers with many events selling out.

The Olympic Delivery Authority, Transport for London (TfL) and Network Rail is doing their best to keep London and your business running smoothly during the 2012 Games however this still means that London will be significantly busier than usual.

In order to deliver effective IT service to your users during the London 2012 Olympic Games, it is important that you start to prepare for the challenges now.

1. Start thinking about this now

The London 2012 Opening Ceremony on 27 July 2012 launches London's biggest ever sporting event. With less than 130 days to go, we believe it is essential that you make time **now** to determine what challenges you need to address. The Olympic Delivery Authority predicts that Days 7 and 8 will be the busiest in central London (with 800,000 people expected to use public transport to commute to the Games). And don't forget the Paralympics which start at the end of August (29 August to 9 September) in time to clash with the travel needs of 1000s of commuters returning from holiday and schools reopening.

2. Create a Service Desk Action Plan

We believe it is essential to create a Service Desk Action Plan so that you can assess the potential impact of the Games and be ready to take action to address the challenges that you will face. Intelliteach

offers a free downloadable action plan at <http://www.intelliteach.co.uk/BigEvent>.

3. Determine the technology demands

There may be higher demand for video conference facilities if users or clients experience travel restrictions during London 2012. Will users be impacted by the likely surge in demand for data. Providers are already warning of clogged mobile telephone or broadband networks. Will users be watching the Games 'online' during office hours? How will this affect network performance? How will your business continuity plan be impacted?

4. Provide refresher training

There is likely to be an increased demand for remote working as users try to avoid the commute into London by working from home or working at an alternative office. Offer refresher training in the weeks leading up to London 2012 to avoid lawyer or support staff meltdown as they struggle to use a new method of working. For every

one that is familiar with using remote access, there will be ten who have not touched remote access since their initial training and do not know how to log in.

5. Get your service desk fit for action

Does your service desk staff regularly handle remote access calls? As well as refresher training for your users, you may want to provide your support staff with refresher training too particularly if it is typically your evening or weekend service desk staff that handle these types of calls.

6. Talk to your suppliers

Road restrictions across London may affect deliveries e.g. paper, toner cartridges, external printer engineers, offsite tape retrieval etc. If you are not sure about how many deliveries to expect, keep a diary for one month. Talk to your suppliers to find out what steps they are taking to understand and minimise the impact of the Games. Review usage during July/August 2011 to understand minimum requirements. Think about stockpiling supplies, postponing non-essential deliveries or consider resource sharing with another firm. If printers or other equipment are due for preventative maintenance in July or August 2012, can you postpone or bring forward?

7. Understand your call volumes

Understand your typical call volumes from July to September. You can only manage what you measure; however even if you do not currently have a good methodology for tracking call volumes and service levels, an approximate call count in a typical week, showing the busy hours in the day, and the time of the first and last calls day, will go some way in helping you to understand anticipated call volume. Do you have plans for rollouts next Spring? We know that rollouts cause a significant increase in volume and add additional strain to existing resources, systems, and service quality. Rollouts often experience delays so be aware that any delays next year may feel the impact of London 2012.

8. Check if you are in an affected area

If you have an office in central London, then the answer is YES. Several locations in and around London are being used for different events which will affect travel congestion on different days. The persistent travel hotspots are likely to be around the major interchange stations such as King's Cross St Pancras, Bank, London Bridge and Liverpool Street. It is not just about your office location, consider where your service desk staff start or finish their commute. Is there a route to avoid the hotspots, perhaps walk from the mainline station? Ask staff to test their personal travel action plan in advance.

9. Understand your staff availability

TfL is encouraging businesses to stagger the start and finish times of working days. How will this affect the requirements for the IT Service Desk? Will you be expected to provide extended coverage? Do you have enough staff to do that effectively? Do you need to recruit and train temporary staff or use the services of an outsourcing supplier for short-term overflow support? And what about annual leave? Survey your users and your staff now about their intentions for annual leave next summer. Do you know how many of your staff volunteered to be a Games Maker? Have they heard yet whether they have been accepted? Volunteers will be informed by February 2012 at the latest.

10. Use the resources available

There are several resources available to help you. For example, if you have more than 200 employees and your office is in a designated 'affected area', your firm may be eligible for Site-Specific Advice (SSA) – a free Transport for London (TfL) service which includes advice on planning staff business travel, tips on maintaining service continuity and sharing best practice from firms that already have plans in place. For more information, email keeponrunning@london2012.com or visit www.london2012.com/traveladviceforbusiness. There are also drop-in workshops for firms with fewer than 200 employees.

Intelliteach is offering its Big Event Service Desk which will be open 24x7 for the duration of the Olympics and Paralympics

2012. Book now to guarantee your reservation.

Start planning today

If you do nothing:

- staff will be late for work and stress levels will rise;
- users will not get the service that they are accustomed to and frustration levels will increase;
- clients will not get their work on time and dissatisfaction will arise.

Take action today to keep your IT Service Desk running during London 2012.

Other useful links:

<http://www.intelliteach.co.uk/BigEvent>

<http://www.london2012.com/business-network>

<http://www.deloittelondon2012.co.uk/london-2012/london-2012-is-your-business-ready>