



BUSINESS SOLUTIONS FOR LONDON 2012



INTRODUCTION

For UK businesses, the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games offer an incredible opportunity.

This once-in-a-lifetime event will generate new investment in a wide range of industry sectors, from transport to construction, communications to training. The effects of such investment, particularly in redevelopment and skills, will deliver real benefits to UK enterprises, not only in the run-up to London 2012 but for years to come.

With opportunities come risks and challenges: in today's changing, globally competitive world, our businesses need to be fit to compete. This demands a commitment to identify, nurture and develop the skills and talents of businesses and employees, building capacity to expand into new markets, deliver results and sustain growth.

The government is committed to making it easier for businesses small and large, new and existing, to find the right support to start up, grow and succeed. To this end, it has streamlined all government-funded support into Solutions for Business, a single portfolio of products that can be accessed via Business Link, the main route to government support.

In turn, businesses will play their part; they must become the best they can be. We want businesses to be inspired by the 2012 Games, to bid for contracts, but we also want them to use this opportunity to get fit to compete.

This brochure shows, through a series of case studies, how UK businesses that register on CompeteFor for Games related contracts can get fit to compete through Business Link advice, and by accessing Solutions for Business products such as Train to Gain, the Manufacturing Advisory Service and Accessing International Markets.

It explains how the free and easy-to-access CompeteFor service – described as an online “London 2012 dating agency for businesses” – is already providing thousands of UK enterprises with the chance to grow their market share by winning Games-related contracts.

The opportunity is there: will you take it?

How to sign up on CompeteFor and the journey a business goes on to get access to London 2012 opportunities and accompanying business support

What is CompeteFor?

CompeteFor is the chosen site of London 2012 for the publication of Games-related contracts, and acts as a brokerage service – an electronic ‘dating agency’ for businesses – between potential suppliers and buyers in the London 2012 supply chain. All available Games related contracts are advertised on CompeteFor, which is the only procurement portal endorsed by the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

How can it help my business?

CompeteFor works in partnership with Business Link (in England, and the relevant agencies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to give businesses access to support services, including advice on how to improve performance and compete successfully for London 2012 and other opportunities.

Business Link itself can signpost you to other more specific means of support, such as help to meet training needs, trade overseas, start or improve manufacturing. All the businesses featured in this booklet have benefited from Business Link help – will you?

How do I sign up?

Signing up to be a supplier on CompeteFor is a straightforward process. Registering takes just a couple of minutes, and as soon as you have filled in some basic information about your business, you can view the opportunities advertised on the site.

To compete for opportunities, you will be invited to complete a business profile by answering a series of questions and successfully publish your company's profile. For this, you will be asked for some further details, such as the size and turnover of your business, shareholder and employee information, and whether you hold relevant policies. If you have difficulty in supplying this information, then a Business Link adviser can provide support over the telephone.

How easy is it to win business through CompeteFor?

When CompeteFor approves your business profile, it will become part of the site's supplier database and visible to any visiting buyers. You can also upload supporting images and marketing information to upgrade the quality of your entry. Throughout the process, Business Link is on hand to help you maximise your chances of success.

Once you successfully publish your profile on CompeteFor, the site will match it automatically to opportunities that fit your business, and will invite you to apply by email by filling out a short, tailored application form. The buyer advertising the contract will then select a shortlist of possible suppliers and ask them to make formal tenders through its own procurement system.



CASE STUDY: A&L PAVING

With the help of Business Link and Train2Gain, Northampton-based A&L Paving won a contract to install kerbs and paving for London 2012 sites. The East Midlands family-run business, established in 1987, registered on the CompeteFor website in December 2008 and just weeks later won a contract to supply the contractor responsible for Highways & Bridges on the Olympic Park.

The business went to Business Link for advice about writing a Quality Statement for its CompeteFor profile. "It was dead simple. Business Link was very helpful and once I had got the information I needed to compile the statement, we went back to CompeteFor and they unlocked our profile so we could update it immediately," says Jo Malpas, head of health, safety and training. "We won the contract pretty soon after that. Being on the CompeteFor site is very helpful, because being pre-registered avoids having to do reams of paperwork once people are keen for you to do the work."

Business Link also introduced A&L Paving to the Train2Gain initiative, which it has subsequently used to equip its workforce for London 2012 work. "We have always kept up with the Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) but at certain times you have to look further to satisfy your principal contractor," said Jo. "For example, the contractor responsible for Highways & Bridges on the Olympic Park requires a first-aider on site, so we have to make sure we have the correct operators on the correct plant, which may involve extra training. We have obtained funds through Train2Gain by submitting and managing training plans."

In particular, the business was able to get funding to put one of its employees through the SMSTS five-day course, which enabled him to gain the knowledge, understanding and competence to carry out duties under health and safety regulations. The total cost of the training was £570, of which A&L Paving received £450 back from Train2Gain. Jo adds: "As a small firm, it would be silly not to take up the offer, and all the ongoing support we have accessed through the Business Link service has been of great benefit to us and really paid off."

"The value of the London 2012 contract is significant for us," said the business's co-founder, Leroy Herbert. "If the opportunity arises, we will bid for other contracts through CompeteFor and continue to make Business Link our first point of contact in order to achieve our business goals."

Train to Gain can help you improve your business performance by providing help to give your employees additional training and development. The service, which can be accessed through Business Link or independently, offers tailored advice about everything from basic skills to leadership and management training. A skills broker will enable you to identify skills that can boost your business, and will help you put in place a strategy and training package, and gain access to funding. The service can be accessed online at www.traintogain.gov.uk, or contact a skills broker directly on **0800 015 5545**.

CASE STUDY: 4WARD

4WARD has benefited from using Business Link by participating in the Supply London initiative, which provides in-depth support to help London companies win contracts.

Through Supply London it has accessed training sessions, including one on procurement in the public sector, which "gave us some very good insights about how to bid, and changed our approach to tendering, helping us to be more successful," says Managing Director, Eloy Mazón. Another training session, on winning new business, will help 4WARD expand its client network. "We saw this programme would give us direct contact and access to opportunities, but the training courses are the icing on the cake."

Since November 2008, 4WARD has been working with UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) to develop international expansion, and was represented on a trade mission in early 2009. It was recently accepted on the Accessing International Markets programme. "Our relationship with

UKTI has been very good so far – the input, support and contacts generated have been extremely valuable," says Eloy. "It's helped us with high level networking; UKTI has been able to get us through the door to see the right people at the right level. I'm surprised at how quickly this relationship has started to add value."

4WARD specialises in security associated with major events. In 2008, it joined CompeteFor to access new opportunities. "CompeteFor is a key tool for tendering, and we use it a lot," explains managing director Eloy. "Taking the time to register and set your company up is extremely worthwhile, as once done, it will provide you with a lot of information on tenders and also help you to identify new business partners. All in all, it's an excellent business tool."

4WARD also plans to take part in Knowledge Connect, which helps London's businesses prosper by connecting them with the expertise of universities and research organisations. The programme is run by the London Development Agency, which manages Business Link in London.

Accessing International Markets can help you with information and advice to enter overseas markets or improve your export performance, giving practical assistance before you travel to your target markets, and ongoing help while you're there. The service, run by UK Trade & Investment provides contacts, mentoring and support from a network of staff in more than 100 markets worldwide, and can give access to major buyers, governments and supply chains, as well as alerts to current business opportunities. Find out more at www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk or by calling UKTI on **(020) 7215 8000**.



CASE STUDY: TC OFFICE INTERIORS

The Bideford-based business TC Office Interiors has already won work on the London 2012 Games and used Business Link for general business support. It hopes that registering on the CompeteFor site will lead to opportunities to take on final fit-outs for many of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Venues in the two years before the Games.

Adrian Sealey, a founder of the business, approached Business Link in 2006, when London won the right to host the Games. "It was a big step for us, and I wanted some reassurance that we were ticking all the right boxes," he says. "Our adviser helped us to put together a Business Support Action Plan."

In 2008, TC Office Interiors worked beside Bovis Lend Lease and Elliott Hire in Stratford, East London on a 16-week contract, worth £425,000, which involved providing lockers, canteen seating and joinery services. "We were fitting out the modular buildings necessary to house up to 3,000 people building the athletes' villages," explained Adrian. Founded in 2006, the business now employs ten people and turns over more than £1m. In the last 12 months, it has moved into new premises.

"It's great to have the reassurance of Business Link's expertise on tap," says Adrian. "They're always there to let us know that we're doing the right things, in the right way, at the right time. They're giving us a lot of the confidence you need to keep going strongly in a tough economy, and if we need advice, a brief conversation with our adviser helps us to take stock."

Registering on the CompeteFor site and publishing a profile was "easy," he says. "When I did have any questions, I just phoned the Business Link team and they were very helpful."



Business Link can help you improve your business performance by giving you access to clear, simple, and trustworthy information. You can access local advice and support from regional operators across England, either online, by phone or face-to-face. Business Link also works in partnership with Business Gateway, Highlands & Islands Enterprise (Scotland) and Invest Northern Ireland. The service provides a fast track to expert help on a range of matters, from finance and sales to IT and energy efficiency. To find your nearest operator, search by postcode at www.businesslink.gov.uk or call **0845 600 9 006** to connect to your local Business Link.

CASE STUDY: ZAUN

Fencing business Zaun won a London 2012 contract as a result of assistance from the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) in improving its factory layout and boosting productivity, plus help from Business Link in brokering a grant to buy machinery.

The Wolverhampton-based business signed up for CompeteFor in June 2008 on the recommendation of contractor BAM Nuttall and subsequently won the contract to supply the Olympic Park main perimeter fencing. It started work on the London 2012 site in January and will install up to 17km of very high security fencing. "As a result of winning this large project, we have benefited from other work both on and off the Olympic site," says Paul Painter, a co-founder of the business.

When Zaun first started to manufacture fencing mesh, a Business Link adviser helped it win from Advantage West Midlands a £60,000 grant, which went towards a welded mesh machine, allowing the manufacture of more specialist panels. This led directly to the success of its bid for the Olympic Park contract. "The machine allows us to reduce

lead-times and keep just wire in stock rather than finished panels. The panels were previously produced on the Continent, so it also helps to increase UK manufacturing. We've opened a new division, ZMesh, to sell welded mesh panels to the trade."

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) aided Zaun's move to larger premises, and helped implement principles of lean cellular manufacturing. The increase in productivity led to the development of a growth strategy to increase market share; Zaun also won a £220,000 grant to finance a significant factory expansion.

"Business Link introduced us to a consultant who helped us write a three-year business plan, the backbone to our most recent grant application," explains Paul. "We have run out of room in our current building, so the expansion will allow us to put in the very large plant and equipment we need for the next growth phase. We are able to finance this when sources of external funding are now more difficult to find. Over the years, Business Link has been of great help."

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) can help you to improve your business performance by offering hands-on advice and assistance from experts in a wide range of manufacturing disciplines. Launched in 2002, MAS operates through ten regional centres in England and Wales, and a separate Scottish branch. Advisers offer information, advice and follow-up support, including a free one-day on-site diagnostic visit to review operations, while a network of organisations provides specialized help. You can access the service by calling **0845 658 9600**, or at **www.mas.bis.gov.uk**.

CASE STUDY: PCL CORPORATEWEAR

A training seminar accessed through Business Link has directly helped Dunstable-based corporate clothing business PCL Corporatewear to break free of old constraints and win new business in the lead-up to London 2012. The Bedfordshire business, established in 1994, recently won a three-year contract worth up to £400,000 to supply the City of London with all its corporate clothing, uniforms and workwear until 2012 – a job which may lead to additional Games-related opportunities.

Sales manager Sarah Lloyd explains: "In spring 2008, our turnover was 'stuck' and we were trying to think of ideas about how to increase it. I did a web search and came up with a Fit to Supply seminar, run by Business Link. Since it was close to where I work, free, and happening soon, I decided to attend."

Becoming involved at some level in the 2012 Games was "a distant dream", according to Sarah, and this was her motivation to attend the Fit to Supply seminar. "We enrolled on the Fit to Supply seminar and as a result of the information and advice received, we have since gone on to complete procedure and policy documents. We hadn't been involved in public tenders or contracts before, but the seminar very simply and concisely went through how much business is out there, the sort of people who are buying, and

the basics of how to get noticed and win tenders. It covered everything, with excellent speakers, and really taught us what we needed to aim for."

As a result of attending Fit to Supply, and with the help of a Business Link checklist, PCL Corporatewear went on to publish its profile on the CompeteFor website; and subsequently to win the contract, through another site, in July 2008. It has also been shortlisted for a number of prestigious opportunities. "Before I went to Fit to Supply, we had policies floating around but nothing properly written out or documented," says Sarah. "We got everything in order and then published our profile. It didn't take very long; it was just a case of knowing where to start."

PCL Corporatewear regularly uses the Business Link website (www.businesslink.gov.uk). "It's clear and concise, easy to use and helpful," says Sarah. "And thanks to the excellent quality of the seminar and the simple practical advice that I received and was able to act upon straightaway, we embarked on our first big tender in July 2008 and won the City of London contract. We are now well on the way to increasing our turnover."

Paul Toben, from Business Link, adds: "This story should be an inspiration to other businesses as to how hard work and attention to detail, together with help from Business Link, can result in success and winning new contracts. As a result of attending this seminar, listening, and putting recommendations about how to become 'fit to supply' into action, PCL has now moved forward and looks set for great future success."



Businesslink.gov.uk can help your business save time and money by giving you instant access to the right information. It has 600 guides on all aspects of business, plus a range of interactive tools, developed in partnership with subject experts within government and relevant business-support organizations. These will help you to comply with regulations and improve performance, whether you are starting up or already established in business. You can also use the website to find out about events near you (go to www.businesslink.gov.uk, click on 'Event' and select your location) or enter your postcode on the home page to access a local advisor who can offer additional support.

INDICATIVE GUIDE TO PRODUCTS BY COMPANY SIZE AND STAGE

This booklet has demonstrated how UK businesses have benefited from working with Business Link to get themselves fit to bid for London 2012 contract opportunities. The publicly funded, 'Solutions for Business', package of support products can help your company start, grow and succeed. For information on the full suite of services identified in the table opposite contact: Business Link Help Line on 0845 600 9 006 or visit businesslink.gov.uk.

PRODUCT	PRE-START UP	NEW COMPANY	SME	LARGE FIRM
Export Credit Insurance			X	X
Grant for Business Investment		X	X	X
Maximising Foreign Direct Investment			X	X
Accessing International Markets			X	X
Developing your International Trade Potential			X	X
Train to Gain			X	X
Business Collaboration Networks		X	X	X
Business Premises		X	X	
Business Growth: Specialist Facilities and Environments			X	
Starting a Business	X	X		
Intensive Start-up Support	X	X		
Starting a High Growth Business	X	X		
Manufacturing Advisory Service		X	X	X
Designing Demand		X	X	
Innovation Advice and Guidance			X	X
Coaching for High Growth			X	
Enterprise Finance Guarantee		X	X	X
Small Loans for Business		X	X	
Understanding Finance for Business	X	X	X	
Finance for Business		X	X	
Enterprise Coaching	X			
Improving your Resource Efficiency			X	X
Collaborative R&D			X	X
Networking for Innovation		X	X	X
Innovation Vouchers			X	
Low Carbon Energy Demonstration			X	X
Rural Development Programme for England Business Support	X	X	X	X
Grant for Research and Development	X	X	X	X
Automotive Assistance Programme			X	X
Scrappage scheme				X
Trade credit insurance top up scheme		X	X	X

NB: Large companies may have to contribute to the costs of some products. Some products specifically offer more support to smaller companies



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