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Marketing and the Olympics

The 2012 Olympic Games will be held in London from 27 July to 12 August 2012, followed by the 2012 Paralympic Games from 29 August to 9 September. This will be the third time London has hosted the modern Olympic Games. 205 nations are expected to take part in 300 events across the country.

It is evident that the Games will boost business activity in London, but any organisation associating itself or its products with London 2012 will need to be aware of the stringent rules protecting the Olympic brand.

To prevent ambush marketing and to protect exclusivity of official sponsors, the organiser of the Games, [The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games \(LOCOG\)](#), trading as 'London 2012', has special statutory marketing rights under The London Olympics Association Right, as well as special legal rights under [The London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act 2006](#) and [The Olympic Symbol etc \(Protection\) Act 1995](#).

While non-official advertisers are restricted, only official sponsors, suppliers and licensees are allowed to use the Olympic Marks, and the penalties for marketers found guilty of ambush marketing are more severe than anything previously recorded.

Below are a few examples of branding where the law prohibits unauthorised use:

- The Olympic Marks, such as the London 2012 logo, the Olympic Rings or any other logo that can be confusingly similar to the Olympic Marks
- Images such as the Olympic torch, the Olympic flame, athletic images and the colour combinations of the Olympic Rings
- The Olympic and Paralympic mottos
- The words 'Olympic', 'Olympiad', 'Olympian', 'Olympix' and similar wordings
- Word combinations and phrases that falsely suggest an association between a business, its goods or services and the Games
- Advertising, marketing material, sales promotions, or goods with words (spoken or written), sounds, designs, images and marks associated with the Games
- Any endorsement, affiliation, sponsorship or similar relationship with the 2012 Games, London 2012, the British Olympic Association (BOA), Team GB, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or the Olympic movement
- Non-sponsors are not permitted to use two of the words in List A with one of more of the words in List B:

List A: Games, 2012, Two Thousand and Twelve, Twenty-Two

List B: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Medals, Sponsor/s, London, Summer

This document is guidance only and should not be used as a substitute for specific legal advice.

It is important to note that an infringement can be created without any use of the examples given here, and a violation can result in fines, court orders and payment of compensation. [A Guide on the Official Brand Guidelines for Businesses](#) is available and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on dos and don'ts are also informative.

Marketers may feel that the regulations present yet another legal obstacle, but some estimates claim the Games will deliver a £2 billion bonus for the British economy just from extra visitors from abroad.

According to [The CIM Marketing Trends Survey](#) Spring 2009, 34% of working marketers say that it is likely that their organisation will undertake some marketing activities connected to the London 2012 Games. But 87% said they lack awareness about the legality of Olympic-related marketing activities.

To help marketers The Institute offers various courses on the topic:

CIM Courses

[Making the most of the Olympic Opportunity – One Day Workshop](#)

Overview: The Government has moved swiftly to bring in legislation preventing the use of Games-related words and images by non-official advertisers. Does this mean that the 2012 Olympics offer no opportunities to organisations unless they pay a huge licence fee to use the symbols? We explore the law in this area and take a sanguine look at the likely opportunities and how best to develop them.

[Sponsorship Essentials – One Day Workshop](#)

Overview: Sponsorship can deliver great results, but can be challenging to select, negotiate, manage and evaluate. This programme seeks to address those issues.

[Must know law for Marketers – One Day Workshop](#)

Overview: This workshop is about the practical application of the law as it affects marketers and sales professionals in their day-to-day activities. It is designed to show you how common marketing practice can easily fall foul of both the law and the regulators and what you can do to prevent this.

Relevant web sites

The Government has been developing secondary legislation to regulate advertising activity and trading in open public places around Olympic and Paralympics events during the 2012 Games. The [consultation](#) was open for views of people until May 2011.

Register your business here to take part in the Olympic procurement opportunities at [CompeteFor](#)

Guidelines on the [Non-commercial use of the London 2012 Brand](#)

The [Business Network](#) of the London2012 website is full of information on how companies throughout the UK can make the most of the business opportunities the Games offer.

The [Olympic Marketing Fact File](#) is a reference document on the marketing policies of the IOC, the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games

The [Olympics and Intellectual Property](#) guides from the British Library draws attention to the intellectual property issues associated with the Olympics brand

Relevant CIM Agenda Papers

CIM (2011) *Ambush marketing and the Law*. Cookham. The Chartered Institute of Marketing. This paper is available for purchase from [CIM Direct](#) on 01628 42 7427

CIM (2008) [The event that dare not speak its name: Marketing and the Olympics](#). Cookham, The Chartered Institute of Marketing.

CIM (2004) [The measure of success: Is sports sponsorship worth the whistle?](#) Cookham. The Chartered Institute of Marketing.

More information on the topic can be found in the [Emerging Themes](#) section on our web site.

Members of The Institute have access to a legal helpline, for further details visit our [Legal Helpline](#) web page.

Selection of relevant online articles

[Olympic partners face online guerilla marketing blitz](#) *Brand Republic News*, 24 May 2011

[London 2012 – advertising buyers beware](#) *Michael Simkin Solicitors LLP*, 19 April 2011

[CIM issues guidance on Olympic marketing and the law](#) *Marketing Magazine Online*, 7 April 2011

[Think BR: Olympic media goes under the hammer](#) *Marketing Magazine*, 4 April 2011

[Coca-Cola tries to lock supermarkets out of Olympic sponsorship](#) *Marketing Week*, 13 October 2009

[Olympic contractors face advert ban](#) *The Financial Times*, 4 February 2009

[Sponsorship that avoids own goals](#) *The Times*, 28 October 2009

[Coca-Cola tries to lock supermarkets out of Olympic sponsorship](#) *Marketing Week*, 13 October 2009

[Olympic contractors face advert ban](#) *The Financial Times*, 4 February 2009

[Sponsorship that avoids own goals](#) *The Times*, 28 October 2009

[Ups and downs of linking names to games](#) *The Financial Times*, 3 April 2007

[Sausage squares beat Olympic ban](#) *BBC News*, 5 September 2007

[Daley Thompson banned from promoting Little Chef's Olympic Breakfast](#) *The Daily Mail*, 1 September 2007

[London Olympics team sets sights on sponsorship gold](#) *The Independent*, 5 May 2006

[2012 Games sponsors sold on logo no-go areas](#) *The Times*, 4 November 2005

Articles from The Marketer

[Hyperlinks will take you to a log in request. Members can access this site using the same user name and password as the main CIM website.]

Blayney-Stuart, Mark (2011) [Ambush marketing and the law](#) *The Marketer*, June, pp 32-37

Williams, Anne (2011) [Playing by the rules](#) *The Marketer*, June, p17.

[Hotspot: Olympic Marketing](#) *The Marketer*, July/August 2010, pp6-7.

Williams, Anne (2010) [Marketing or bribery](#). *The Marketer*, June, p 17.

Disclaimer: Neither the title of this document nor its contents is intended to imply that there is a connection between The Chartered Institute of Marketing and the London 2012 Olympic Games.

For further information please go to www.cim.co.uk/resources or contact:

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