



Inaugural Innovatus dinner

Following a distinguished career in the Civil Service, Nicky Roche joined the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport in 2004, to do her "dream job" as Director of Sport. She worked on the Games, from the bid to the end, an experience she described as the greatest privilege of her professional life, remembering with particular pleasure the honour of taking part at the end of the parade for London's Olympian and Paralympian athletes once the Games were over.



Building a supportive team

Delivering such a complex event needed a well-coordinated team. *"It was a total team effort - of the public, private and voluntary sectors including the sponsors."* She said. *"It shows the importance of a common purpose and common endeavour - and an immovable deadline! We assembled a coalition of the willing to deliver it."*

Teamwork was particularly important when the organisers faced its single biggest problem before the Games, dealing with G4S's difficulty in delivering the security contract. Nicky recalled *"there was just a calm determination to work through what had to be done. It showed the importance of a good contingency plan."*

Asked how they built such a strong team, she noted that: *"we realised pretty quickly that we would sink or swim together. We did have arguments, but they were about issues -important things - it was never personal and it was never nasty. Everyone was focused on the deadline, so people were prepared to ask questions or ask for help that maybe they wouldn't have in other situations. We bonded socially as well"* she added.



e: reception@executive-action.com

t: 0844 8044 299



"We spent a lot of time together, especially observing the Beijing Games. You get to know people really well. We had conference calls every day during the Games. Eventually we could recognise who was going to speak next by hearing an intake of breath on the phone! I'm still in touch with everyone. It really is a family."

Reflections on the experience - and the role of women

Women played a huge role in delivering the Games, although that might not have been clear to the public. *"Other than Dame Tessa Jowell, women were in the second tier, it was the men who were on the news"* she admitted. *"Women were leading teams and doing it well but were not at the top table... I was doing a good job. I knew I was doing a good job. I didn't mind about the plaudits".*

When asked how women could tackle limelight-hogging by male colleagues she was philosophical. *"There was occasional alpha male behaviour, men and women have different attitudes to being at the top. Sometimes women just value different things"* she said.

The Innovatus dinner took place on the day following the funeral of Baroness Thatcher, for whom Nicky Roche worked in the 1980s. Inevitably her mind turned to one woman who had no reservations about being at the top. *"I learned a great deal from Margaret Thatcher. Have big ideas, be ambitious, think the unthinkable."*

Finally, Nicky was asked what she hoped would be the lasting legacy of 2012. *"The public sector is very rarely praised"* she said. *"The Olympics and Paralympics have been a great source of pleasure and pride. Our reputation is absolutely sky-high around the world. I hope that people will feel that they should be proud of their public institutions."*

About the Innovatus Network

Innovatus is a networking group for women, which has been set up by Davidson & Partners and Executive Action. It will bring together senior women to build a supportive network spanning different disciplines and sectors. If you would like more information about the network please contact either Anna Bishell (mobile: 07766251665; e-mail: anna.bishell@davidsonpartners.com) or Heather Greatrex (mobile: 0792 084 2580, e-mail: hgreatrex@executive-action.com).



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