

# GREATNESS BEGINS BEHIND THE SCENES

In 2011, Harper Macleod were appointed as Legal Advisors to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. This is the story of how Harper Macleod and Frame turned this Defining Moment into Greatness in 2014, with a powerful integrated campaign driven to deliver results for the firm.

## CATEGORY

4.2 Financial  
and Professional  
Services

## AUTHOR

Richard Booth  
Account Director  
Frame



## Introduction

Harper Macleod (HM) is a top 5 Scottish law firm, headquartered in Glasgow with offices in Edinburgh, Inverness and Thurso, employing over 300 people.

HM is young (in relative terms for its sector), with a short 26-year history which has seen it start from nothing to become one of Scotland's biggest law firms.

In a Scottish legal market where once 'famous' names are no more, HM recognised the value of their brand to continuing growth.

To that end, HM worked closely with Frame during 2012 & 2013 to define and develop a clear brand identity and positioning to make HM a byword for excellence, rooted in its unique approach to practising the law.

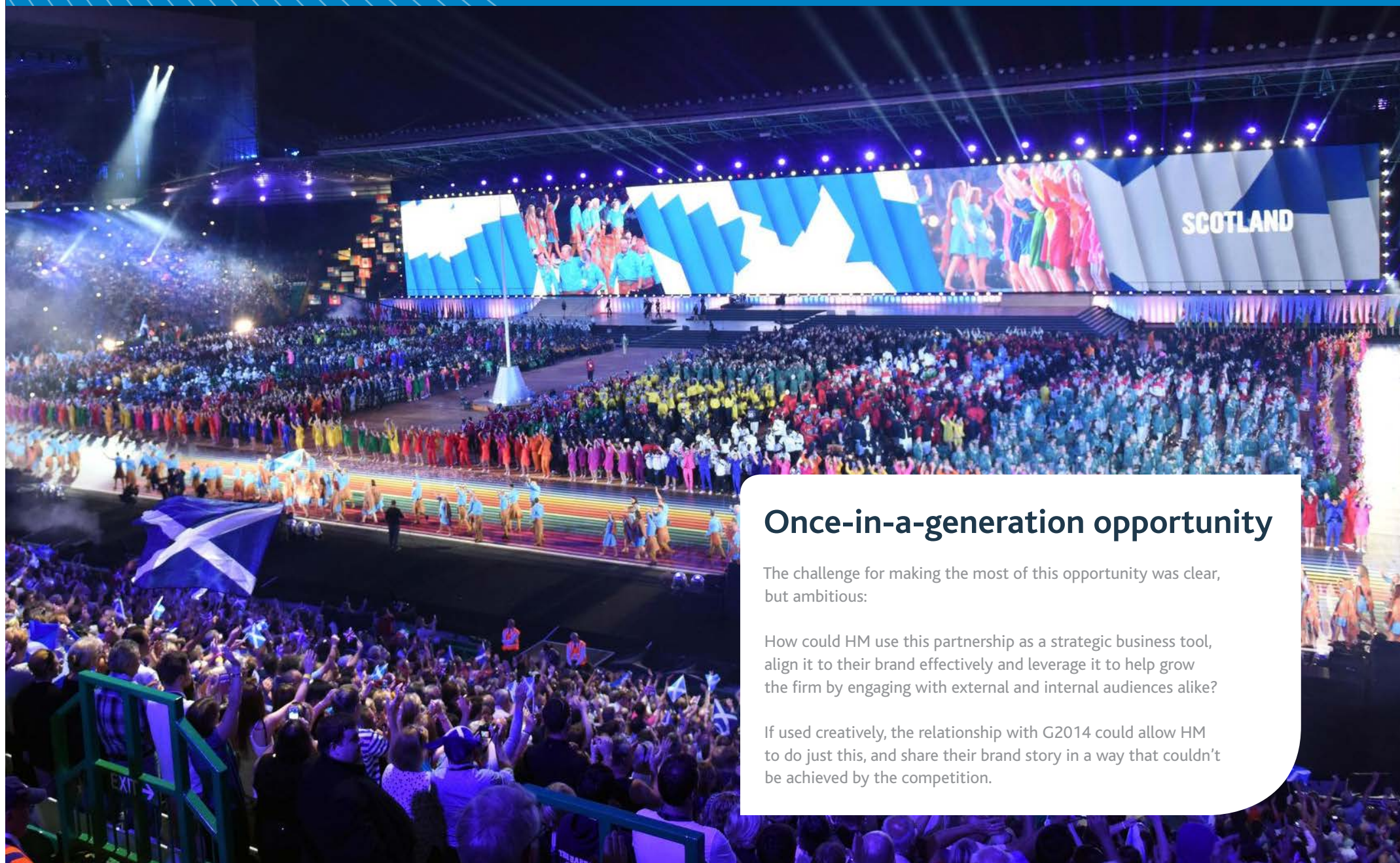
And when an opportunity arose that they believed could be transformational for their brand they grabbed it with both hands.

Opting to tie their brand and reputation to Glasgow 2014 by winning the role as Legal Advisers against stiff opposition was ambitious, and back in 2011, many saw it as a risk. As was choosing to become the very first sponsor of the Games that same year.

Therefore, HM needed to make sure it could maximise the sponsorship. This wasn't simply a case of putting on a Glasgow 2014 badge and sitting back waiting for success.







## Once-in-a-generation opportunity

The challenge for making the most of this opportunity was clear, but ambitious:

How could HM use this partnership as a strategic business tool, align it to their brand effectively and leverage it to help grow the firm by engaging with external and internal audiences alike?

If used creatively, the relationship with G2014 could allow HM to do just this, and share their brand story in a way that couldn't be achieved by the competition.



## Going for gold

The over-arching objective was enhanced reputation, brand awareness and reach for the firm. Specific sponsorship objectives were then set for three principal audiences:

### Enhanced reputation, brand awareness & reach

#### CLIENT ENGAGEMENT & NEW BUSINESS

Increased fee income via  
(i) Additional work from  
existing clients; (ii) New  
client appointments

Positive client feedback  
& net promoter score

#### COLLEAGUE ENGAGEMENT

People retention & attraction

Create brand ambassadors  
– measured via employee  
benchmark surveys

#### MEDIA RELATIONS (INCLUDING DIGITAL)

Media exposure  
Enhanced awareness  
& reputation

Increased digital traffic  
– website & social media  
engagement



A creative strategy and Activation Plan for 2014 was developed to ensure the partnership opportunity was fully realised for each audience through a truly integrated campaign.

## The starting blocks

Unlike many other professional services firms, HM had invested in identifying a credible and motivating point of difference to set themselves apart from their competitors.

Following an in-depth brand positioning exercise (completed by Frame in 2012), an over-arching insight emerged that was strategically differentiating:

### Harper Macleod is Driven

This described the innate restlessness, hunger to improve and entrepreneurial spirit within the firm that led to its meteoric rise, and captured the unique culture and mindset of its people.

Using the external proposition 'Driven to perform' we created a number of G2014-themed communications during 2012 & 2013.

But for 2014 itself, something more powerful was needed.



## The big idea

### What we wanted:

A creative strategy & platform to celebrate the association with the Games, linked to the firm's values and 'Driven' brand positioning. It also had to promote the role and expertise of HM in making the Games happen.

### What we didn't want:

Sporting clichés.

We needed a big idea to take HM up to, and through, the Games. It needed to be the catalyst for content and engage over 300 staff in three locations as well as external audiences.

## The insight

Our insight came from HM lawyers who had been seconded to work at G2014:

*"We're creating the stage for the athletes to perform on."*

*No stage, no games..."*

*"It raises our profile to businesses. Hopefully it shows that our understanding of the 'business of the Games' has relevance for the business world's issues."*

## The big idea - Greatness begins behind the scenes



BEGINS BEHIND THE SCENES







In a short narrative we summed up what this meant:

---

*"Before anything truly great can happen, much has to happen first behind the scenes. Obsessiveness, skill, preparation, vision and drive are all needed."*

*At the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, before a single flag is waved, starter's gun fired or record broken, years of blood, sweat and tears will have gone into every performance – something Harper Macleod can empathise with.*

*Their advice, support and expertise sees them play a vital role for the Games and for businesses and organisations in Scotland, the UK and worldwide. More often than not this role is unseen to the wider world.*

*HM understand that achieving your goals is often determined by drive, dedication, skill and strong working relationships in the background. There is no shortcut to success."*

---

This perfectly described the firm's role within the Games' preparation and gave us a creative platform aligned to what was required. But how could we create communications to bring this to life effectively, with limited budgets?



## Introducing our athlete ambassador

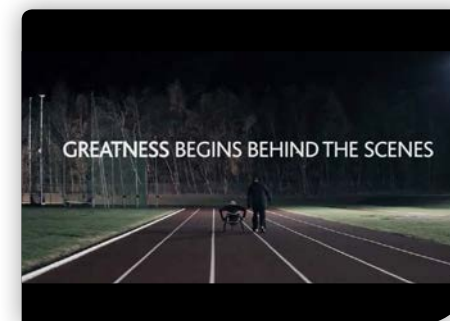
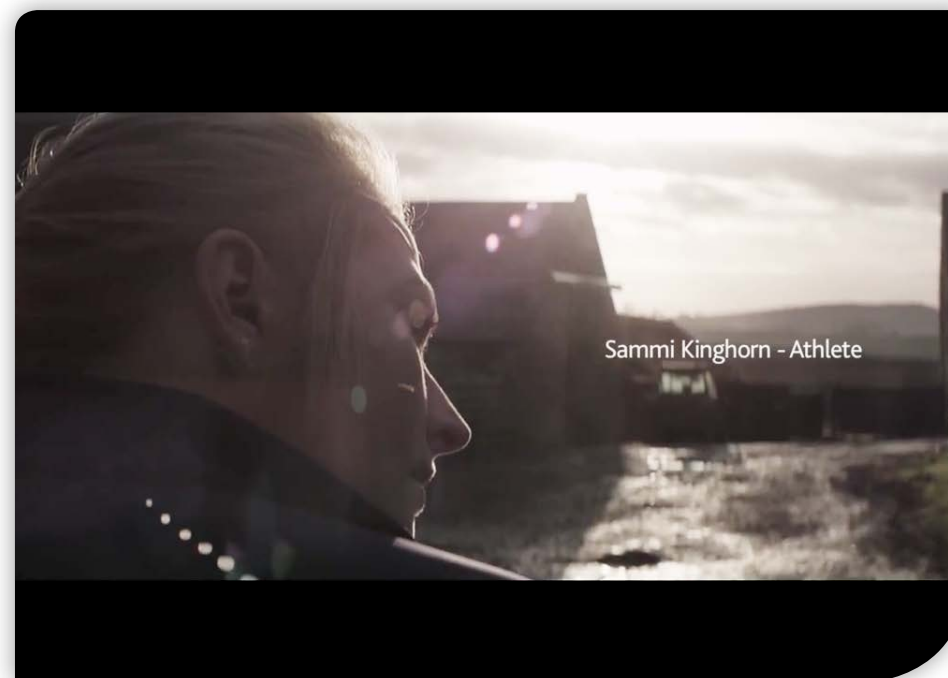
In **Sammi Kinghorn**, we found a perfect example of someone who also displayed skill, expertise, dedication, vision and drive behind the scenes to achieve success at the Games.

Sammi is Scotland's leading T53 wheelchair racer, holding every national record in her disability class. Despite being only 18, she is ranked No. 2 in Europe.

In telling the story behind Sammi and the relationship with her coach, Iain Mirfin, HM were also able to draw a parallel between themselves and the coach's role behind the scenes in Sammi's drive for success.

We wanted to tell this story in a powerful and innovative way.  
So we made a film...

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6\\_X4xD87Fc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6_X4xD87Fc)



## A bigger idea

The idea allowed us to shine a light on others, like HM, whose hard work helped create the stage for the Games.

For example, we partnered with 4C Design, the company who made the Queen's Baton, and who spoke at internal colleague and client engagement events.

The HM lawyers seconded to the G2014 Organising Committee became our narrators for the exciting projects that HM were delivering.





## Client engagement

Initiatives took the form of events and communications, both of which were reinforced by exposure to PR, advertising, the website and social media campaigns.

Communications to over 2,500 clients were issued including updates on HM's work on the Games through direct mail, emails and literature.



25th anniversary party



Team Scotland taster sessions



Commonwealth sport & law conference



Batonbearer prize for clients



Taste of the Commonwealth event



HM North QBR event in Inverness



Branded Minibus



Games Venue Tours



G2014 client hospitality



Business Seminars

## Client engagement

All communications were supported by the campaign idea and included a range of bespoke collateral:



Firm brochure



Branded merchandise



Hospitality venue branding



Hospitality – invites & venue branding



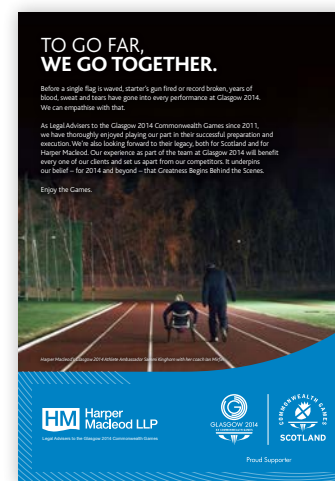
## External comms: Advertising

A flexible advertising campaign promoted the firm to external audiences up to, during and after the Games:

- Greatness begins behind the scenes – up to and including Games-time
- Greatness doesn't stop at the finish line – post-Games legacy communications

Results were impressive:

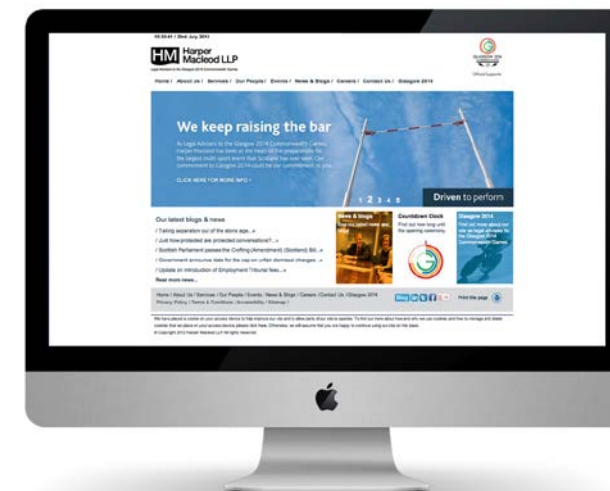
- A Herald advert to congratulate Sammi increased website views by **60%**
- Other Games-time adverts gained on average **51.4%** more website views



## External comms: Digital

An integrated digital content strategy delivered great results too:

- **Website** – over **46,000** page views during the month of the Games, a **44%** increase on the previous month and **58%** increase on previous year.
- **Twitter** – tweets delivered over **75,000** impressions over 28 days before & during the Games, an increase on normal of **255%**.
- **Facebook** – posts reached over **46,000** people and included over **380** interactions.
- **Blogs** – connected to activity during the Games, received over **3,500** views.
- **YouTube** – G2014 content including the Sammi film, had over **12,000** views.





## Colleague engagement

Regular internal communications and initiatives ensured HM people benefited too.

Content was hosted on a dedicated G2014 intranet page.



HM Employee Batonbearers



Question of the Commonwealth Event



HM Volunteer Venue tours



HM office branding



Clyde Mascot Competitions



Big Fit Commonwealth Walk



QBR themed Monthly Recipes



HM office branding



Tour de Baton Cycle Challenge



Sport your Trainers



25th Anniversary Party

## Enhanced reputation, brand awareness & reach

### Measuring Returns

Overall results in relation to the set objectives were impressive:

#### CLIENT ENGAGEMENT & NEW BUSINESS

Increased fee income via

- (i) Additional work from existing clients;
- (ii) New client appointments

Turnover in 2010-11 was £16.7 million. For 2014-15 it went beyond £22 million. Of course, that can't all be directly attributed to the campaign, but it didn't hurt.

HM has won a number of significant instructions and been introduced to new opportunities thanks to the strengthening of existing relationships and the creation of new ones in 2014.

The association with G2014 has been priceless in tenders to differentiate from competitors vying for new work.

#### Positive client feedback & net promoter score

Client survey results revealed that 9.3/10 people would recommend HM to a colleague or client

The firm's net promoter score was 78 – versus Apple and First Direct who routinely score in the 60s.

#### COLLEAGUE ENGAGEMENT

People retention & attraction

*"Due to the strengthening of our brand we have made a saving of over £75K in permanent recruitment costs since the start of the sponsorship. Previously, external recruitment agencies were used for the majority of our vacancies and this now accounts for only 8% of our recruitment source."*

*"Our relationship and involvement with G2014 was mentioned by candidates going through our recruitment processes at all levels, particularly when asked 'what do you know about HM' and 'why do you want to join Harper Macleod'. It is clear that to prospective employees our G2014 involvement made us stand out from other firms and was a clear indicator of what type of firm we are and what we are capable of - people wanted to be a part of what we were doing."*

#### Create brand ambassadors

In 2014, there was 100% positive employee survey response to: recognition of involvement, opportunities to participate in G2014 activities and positive brand association with G2014.

#### MEDIA RELATIONS (INCLUDING DIGITAL)

Media exposure

Traditional media reach was 100,000 during Games time alone.

Significant upturn in media profile throughout the course of 2014. Every piece of PR or media coverage for the firm mentioned the designation as Legal Advisers to Glasgow 2014, whether it was Games-related or not.

HM entertained important editors and journalists at Games-related events and at the Games themselves – enhancing the relationships with key media.

#### Increased digital traffic – website & social media engagement

The digital strategy reached more than 150,000 people and social media performance was exceptional (audience increase of 350%).



## Client testimonials

*"Your close association and support of the games says so much about what your firm is all about... what a night and there are 10 more to go!"*

*"Thanks again for the kind invite and your firm's reputation will be hugely advanced by the success of the Games."*

*"You at Harper Macleod, have made a massive commitment to making the Games such a great success and everyone must be so pleased it is going so well, the world is seeing the best of Glasgow and Scotland, well organised and delivered in good humour and you have certainly played your part to the full."*

*"I am genuinely delighted that your bold decision to become involved at such an early stage of the Games has worked out so well for you."*

*"HM and the Games are a good fit. Well done on taking the leap and I hope it achieves more than you hope for."*

## Colleague feedback

***"To be the law firm at the forefront of this important event was incredible exposure for the firm."***

*"Being a sponsor shows that we are willing to invest time and money to support Glasgow and Scotland in a major sporting event. It is also good advertising for our firm as many firms would just sit back and not get involved as it is a lot of extra work which Harper Macleod haven't shied away from - our marketing department have been exceptionally outstanding on this front."*

*"To be involved with the largest multi-sporting event ever to be held in this country was a fabulous opportunity for the firm which will never be matched. The publicity which HM received through our association with G2014 can only be positive and benefit the firm and the HM brand. It makes us stand out as a pro-active, forward-thinking and modern law firm."*

*"The firm is now known to nearly everyone that you speak to. The Commonwealth Games offered a unique talking point. Nearly everyone was interested in the Games and so our profile has been raised as a result. It has also, on an individual basis, added to the general excitement in relation to the Games."*

***"This is a reflection of the Firm's ability to take on challenging work. Being so involved in something so huge has boosted the firm's reputation on an international scale."***



## Conclusion

If deciding to become sponsors of G2014 and making it integral to their brand could be described as something of a gamble, then HM certainly managed to play a good hand.

Simply put, the Commonwealth Games were a spectacular success, hailed by many observers as the greatest ever.

Aligning the HM brand with it, in a strategically sound and engaging way, accelerated the firm's awareness to unprecedented levels.

Results exceeded expectations, as did the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in the project, which included everyone within their firm.

Proving that Greatness truly does begin behind the scenes.

***"The HM team delivered beyond our expectations in supporting the team through complex operational and commercial contracts and negotiations. They truly were a key part of the team that delivered the best Commonwealth Games ever."***

**Ian Reid**  
Chief Financial Officer, Glasgow 2014

*"Harper Macleod wasted no time capitalising on their first-mover advantage by developing a clear, effective and robust plan to activate their support of the XX Commonwealth Games. This included developing their brand via their association with not only the Games but Team Scotland athletes; engaging and positioning themselves with staff, clients, prospects, media and across industry. Their success was simple: a very clear plan, ambitiously and successfully delivered."*

**Martin Reynolds**  
Head of Marketing and Advertising, Glasgow 2014

*"The sponsorship marked a defining moment with the Scottish legal industry. No firm had until this point shown such a commitment and investment to a multi-sport event of this size. As the first sponsor of Glasgow 2014, they have led the way in terms of activating their sponsorship rights; maximizing the value of business-to-business activation whilst at the same time promoting sports law within Scotland."*

**Ian Reid**  
Chief Financial Officer, Glasgow 2014

***"Thanks to partners such as Harper Macleod we were able to deliver the best ever Commonwealth Games and that achievement and experience is something that I know the firm will carry into everything it does in the future."***

**David Grevenberg**  
Head of Legal, Glasgow 2014 Limited