



PAUL CHARLES HOWELL

# The Montreal Olympics

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*Large scale ad hoc event planning and the  
1976 Montreal Olympic Games.*

The 1976 Summer Olympics were the most riveting Games the world had ever seen, but planning efforts in Montreal were complicated by a wilful mayor, an inexperienced head of the IOC, a federal government that stayed at arm's length, and a provincial government split along federalist/separatist lines.

Paul Howell, a planning consultant and key player in the Montreal Olympic Organizing Committee, offers an insider's perspective on how a vast, complex, expensive, and highly politicized event was organized within the constraints imposed by limited resources, an unyielding deadline, and intense pressures from international and local special interest groups. He looks at both the struggles and what went uniquely right in Montreal, setting the record straight on operations, political involvement, and finance, including details of the well-publicized multi-billion dollar deficit that was misrepresented by the press and misunderstood by the public for decades.

For students of organizations the Montreal 1976 Games were a watershed - the first example of a large-scale sports endeavour that applied formal project management using computers as well as critical path planning and scheduling. Focusing on this historic event to illustrate issues of organization, structure, planning, and execution, Howell offers valuable insights not only for those involved in planning Vancouver 2010 and future Games but for anyone involved in ad hoc planning on a massive scale.

*"The Montreal Olympics offers valuable information on the nature of planning and the need for constant revision and flexibility, as well as a good snapshot of the thousands of decisions that have to be made in the process of competing tasks of great magnitude and complexity."*

Brian Milner, The Globe and Mail

**Paul Charles Howell**, president of HT/TH Howell Technologie, has planned large projects worldwide, including several Olympic Games, and lectured in the McGill Faculty of Management and the HÉC, Université de Montréal.

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