

Employee Spotlight: Working at the Beijing Olympics

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Published in 2008 in NBCUniversal's *insideNBCU*

insideNBCU sits down with Steve Hollander, Stage Manager for Primetime, Olympics, and Stage Manager, *Late Night with Conan* to talk Olympics.

You may find him prepping guests before they go on air with Bob Costas or sitting in Conan's seat as various cameramen readjust their angles. He is both stage manager of primetime for the Olympic Games and first stage manager of *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, two jobs that bring him an endless amount of great experiences.

For Steve Hollander, there is nothing like watching an Olympic athlete become an instant star, only to have him or her in the studio a few hours later to sit down with Costas.

"That's something you can't get anywhere else," said Hollander.

Witnessing history in such close proximity is just one of the perks of working at the Olympics. Hollander was one of approximately 90,000 people who had the opportunity to attend Beijing's Opening Ceremonies, the most watched in Olympic history. It is, according to Hollander, "one of the reasons you say, 'you know what, I'm glad I'm in this business.'"

Hollander feels grateful to work with such good people and blessed to have the support of his *Late Night* team as he travels halfway around the world.

Prior to joining *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, where he has worked since the show's beginning, Hollander had aspirations of becoming an actor but an interest in production soon took over, leading him to several opportunities including a three-year stint with *The Cosby Show*. He began *Late Night* as a production assistant and after a few years, became first stage manager.

It was during the Olympic Games in Atlanta when Hollander realized that because of *Late Night's* production schedule, he could do stage managing for the Olympics during the show's dark period. After a series of approvals, Hollander had the go-ahead and began his Olympics career at the Sydney Games in 2000.

Fast forward five Olympic Games to Beijing, where Steve Hollander continues to stage manage for primetime. He acts as the director's voice, making sure everything is set up to ensure the interviews run smoothly. And if Hollander has his way, he'll be working at the Olympics for many years to come.

“I’ll keep doing it as long as they’ll have me,” said Hollander.

Being in Beijing has been a great experience for Hollander, who finds everything from the venues to the amount of live coverage NBC is providing, unparalleled.

“The fact that we’re live, which we haven’t been in a few Olympics, makes a huge difference. There’s an immediacy, a spontaneity, that you just can’t get from airing an Olympics that are on tape.”

Hollander has also enjoyed seeing Beijing through the eyes of a tourist whenever the show leaves the studio. But the best part of being at the Olympics?

“Anything can happen,” said Hollander. “And I’m right there.”