

IN THE SWIM

the Calcutta Run raises money for two homeless charities: the GOAL orphanages in Calcutta and the Peter McVerry Trust in Dublin. And while the majority of participants are law professionals, the race is open to everyone, and the wider public is encouraged to join in. "Law firms can be hierarchical places, so seeing bosses being beaten by trainees is very funny, as is seeing your colleagues in running shorts! It's about learning the little, personal details about people: we were amazed by how fast one Senior Partner could run. What none of us realised was that he was a keen sprinter in his spare time."

Running with colleagues is the very definition of "healthy" competition. Johnston says that competition is encouraged, "especially between firms and departments; last year, the partners even offered extra day's holidays to those who got the fastest team together or achieved the fastest times". Julie Jean Scanlan admitted that "some of us just like to be content to get over the finishing line!"

If your charity is in some way linked to your line of work, all the better: I am running the London Marathon on April 26 and, as a writer, decided on Children in Crisis, which improves literacy and access to education (www.childrenincrisis.org).

"Raising money remains the prime motivator," says Johnston. "Unlike a fundraising ball, for example, overheads are minimal, which means nearly all the money raised goes directly to the charities. Last year, we raised €340,000." Such positive and wholesome ways of fundraising are particularly pertinent right now. Corporate social responsibility has never been such a hot topic and never before have banks, law firms and big businesses cared so much about what the wider public thinks of them. So, it seems, is not the time for swanky black-tie events, or outlandish bidding at charity auctions, it's time for getting your head down, limbering up and paving the way... ■ *To enter the Calcutta Run on May 19, visit www.calcuttarun.com.*

Contact Amanda Gannon, call 087 810 7443.

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If anyone can talk with authority about **MOTIVATION, COMMITMENT, STAMINA** and the sting of cold seawater, it has to be **JULIE BRADSHAW**, who first swam the English Channel solo at 15, now holds 17 world records in long distance and marathon swimming, and has been awarded an MBE for her services to swimming and charity. Bradshaw came to Dublin recently to talk to a squad at Irish Life Investment Managers who are training for a relay swim of the Channel. She highlighted to **THE GLOSS** some of the benefits of training for this kind of event.

"It's not necessarily about the achievement, but the journey. Training together like this, with a common goal, has all kinds of benefits, for the company as a whole and for the individuals taking part. It helps people to see their colleagues in a different light, and it's great for helping people to realise that all the members of a team are invaluable in different ways. It introduces a wonderful sense of camaraderie."

The ILIM team will have spent a year in training by the time they cross the Channel next September – a long period over which to keep spirits high and team members focused. Bradshaw says that keeping motivation high will come naturally so long as people are working towards the right goal. "What you want is what you get, so you focus on what you want, not on what you don't want. You keep the vision of the goal in your mind's eye, you see it already achieved. If it's the right goal, then you'll want it enough and, if you want it enough, you'll put the work in."

Bradshaw says team training is fantastic for aiding communication back in the office, by introducing good habits of communication and problem-solving. "If there's a problem with someone's training, it has to be talked through – you have no choice. If someone is struggling, they need to be encouraged. If there's a problem, you've got to be able to arrive at a solution." Does she have any words of advice for someone thinking of pulling together a sporting team out of their co-workers? "You've got to have clear goals for people, you've got to make them appealing, and you've got to give the facts about how you're planning to achieve them, what's entailed in the training. After that, if they have the appetite, they will join in." And do you have to be a sporting hero yourself to lead the team? "Much more important than the leader's sporting ability is an ability to inspire others. The world's best swimmer or runner still has to be able to listen and communicate, still has to be a good manager of people to lead a team."

Bradshaw praised the keenness and appetite of the ILIM team; here's hoping they harvest the fruits of their tough training regime by reaching their cross-Channel goal in September.

TOP FIVE TRAINING TIPS:

1. Set a clear goal so you know what you're working towards
2. Visualise this goal already achieved, and focus on it throughout your training
3. Maintain your motivation
4. Always log your improvements in your training diary
5. Accentuate the positive at every turn

For more information, visit www.getset4success.co.uk.