

## Olympic rower coaches Jones Lang LaSalle

08.08.08 By [Lydia Stockdale](#)

Jones Lang LaSalle has been using the motivational and team building services of Olympic rower Alan Campbell and coach Bill Barry.

When Andrew Hynard, head of the England capital markets team at Jones Lang LaSalle, went in search of a business coach, he returned with one of Britain's brightest hopes for a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics, which begin today.

Northern Irish rower Alan Campbell will compete in the men's single scull race on 16 August. His coach is Bill Barry, a former advertising chief executive and silver Olympic medal winner at rowing, and co-founder of 121 Partners, an executive coaching company.

Ever since Barry coached Hynard and 10 colleagues during a teambuilding exercise on the River Thames, JLL has forged a strong relationship with him and his rowing protege (see box). JLL has sponsored Campbell during his preparations for the Olympics and, in return, he and Barry have visited the property services firm's offices to pass on their motivational secrets and improve team spirit.



Property Week attended the most recent of these events to find out what lessons from the world of competitive sport could be taken into the world of property.

### **Make a business plan**

Barry began coaching Campbell in 2003 and they have since gone from being an accomplished, but novice rowing team, to potential Olympic winners. They say they did this by setting themselves clear goals.

‘When I met Alan, I asked him: what are your objectives?’ recalls Barry. ‘He answered that it was to win a gold medal in the single scull at the Beijing Olympics. I had the feeling that he really meant it.’

To achieve this objective, they devised a business plan. The first yearly target within this plan was for Campbell to compete in the quadruple scull in the 2004 Athens Olympics and then, in 2005, to win the Great British single scull trial.

In 2006, he was to take part in the Rowing World Cup final and in 2007 to win a World Championship medal.

‘The business plan is a single line on a page,’ says Campbell, pointing to it on a flipchart. ‘A gradual upwards incline with no plateau.’

This kind of plan also forms the basis of executive coaching, say Barry.

### **Manage failure**

According to the business plan, Campbell was to be a finalist in the 2007 World Championship, but he came fourth. ‘I always knew there would be times when I wasn’t going to win,’ says Campbell. ‘Dealing with failure is important.’

### **Bake the perfect cake**

When considering the ingredients needed to reach a sporting or business goal, Barry uses the analogy of baking a cake. All Campbell’s ingredients, for example, have to be of a gold-medal standard. If just one ingredient falls below that level the plan will fail, says Barry.

### **Work harder than your competitors**

At 6.30 am on Christmas day, Campbell was on a beach in Northern Ireland running up and down sand dunes for five miles before beginning 40 minutes of shuttle runs, carrying 50 kg bags of sand back and forth on a 40 metre course, and finishing by sawing wood for an hour – half an hour on each arm.

More than improving his physical capabilities, these exercises will give him ‘mental toughness’ says Barry. ‘It’s something that I’ve done that others haven’t,’ adds Campbell.



‘It is time I’ve given up. On race day, I can look everyone else in the eye and know I’ve left no stone unturned and that I deserve to be there.’

### **Use trigger words and phrases**

One of the rowers’ favourites is ‘virtus’, which derives from Latin meaning valour, excellence, courage, and character. For the Olympic pair, it is the ‘fundamental belief that they are stronger than their opponents’.

They also refer to ‘squeezing the cheese’ – a phrase coined by Barry that was inspired by an Ironman athlete who wanted to lose 4% body fat. His diet included wrapping cottage cheese in cloth to squeeze the fat out of it. This kind of extra effort brings results, says Barry.

### **Lead by example**

‘When we are training, I know that Bill is not asking me to do something he wouldn’t do himself,’ says Campbell. The fact that Barry was a rower himself means that he trusts his judgement. ‘Often, halfway through a race I’ll start seeing something happen that Bill has foreseen,’ he says.

### **Value rest**

Eleven months a year, seven days a week, Campbell is in his boat by 8 am. He does two to five training sessions a day, either intensive half-hour sessions or less-intensive sessions that last an hour and a half. He works in two and a half- or three and a half-day cycles. On these half-days, ‘I just sleep’, he says.

‘Rest is just as important as training,’ explains Barry. ‘If Alan does not rest properly the training the next day is undermined. The human body is so magic, during the rest period it will put back more than he took out of it during the period of training, allowing him to go back and train even harder.’

Those working in business can learn from this, says Barry. ‘People at work are often highly stressed through working long hours. They should be thinking of the quality, not quantity, of work.’

### **Coach and Courses**

When Andrew Hynard took on the role of leading the national investment team at Jones Lang LaSalle, he wanted help with team building for the group of which he would be in charge.

The HR department at JLL pointed him in the direction of Bill Barry, co-founder of 121 Partners, an executive coaching company, who says there is a huge overlap between business coaching and Olympic coaching.

Essentially, coaching does not involve telling someone what to do, says Barry: 'It's about trying to get them to take action to move towards their goal.'

Executive coaching, which involves working with directors and managing partners on strategy, and performance coaching, in which a coach helps a team set and achieve targets, are increasingly sought after.

Chris Bones, principal of Henley Business School at the University of Reading, says this is because jobs are more specialised than they used to be, so it takes a collection of people in a team to do things. Being a strong team player – being able to develop and lead people – is therefore highly valued by employers. 'Modern organisations need collaboration,' says Bones.

Robert Ferguson, managing director of business coaching provider EQ Centre, works with teams setting objectives – usually financial targets – for six months or more.

Clients, which have included Savills, normally pay half the coach's fees up front, and then pay the second half upon the achievement of their targets.

'Coaching helps you take action on an idea faster than if you were left to your own devices,' says Ferguson, who often receives a percentage of profits made over the agreed target.

Property Week columnist Tom Kennie, a director of Ranmore Consulting, says that team members often find it useful to come together in action learning, which involves each individual identifying a different target, while the group asks questions and provides information that will help them achieve their goals.

Executives are increasingly turning to coaching, particularly when they are anticipating a difficult period, says Kennie. 'The coach acts as a critical friend,' he explains.

Olympic hopeful Alan Campbell may one day be in need of executive coaching – when his rowing days are over, he hopes to turn his hand to property. In the meantime, tune into Olympics coverage on 16 August at 8.30 am to see him race.

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