

## Marathon fundraising for WoW



It was with a mixture of euphoria, pride and fatigue that, at 2:30 pm on 13 April 2008, I ran over the finish line of the London marathon. Clocking a time of 4 hours 30 minutes, I had also, by that point, amassed £1300 through fundraising donations and was well on my way to smashing my £1500 fundraising goal.

On the morning of the race, one of my five fellow WoW runners explained that some of the large charities raise over £1 million from their London marathon runners. This made me even more proud to be running for WoW, where I knew that my contribution would make so much more difference, relatively speaking.

Just four and a half months earlier, I had accepted a place to run the London marathon – one of the ‘Big Five’ world marathons – on behalf of WoW. I had done this a little apprehensively, not knowing whether I would be able to reach either the 26-mile mark or the £1500 fundraising target.

I had run sponsored half-marathons before, so neither endurance running nor charity fundraising were new to me. In fact, I had run the Bristol half marathon only 7 months previously for charity and was a little concerned that ‘charity fatigue’ would have set in amongst my friends and family.

How do you go about learning how to run 26 miles? Ironically, this soon felt like the lesser challenge. Having not long before started a new job in an office conveniently located opposite the Marathon Shop in Covent Garden, London, I was well equipped with access to both training advice and equipment and soon invested in an excellent training manual and enrolled myself on the marathon’s official ‘first-timers’ training day. If you are planning to run the marathon, you will certainly not be short of access to advice through the official training day and marathon website, as well as your local running shops, book shops and sports centres.





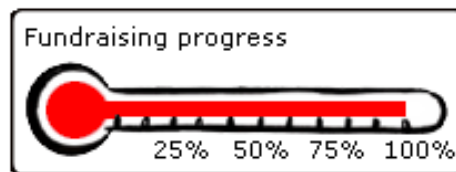
Fundraising, however, felt rather more challenging. The secret, I think, is to think of as many fundraising ideas as possible, enrolling family, friends and work colleagues to help you do this; you may find that some of your ideas do not work, but others will be much more successful than you had anticipated. At the same time, aim for small, incremental fundraising goals so that you don't get disheartened by the size of the challenge; it is amazing how quickly a few £10 donations from friends and colleagues can add up to several hundred pounds and take you within reach of your goal.

If running the London marathon is one of your dreams but you have always thought it would be too difficult or the fundraising goal too high, give it a go! A year ago, I would never have believed that I would be able to train sufficiently to complete the marathon successfully, much less raise more than £1800 (and over £2100 with Gift Aid) for WoW. With a little inventiveness and effort, it really is easier than it seems. Below are some tips that helped me surpass my fundraising goal for WoW.



**Fundraising target: £1,500.00**  
**My donations to date: £ 1,870.00**

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### **My five top tips for marathon fundraising**

1. Set up a justgiving website: an easy and secure way to collect sponsorship and track your fundraising; justgiving websites are easy to set up and justgiving will also send you tips and support
2. Make the most of the support offered by the marathon organizers; their website is fantastic and offers help on training, fundraising and ways of getting in touch with other first-timers
3. Start as early as possible to give you plenty of time to think up and plan fundraising activities and so that you can target potential sponsors early on
4. Try as many avenues as possible – and approach as many people as possible – starting with friends, family and work colleagues, for sponsorship, fundraising ideas and help with fundraising activities. Also make the most of the support offered by WoW. It is also well worth approaching your employer for matched donations
5. Make the most of all your skills (and those of friends and family), even if they may seem unlikely means of fundraising. For example, as a professional writer and an amateur musician, I used both skills to raise funds, through freelance writing (with all proceeds going to WoW) and busking

## Top fundraising ideas

- \* *Email your contacts:* email a link to your justgiving webpage to your family, friends and colleagues
- \* *Facebook:* Set up a Facebook page to advertise your run, explain your reason for running for Wow and provide your justgiving web address
- \* *Clubs and social groups:* Place collecting tins and posters in your gym (or any other club[s] you belong to)
- \* *Sweepstake:* Organize a sports sweepstake at work (a simple and effective fundraiser if half the proceeds go to the winner and half to WoW)
- \*\* *Cake sales:* Organize cake sales at work or at home (more successful if you bake your own cakes!)
- \*\* *Publish articles:* Write articles for your local paper/work newsletter/WoW website to advertise why you are running for WoW (takes a bit of time but very rewarding; make sure to include your justgiving web address and photos)
- \*\* *Raffles:* Organize a prize raffle (plan ahead and ask local shops to donate prizes. Check with WoW for stores and chains that might be supportive)
- \*\*\* *Calendar competition:* Organize a calendar competition at work, encourage colleagues to contribute photos on a specific topic and arrange for a local photographer to select the best 12 photos. If you plan to do this, start well ahead so you give colleagues sufficient time to submit photos and for the calendar to be prepared and printed ready for the New Year)
- \*\*\* *Fundraising parties:* Organise a fundraising gig or party in your local pub (I did this in conjunction with a raffle and managed to get two bands and a DJ to play for free and a reduced cost for room hire)
- \*\*\* *Use your skills:* Freelance writing work (or any skills of yours that you can use to raise funds; check with your employer and the Inland Revenue first)
- \*\*\* *Busking* (your local council will explain how you can gain a license to do this)

**\* quickest, \*\*\* most time-consuming**