

## Hannah McKeand

### World-record breaker: Polar Exploration

‘Hannah McKeand ... has made the trek four times [to the South Pole], more than anyone else in the world, and she once went solo, setting a speed record in the process.’ *New York Times* (2011)

British adventurer and endurance athlete Hannah McKeand became the fastest person ever to trek to the South Pole, solo and unaided in December 2006. During this expedition, Hannah pulled a sledge that weighed up to 100kg (16st) for 690 miles from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole. Despite a diet of fudge and chocolate, Hannah lost three stone during her solo trek. Completing her polar expedition in just 39 days, 9 hours and 33 minutes, Hannah broke the world record for the fastest solo, unsupported journey.

Hannah's leadership, energy, vitality, dedication and resourcefulness are clearly evident in her South Pole success. Hannah is now a highly respected Polar Guide and returns to Antarctica leading a team again this season (2011/12): this will be a record fifth expedition from the coast to the South Pole. Focus, determination, positive visualization and a will to face adversity are vital to survive in the polar environment. Hannah's inspirational story delivers powerful messages about extending your own limits, developing potential and effective teamwork for businesses across all sectors. She is passionate about raising environmental awareness too where appropriate.

Hannah offers an entertaining and inspiring keynote talk with stunning images from the Polar environment and footage from her expeditions. She is also in demand for after dinner speaking engagements. Her style is natural and engaging with self-effacing humour and her story is highly motivational as she seeks to encourage others to achieve their goals.

Hannah's next major challenge is to take on the toughest route to the North Pole. Hannah aims to become the first solo woman to travel successfully from Ward Hunt Island (Canada) to the Geographic North Pole on foot without

re-supplies and with no outside assistance. The terrain is hostile with open leads of water that must be swum across, potential threats from Polar Bears and temperatures as low as -50 °C. The frozen Arctic Ocean is constantly in a state of flux and forms rubble and huge pressure ridges of ice that have to be negotiated (many stand two-storeys high). In March 2008, Hannah began her trek across this difficult terrain but after two weeks successful progress, she was forced to end her expedition early due to injury. The ice unexpectedly cracked and Hannah fell into a deep hole in the polar ice. One of the world's most experienced adventurers in polar exploration, Hannah's courage, determination and positive spirit continue to inspire many.

Hannah followed a degree in Classics with a Marketing career in theatre for seven years before following her passion for exploring. Hannah has travelled remote regions in Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Afghanistan. In 2004, Hannah joined a team to ski to the South Pole completing this trek in 56 days. She'd never skied before. (Extraordinarily, just two years later, Hannah set the speed record for the journey solo and unaided.) After her first expedition to the South Pole, Hannah began training to join the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in 2005 completing half of the voyage. Hannah has also helped organise successful sailing expeditions from Australia to Chile and within the Antarctic region. She is an experienced Antarctic guide and has led many teams and individuals to achieve their dream of reaching the South Pole.

Hannah is a reporter from the outposts of our planet. Audiences appreciate her personal insights on staying focused when it gets tough; leading teams as well as staying motivated during solo expeditions, and her individual perspective on environmental issues. An inspirational woman with a natural and engaging style, Hannah greatly enjoys the opportunity to speak in schools as well as corporate events. She remains the fastest woman in the world to trek solo unsupported to the South Pole.