

# Skydive for Yorkshire Cancer Research

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I always thought that when I jumped out of a plane, I'd have some sort of profound epiphany... turns out that instead my mind went through a load of profanities!

In April 2016 we, MediaCom Leeds, selected Yorkshire Cancer Research as our chosen charity for the year; in Yorkshire alone, 565 people are diagnosed with cancer every week.

The charity supports those in Yorkshire and the Humber with the disease. Their aim is simple: to give everyone the best chance of living a long and healthy life.

## Our Challenge

Due to all the great work they do, we naturally wanted to raise money for Yorkshire Cancer Research.

During the initial ideation stage, our inspiration fell on what we had done before with the charity – in 2015 we completed the Yorkshire 3 Peaks challenge. Now, in 2017, we thought we were ready for a new challenge – and this one involved jumping 15,000ft from a plane!

Steph, our Yorkshire Cancer Research representative, had just completed her own skydive, so we knew where to go and how to do it, all we needed was a bunch of brave – or foolish – volunteers!

## Fundraising

Our Leeds MediaComms were more than ready to rise to the challenge of not only skydiving for charity, but also of raising £400 each to take part.

With the support of friends, family and colleagues via bake sales, coffee mornings and 10Ks we managed to raise nearly **£5,000** for the cause! The only thing left to do was take the leap...

## Battling the Elements

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016 we attempted our first skydive at Hibaldstow Airfield but unfortunately, the weather was not on our side – after months of anticipation and fundraising, it's safe to say we felt deflated on the drive home that day.

However, not to be discouraged we tried again, and again! Finally, nearly a whole year later, on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017 we saw the sun!

Given this was the fourth (or fifth) time we'd tried to skydive, there were no sleepless nights and although it was sunny, we weren't entirely convinced we'd be able to jump.

# The Jump

We got to the airfield at 10am, they took our details, showed us a safety briefing (which included practicing how to fall out of a plane!?) then we played the waiting game.

At approximately 11.30am our names were called and we were introduced to our instructors; mine was called Lou, a long haired Portuguese man with a big smile. When Lou told me this was his first skydive, and didn't proceed to laugh, the fear set in.

While going up in the plane, and despite being securely strapped to Lou, I did attempt to scoot away, clawing the side of the aeroplane. But when you're in the air, there is no option left apart from to jump! However, the time had come... it was time for Lou and I to fly.

When Lou first pulled the parachute, aside from the minor hiccup of my parachute strings being tangled, I really started to enjoy the experience. Endorphins kicked in as we soared through the clouds.

It's hard to describe the feeling of free falling; imagine someone is standing in front of you with a leaf blower, directing it in your face. Now times that by 20.

Once we landed safely back on land I must admit, it was a relief. Only after a few minutes on the ground with two feet firmly planted did I realise I'd done it. I'd jumped out of a plane.

Not only had we collectively raised close to £5,000 for charity, we'd ticked something off the bucket list.

I'd just like to say a massive thank you on behalf of the skydivers and Yorkshire Cancer Research. We did it – together!