

Episode 1: Balancing passion with profession

Speaker 1: Karine

Speaker 2: Ludovic

Speaker 3: Ioan

Transcript

00:00:02 Speaker 1: Karine

In Capgemini, everyone is in the game. We share a common passion for sports and we build inclusive futures for all, on and off the field. In this series, we will be hearing from amazing athletes and inspiring role models, how they break stereotypes and overcome challenges in sports and in the workplace. I am Karine Vasselin. I'm leading the Group Diversity and Inclusion agenda. I do para triathlons myself and I will be your host.

Today, I'm with Ludovic, a French Ironman athlete and Ioan from UK, national level sailor and coach and they are both my colleagues at Capgemini. Together we will learn from them how they succeeded in performing at the same time, in their careers and in sports.

So maybe Ludovic, we'll start with you. And I know that we have something in common because it seems that we both started triathlons after facing some health issues.

So can you tell us what inspired you to start with triathlon?

00:01:10 Speaker 2: Ludovic

Thank you, Karine. My journey began after my second transplant, kidney transplant in 2011. It was, you know, a stressful time filled with doubt. But I slowly rebuilt my physical health because it was really important to come back. Two years after the transplant, in 2014, I completed my first 150 kilometers bike ride and developed an interest in triathlons.

00:01:34 Speaker 2

One of the most challenging period of my life, just I remember on the beach just before the swimming part. Yes, I was crying because it was quite incredible to be there and to be part of incredible athletes because a triathlon is a sum of three disciplines and very demanding ones. And I did my first half Ironman in 2016.

00:01:56 Speaker 2

Just to remember the distance we're talking about 1.9 kms of swimming and 90 kms of biking and just to finish with the half marathon of 21 kilometers.

00:02:07 Speaker 2

My first Ironman was in 2018 and the second one in 2019, and I decided to run and to demonstrate to myself that it's possible to do another one in 2023 and I have been qualified for the Ironman World Championship.

00:02:27 Speaker 2

At the same time, just 80 days after my friends and my colleagues said “ok, you are totally crazy” because it's totally crazy to finish one, but just to finish one and to be prepared for another 80 days after. It's totally crazy.

00:02:42 Speaker 1: Karine

Such an impressive track record. Well done, Ludovic!

00:02:45 Speaker 1

And what about you, Ioan? I've been told that sailing is a long tradition in your family. Can you tell us more about that and how you discovered your own passion for sailing?

00:02:58 Speaker 3: Ioan

Hi, Karine. Yes, three generations of sailing in the family, I guess for myself, it was back as a child, my brother and I would watch our father and his crew kind of sail off into the horizon, competing with other yachts. And they kind of disappeared for about 5-6 hours and come back with these stories about how they've braved all the elements, from strong winds, big waves and this inspired myself and my brother to take up the sport.

00:03:25 Speaker 3

And really, from the kind of the age of eight years old, for myself, I've been actively involved, almost probably every single weekend of my life racing, and as my time as a sailing coach, which is about 20-25 years of coaching there with all the experiences I've had over the years. It's given me the opportunity to kind of use that skill set and opportunities and leadership and skills on the boat and kind of relay that back into the workplace.

In talking about the three generations, I was very fortunate that my son, who's now 10, he also learned to sail at six years old. So to have the three of us on the water at any one moment is a kind of sense of pridefulness, really. Although I must say, my son is taking little bit more keen to football at the minute.

00:04:15 Speaker 3

But I'll let him off at the time being, but it's all really good, yes.

00:04:20 Speaker 1: Karine

So, Ludovic, for instance, you've got a very high demanding career in Capgemini and your career as a champion. But so how do you succeed in combining both?

00:04:33 Speaker 2: Ludovic

On a daily basis, it's a challenge to beat the competition. But we have many parallels with the passion and with the triathlon. The first topic is about discipline because we have to demonstrate discipline in our internal processes, external processes and the way we are managing the pursuit, the way we are pushing for a deal.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

It's the same for this kind of target and to be prepared for an Ironman. And I'm working in two different places in France, in Paris and in the north of France, you will see running shoes in each one. That's a kind of discipline and organization. When I am preparing for a race, in fact I select the hotel, not based on the location - is it close from the office of the client? The first criteria is about, is a gym room available in the hotel to organize and to make sure that I can access to some sport material to be trained?

In fact it's two things, discipline and the second one, about excellence. I believe that excellence is coming from discipline. This is the result of your investment and the way you are developing your skills at personal, even on professional level, it's quite the same.

I train hard to be prepared for this kind of long distance. And the race day, it's really just to repeat what you did during the preparation phase.

00:06:01 Speaker 1: Karine

Thanks for these tips, Ludovic. And what about you, loan?

00:06:06 Speaker 3: loan

Yeah, I think that's right. I think when you have the passion for both work and your, kind of, interests outside it, it kind of relates quite closely. Time management is obviously pretty kind of high up there in terms of ensuring that your ways of working are balanced correctly and something I'll always advise to my peers and my juniors joining Capgemini to get that right balance. And I think we're fortunate of course with the introduction of hybrid ways of working, it's kind of supported this opportunity to work and enjoy your outside of work interest.

I would be on the water training probably almost every weekend and more so during the lighter summer evenings subject to dad duties, of course. Mustn't forget my son. And I guess within a yacht full of crew members in a racing environment, it's quite a great analogy to my workplace.

So, for example, those working on the bow on the front of the boat taking all the foul weather and the winds are kind of like our PMO team, if you like. Then you have those in the middle of the boat that are kind of your trimmers and tacticians, your data engineers, your Dev Ops, visualization architects that probably do the harder work for you getting you over the line if you'd like, and then you eventually coming to the back of the boat where you got your helm skipper navigators. So you're probably your account managers, engagement managers, delivery leads etc, where sometimes, if not all the times, we take all the glory.

But I was once reminded by a wise person that we must remember that those at the front, so that bow person or that PMO, they're always the first to cross the line and I think if we always have that mindset and remember that those ahead of you, the guys and the team members putting all the effort in, they're the ones who take you across that line.

00:07:54 Speaker 1: Karine

Thank you, Ioan and Ludovic! So striking that the skills you refer to as important for success in the workplace or in the sport are not so different, and not coming from different fields. And really glad that you brought in the discussion the team and family around you, Ioan. It takes a whole group, not to say a village, to grow a champion.

I am convinced that in sports, in the workplace and in society in general, inclusion is the way forward. How does it translate in your own sport, in your practice Ludovic?

00:08:30 Speaker 2: Ludovic

Yes, Ironman races are about pushing boundaries and competing with a lot of athletes coming from different countries and backgrounds for sure. But at this stage, the gender diversity is quite low. Only 10 or 15% of athletes are women, they are trying to innovate and to push new initiatives like women in triathlon, Women for Tri, to develop and to be more attractive for women. Because I imagine I am discussing with a lot of my female colleagues in the organization and I know that it's quite difficult to manage because another time, it's very demanding and you have to invest if you want to succeed and it's mandatory to invest. In this background, I am able to prioritize flexibility and I am able to create a more encouraging work environment and workplace. Ultimately, I think that inclusivity is creating high performing team because you are mixing a lot of skills, a lot of different background and everyone is coming with his own story. That's why it's very, very impactful in my daily

job because we have to create and we have to innovate to build the right value proposal for the client.

00:09:53 Speaker 1: Karine

Thanks Ludovic! You're a great advocate for inclusion and thanks for the tip. I should really apply to Women in Tri.

00:10:00 Speaker 1

loan, what about you? Do you consider that sailing is opening to diverse profiles?

00:10:08 Speaker 3: loan

Karine, yes, it is. Very much so. Kind of very fortunate to take part in the sport that is very inclusive to ages, genders, abilities. You don't know really the ability of the person you're racing against next until you see the results, obviously. More so now if we look at the Americas Cup, coming to Barcelona in August, September, October of this year. So for women sailors, for disability sailors or sailability, as we know, to take part in the event on that period of time on the water as well. So it's not just about one event. It's about having that inclusive teams on the water all the same time.

I have an example of one of the ex clubs I was a member of. We had the general sailors, but we were also very much aware of inclusivity towards younger ages, or those with less ability to be able to just jump in the boat at their ease. We were awarded a sailing grant and for that we were able to purchase new sailing boats to provide that inclusive sailing opportunities for the local community and that instantly put the club back on the map in the area and and I think it's really important to take that back into your workplace and by understanding your team understanding who's around you, what abilities everyone have, whether it's their skill sets, whether it's their ways of working, ways of living, lifestyle balance, all of this into one place to ensure that you're supporting your team and that's so important in, in today's working environment. And fortunately, we get that crossover from work to our interests outside of work.

00:11:58 Speaker 1: Karine

Thank you so much, Ludovic and loan!

00:12:00 Speaker 1

We really learned a lot from both of you on what mutual skills we could gain from practicing with excellence in sports and in the workplace? The individual discipline it requires, the team effort it implies to be successful in both fields, while preserving a good

life balance. It's been really a pleasure and very inspiring. And I'm sure that the audience will have the same feelings that I have.

00:12:30 Speaker 3: Ioan

Thank you, Karine.

00:12:32 Speaker 2: Ludovic

Thank you again.

- End of episode -