



Annie Lush

OLYMPIC ATHLETE • SPORTS PERSONALITY

Leadership teams rehearse plans for conditions that never arrive. The harder problem is what happens when the situation shifts, sleep is short, information is thin, and a call still has to be made together. Most organisations underestimate how much of that work is about trust between a handful of people, not strategy on a slide.

Annie Lush is an Olympic and world champion sailor who helps organisations understand how small, mixed teams make sound decisions under sustained pressure.

Annie Lush's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Annie Lush

- She has led from inside the crew on the Volvo Ocean Race and The Ocean Race Europe, where a wrong call at 3am in the Southern Ocean is not a case study, it is a survival event. Leaders hear an operator, not a commentator.
- She was part of Team SCA in 2015, the first all-female crew to win a leg of the Volvo Ocean Race in 25 years. The lessons on what the crew built internally to close that gap translate directly to leadership teams rebuilding performance from behind.
- She has raced with Offshore Team Germany in mixed international IMOCA crews, giving her concrete material on how diverse, multilingual teams actually resolve disagreement at speed, rather than in the abstract.
- She is a match racing world champion and a 2012 Olympian, so the content on head-to-head tactical decision-making is first-hand, not borrowed.
- She speaks in English and Spanish and works in European, UK and international programmes without an interpreter layer.

Biography highlights

- London 2012 Olympian, Women's Elliott 6m match racing (7th, with Lucy and Kate MacGregor).
- ISAF Women's Match Racing World Champion, Newport 2010, with further world-champion titles earlier in her match racing career.
- Member of Team SCA in the 2014-15 Volvo Ocean Race; crew of the first all-female Leg 8 win (Lisbon to Lorient) in a quarter century.
- Volvo Ocean Race 2017-18 with Team Brunel; The Ocean Race Europe 2021 and 2025 with Offshore Team Germany aboard the IMOCA "Einstein".
- Cambridge Blue in rowing, sailing and rugby; member of the Cambridge

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Awards Hosting
- Event Hosting
- Panel Participation
- Speaking

ANNIE'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Leadership
- Organizational Agility
- Peak Performance
- Resilience & Stress Management

LANGUAGES: English, Spanish

crew that won the 2001 Women's Boat Race by the narrowest margin in the race's history.

- Works in English and Spanish.

Biography

A Volvo Ocean Race crew is four or five sailors living inside a 65-foot boat for weeks at a time, making dozens of consequential decisions a day on half-sleep. When Team SCA crossed the line at Lorient in June 2015, it was the first leg win by an all-female crew in 25 years of the race. Annie Lush was on board.

That context matters for a boardroom because the sailing is the secondary story. The primary story is how a small, mixed, multilingual crew decides together when the weather model is wrong, the rival boat has picked the other side of a front, and the person on watch has been awake for 20 hours. Lush has been inside that decision loop across four offshore campaigns, including two Volvo Ocean Races and The Ocean Race Europe in 2021 and 2025 with Offshore Team Germany.

Her match racing record sharpens the tactical side. She is a world champion in the Women's Match Racing class and a London 2012 Olympian in the Elliott 6m, a boat-on-boat discipline where the reading of the opposing skipper is as important as the boat speed. Before any of that, she was a Cambridge Blue in three sports and part of the crew that won the 2001 Women's Boat Race by the smallest margin in its history.

What leaders take from her is not a metaphor about sailing. It is a working account of how trust inside a small team is built before the pressure arrives, how followership is a skill in its own right, and how a crew handles the gap between the plan on the chart table and what the sea actually does.

Key speaking topics

- High-performance teamwork under sustained pressure
- Decision-making with incomplete information
- Leadership and followership in small mixed teams
- Resilience and mental endurance in extreme environments
- Building trust inside a crew before it is tested
- Performance culture and learning from losing legs
- Women in elite mixed-gender professional environments

Ideal for

- Executive committees and senior leadership teams heading into a period of sustained operational pressure
- Transformation leads and programme directors running long-duration, multi-country teams
- Sales and commercial leadership offsites where decision quality under load is the theme
- CHROs and culture leads working on trust, followership and mixed-team performance

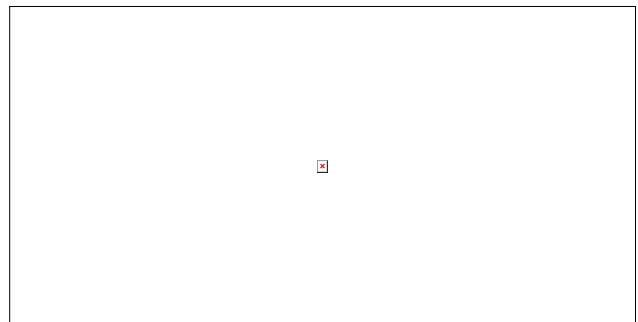
Audience outcomes

- A concrete picture of how an elite offshore crew rebuilds trust after a bad leg, transferable to a team after a missed quarter
- Language for the difference between leadership and followership, and

why strong teams need both inside the same person

- A usable test for when to change plan at sea, and how that maps to changing plan mid-quarter in business
- A more honest view of diversity in high-pressure teams, drawn from mixed international IMOCA crews rather than policy decks
- Specific examples of decisions made with thin data and short sleep that senior leaders recognise from their own weeks

Annie Lush's Videos



What Annie Lush's clients say

Annie presented to us an inspiring story on her life and experiences with Team SCA: the first female team to participate in the Volvo Ocean Race in over a decade. A story on the training, the gap vs the mens' teams, the consequences of one's competitiveness, teambuilding, pushing boundaries and leadership. Aligned with what we asked for. Annie talks in an open, honest and inspiring way with a good sense of humour. Close interaction with the audience and completed with impactful imagery and films. We had a wonderful afternoon and our guests appreciated it a lot. Thank you Annie!

Nicole de Wit

SCA Hygiene Products, The Netherlands

Annie has a uniquely engaging, personable and captivating way of sharing her experiences from her professional sailing career. We listened enthralled to her tales of commitment, hard work, determination, high and low points from her time in the all female Team SCA Volvo Ocean Race. Her delivery style and balance of technical versus universally applicable information enables a wide ranging audience to relate to her experiences walk away, not only inspired, but with lessons learned applicable to their daily lives.

Kirsten Percival

Co-Chair Commerzbank London Women's Network