



Case Study: Marine Corps Marathon

Marathon runs 35th edition with efficient race software solutions and innovative green initiatives

Background

Voted “Best Marathon for Families,” the [Marine Corps Marathon](#) (MCM) continues a combined tradition of dedication, sportsmanship and patriotism in Washington, DC. Hosting over 22,000 participants each year, runners from all walks of life have participated in MCM, earning it the nickname “The People’s Marathon.” For 35 years, MCM staff has taken pride in offering a world-class event that is known as one of the best-organized marathons in the world. On race weekend, MCM also hosts a 10K and Healthy Kids Fun Run, in addition to various other endurance events throughout the year. All told, the event organizers serve approximately 60,000 participants annually.

MCM celebrated its 35th anniversary on October 31, 2010 and consistently sells out every year. It is also an industry leader for its green initiatives and was awarded silver-level certification by the Council for Responsible Sport.



Challenge

With national landmarks dotting the course and perfect fall weather, MCM has always been a huge attraction for runners. Plus, its operations run like clockwork, especially with the help of thousands of Marine volunteers. With such strong support and popularity, MCM’s main challenge has been to stay ahead of the marathon management curve and continually add new features to improve the event. Beginning in 2004, MCM teamed up with Active Network to implement online race registration and technology that encompasses some of the best management and marketing services in the industry. Together, Active and MCM have worked together to beat expectations and create the experience of a lifetime for runners. “Active is a leader in race technology,” mentions Angela Huff, MCM’s Deputy Director. “A lot of what we’ve accomplished is due to Active’s help. You put into action what we need done.”

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Deputy Director,
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Race Software Solutions

Active provides MCM with a complete one-stop-shop for its technology needs. Here is a quick overview of the features that MCM uses most:

- ▶ **Online Registration.** MCM processes all registrations online through its website using Active’s integrated race registration software. This is easy and convenient for participants and saves the staff hours of time because all registrations are handled automatically, no manual data entry required.
- ▶ **Online Payment Processing.** All race payments are processed through Active’s secure online server. MCM can safely and efficiently manage their revenue, without incurring risk from handling cash or checks themselves.



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- ▶ **Reporting.** Active's system includes customizable, built-in reports that provide details on everything from participant demographics to financials.
- ▶ **Marketing.** MCM takes advantage of Active's consumer base of millions, running geo-targeted online advertisements on Active.com and sending e-marketing campaigns to Active's lists of opt-in subscribers.
- ▶ **Active Trainer.** As part of the event experience, MCM offers participants easy-to-follow online training programs from Active Trainer. The plans are customized for the MCM course and can be tailored to any level, from a first-time runner to an experienced marathoner.
- ▶ **Live Search Results with Map Track and Medical Tracker.** Active's software has included features that allow spectators to track participants online, plotting their pace along the course. Spectators can also check to see if loved ones have stopped at a medical tent.

Going Green

MCM takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and was recently awarded silver-level certification from the Council for Responsible Sport, becoming the largest event to date to earn this distinction. Athletes for a Fit Planet consults and provides on-site support for the MCM's eco-initiatives.

- ▶ In addition to paperless online registration, MCM is proud to provide **electronic finisher certificates** to reduce unnecessary waste.
- ▶ The 2010 MCM **Race Program was printed entirely on recycled paper.**
- ▶ Incredibly, MCM achieved over a **32% reduction in waste to landfill** from 2008 to 2009. In just one year, MCM reduced waste by more than a pound per runner!
- ▶ An aggressive recycling effort at the Finish Festival supported by the Rosslyn Business Improvement District and Arlington County's Department of Environmental Services led to the **collection of 3.2 tons of recycling materials**, the largest haul in the three years of this program.
- ▶ MCM has a **"no postal mail"** rule. Everything is sent via email: registration and payment confirmations; e-newsletters updates; and Carbo Dining In tickets.
- ▶ An ongoing **Trash Run** encouraged running clubs to pick up trash on their training runs and send in pictures to be posted on the MCM website.
- ▶ Healthy Kids Fun Run used **seed paper bibs**, allowing the young runners to commemorate their race by planting their bib and growing Black-Eyed Susans.
- ▶ **Water recycling stations** were hooked up to fire hydrants, encouraging runners to refill bottles instead of using paper cups.
- ▶ MCM's **Shoe-A-Thon** collects gently-used running shoes at all 2010 events and donates them to homeless shelters.



Not only has MCM received accolades from the green industry, but its eco-initiatives have been overwhelmingly supported by the participants who were committed to help recycle and reuse at the event.

Conclusion

With MCM, there will always be new events and exciting things that are offered to participants each year. The marathon is known for leading the industry with the latest technology and race software solutions to further its reputation as one of the best run, most well-respected events in the world. Active is committed to helping MCM put into play any ideas it has to improve the event in the years to come.

"I have the ideas and I tell Active. And then you actually do it. That's what I love about you guys I've never heard 'no we can't do it'." —Angela Huff, Deputy Director, Marine Corps Marathon