



Case Study: Pat Griskus Triathlon Series

Race upgrades to automated triathlon management software which results in tremendous time savings

Background

Founded in 1987, the Pat Griskus Triathlon Series was organized in memory of its eponymous chairman, a nationally recognized runner and triathlete who competed in road races, marathons, ultra-marathons and triathlons using a prosthetic leg. Located in Middlebury, CT, the event began as a sprint distance and then expanded to add an Olympic distance in 2002. Approximately 1200 athletes participate in the series each year and over \$190,000 has been raised for charity. In 2011, the Pat Griskus Olympic Triathlon was named the USA Triathlon Northeast Regional Championship.



Challenge

For the first 13 years of its existence, the triathlon relied upon a manual, paper-based process to register participants for the event. That meant hundreds of application forms had to be deciphered and entered into a system. Plus, checks had to be sent to the bank and cashed or credit card numbers run manually. It was time consuming and inefficient, not to mention an insecure way for triathletes to submit personal data. When Tom Wilkas assumed the mantle of race director in 2000, he knew unquestioningly that the event had to be upgraded to online registration. "We needed to move quickly and processing so many applications by hand was just not going to work," notes Tom. He was familiar with the Active Network brand, knowing that Active not only provided triathlon management solutions but was also closely tied to the endurance sports community because of Active.com, an online search directory for events and activities. Tom immediately implemented Active's triathlon software to automate registration and resolve the issues that resulted from paper forms.

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— Tom Wilkas, Race Director, Pat Griskus Triathlon Series

Solution

The first year of processing registrations online resulted in about one third of participants choosing the automated option. Only a few years later, 100% of registrations were processed online. "I won't even accept paper applications anymore," mentions Tom. "It takes up too much time with the inevitable back and forth trying to read illegible writing, filling in blanks that registrants forgot and all the data entry. I don't have to worry about any of that now." Other top benefits of Active's triathlon software include:

Reporting. The system includes both standard and custom reports to view and email registrants, download full registration details, pull a registration summary and more.

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Email. With the built-in email tool, race directors can send event updates and information to registrants as well as marketing emails to past participants. Emails can be customized and contact lists can be segmented as needed.

Customer support. Active's clients receive free, unlimited support from a team of experts. "Our account manager is just about perfect," comments Tom. "Whatever I need, whenever I need it, she's all over it."

Data security. Active's systems are protected with the highest level of data security and are Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliant. "Increased security is a primary strength of Active," says Tom. "It's a big selling point for me to have a company that's been around for so long and is focused on protecting our event's and our athlete's information."

Marketing. Active offers clients marketing opportunities to help attract more participants. In addition to a free listing in the Active.com online directory, Tom took advantage of a spotlight advertisement on Active.com which targeted athletes in the New York area. "Active.com is a great way to find races and I use it myself to find things to do. We knew we'd reach a lot of people by advertising with Active."

Results

The event has seen a significant improvement in efficiency and time savings since implementing Active's triathlon software. Registration was once an unmanageable and cumbersome manual process that now functions on autopilot. "Active's solution has saved my sanity," says Tom. "It's hard to quantify just how much time it's saved, but I can tell you that now I'm free to focus on more important things like buttoning up safety requirements for the course. As I get nearer to race day, I don't want to be dealing with administration and paperwork. I've got lives in my hands and I don't want to be thinking about anything but making the triathlon a great, safe experience for the participants."

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