



Case Study: Simi Sunset Rotary Club Gator Run 5K/10K, Kid's Fun Run

Rotary Club Gets Maximum Mileage from Active's Race Management Software

Background

The Simi Sunset Rotary Club, though relatively small, packs a punch when it comes to community ties and raising funds for worthy causes. Chartered in 2002, the organization, which had primarily sponsored fundraisers of casino nights and golf tournaments, came up with the idea of a 5K/10K race as a new means of achieving their goals. Thus was born Gator Run. Lynda Nickolai had been in the organization only a year when the idea was put forth, and being the only runner in the club, decided to take it on. The planning phase took about six months, but in May 2007, the first Gator Run 5K/10K took to the streets.

Challenges

Lynda had participated in races for years, but never before had she planned such an event. Thankfully, Club members would help put together goodie bags, handle day-of duties and various other details; still, everything from registration to sponsorships to marketing to course set-up, was up to her to oversee. Simply registering, confirming and preparing for more than 550 runners that first year seemed a bit daunting.

Solution

Lynda's main goal was to make it easy—easy for participants to sign up and easy for her and race volunteers to manage. And being familiar with Active Network's race registration software as a participant in countless races over the years, the answer to easy was Active. What she discovered on the planning side was a user-friendly race management software system that positioned Gator Run as professional from the beginning; and that Active's customer service team was extremely helpful every time she turned to them, which in the beginning, was plenty. Now in its fifth year, Gator Run registration continues to increase, thanks to the use of Active's marathon software tools such as broadcast emails and Spotlight Ads. These are part of an overall marketing plan that includes more traditional print spots, posters and the like, helping to ensure greater success each year. With both adult and kid runs – there are no first-, second- or third-place winners in the Kid's Fun Run – all participants receive a ribbon and goodie bag – there's a lot of data coming in. "I can't imagine having to keep track of all that information myself!" Lynda says. "Active does it all for me. I don't even think about it."



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- ▶ **Reports:** The system allows for customized reports, which allows Lynda to breakdown each race category, a plus when managing same-day adult and kid's runs.
- ▶ **Email:** The system's built-in email and list segmentation tools make sending out registration information, event updates and other news to past and current participants a no-brainer.
- ▶ **Customer Support:** Active's free, unlimited support is a winner for race managers. "Without the great support from Active's team," Lynda says, "there's no way I would have gotten through that first year's event!"
- ▶ **Marketing:** Increasing registration depends on a solid marketing strategy. Active's marathon software includes broadcast email capability and Spotlight Ads to support race management marketing efforts.

Results

This year's race saw 1153 runners take part. The primary beneficiary of this year's monies was the Special Olympics (each year the Club chooses where to donate the bulk of the funds raised, with the balance going to other organizations, both community-based and national, such as For the Troops, Firefighter Memorial Fund, etc.). As part of this year's event, they threw in an additional run for Special Olympics participants; a huge hit with everyone.

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—Lynda Nickolai, Event Director

What's Next

With the Special Olympics Run such a success, plans are in the works for expanding that, along with the Kid's Fun Run for the coming year. Other groups, such as the local Boys & Girls Club, have turned to Lynda for advice. "The first thing I suggest they do is use Active's race registration software!" Lynda says. "And then get as many volunteers as possible." But perhaps the most important overall aspect to Lynda is this: "It has to be fun. Because for Gator Run, it's not about finding elite athletes, it's about community."

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