

YOUR COMPLETE RUNNER'S GUIDE

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MAGAZINE

RUN

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2013

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- ▶ Run & Finish Strong
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F O R C E A MOVING

Serving more than 55,000 global customers and driving over 80 million transactions annually, ACTIVE Network is the best-kept secret in the events industry. But if Sam Renouf has anything to do with it, it won't stay that way for long. It's his job to make sure that ACTIVE is at the heart of Asia's events—from conferences to marathons!

Text Marie Monozca Photos Sam Renouf

As the leading provider of activity and participant management solutions, thousands of people use ACTIVE Network to register for events every day. ACTIVE's technology platform makes managing and operating all types of activities, events and organisations smarter and easier, thanks to vertical technology applications for each market—from communities, to sports and endurance, and business events. It would be harder to find an event they aren't involved in. Closer to home, they have offices in Australia, China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

And you've probably never heard of them.

"We provide online technology and software to manage events, activities and participants. We support all kinds of events—some 70,000 of them—including marathons, triathlons and cycling events around the world," explains Sam Renouf, ACTIVE's Vice President for Emerging Markets and General Manager for Asia Pacific.

And it is the Briton's job to make sure that Asia—with no less than 1,500 events under ACTIVE Network's belt—continues to grow.

A Sporting Chance

Good thing, running helps keep Renouf, a former international triathlete, on the ball.

"My family was very active so I was brought up with sport. I think I ran my first half marathon at 13 or 14 and got into long-distance cycling shortly after. I made the Great Britain Junior team for duathlon at 17," recalls the avid kite surfer, hiker and skier.

He adds: "I raced as a professional athlete around the world for a few years after university—which brought me to Asia for the first time, but decided I'd rather put my energies towards a career—joining ACTIVE as one of their first international employees. Five years on, the company is growing really fast at the moment so I'm spending between 2-3 weeks per month on the road—you probably need the endurance of an athlete to handle that!"

Founded in 1999 in San Diego, the birthplace of triathlon, ACTIVE Network spent 10 years focused on the US market before expanding internationally—first to London, then to Singapore and the rest of the world. Essentially, they provide IT solutions for organisers to manage their entire event online—from sending out e-mail invites to receiving registrations, taking payments online and then managing start lists. This also helps event organisers harness the recent explosion in popularity of social media—turning runners into event

“MY FAVOURITE RUN IS OUT PAST THE BOTANIC GARDENS AND ACROSS THE MARINA BAY BARRAGE. THE VIEWS BACK TO THE CITY SKYLINE ARE INCREDIBLE—EVEN MORE SO IF SEEN AT SUNSET OR SUNRISE.”

— Sam Renouf of ACTIVE Network, who runs at least 5 hours per week despite a very busy schedule

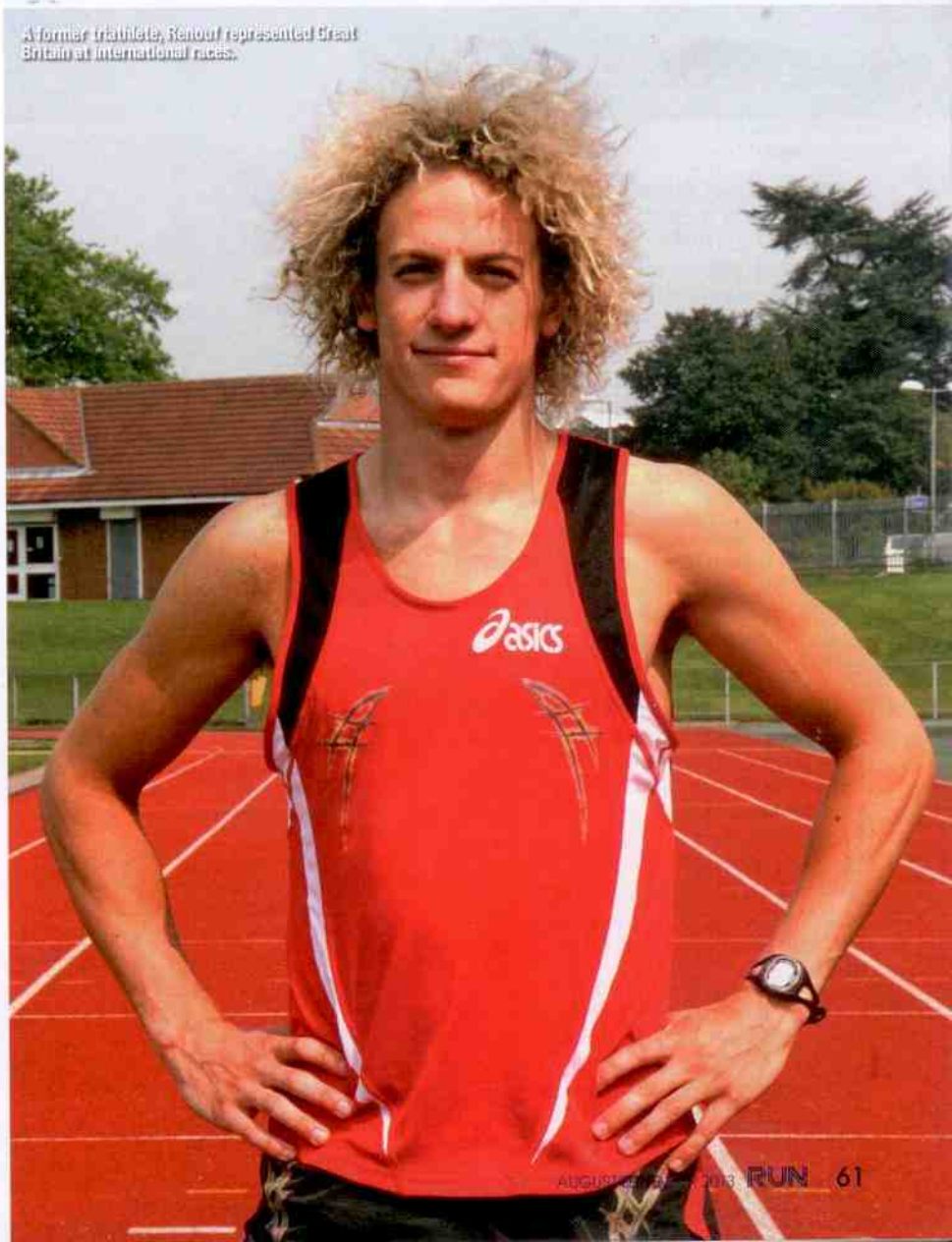
marketers themselves by announcing their participation automatically onto their Facebook or Twitter accounts.

"Research shows we are far more likely to trust the recommendations of our friends than any commercial advertising; so, by seeing my friends signed up to an event, I'm far more likely to sign up too—we call this 'socialising the event commitment,'" says Renouf.

And the next trend they are seeing is in mobile. Renouf explains: "We want to make sure you can enter as soon as you want to—not just when you are near a computer. Singapore was one of the fastest adopters of online registration and we think it will be the same now with mobile."

In a nutshell, ACTIVE is the pioneer of event technology—and if you've entered a race recently—you've probably already used them!

A former triathlete, Renouf represented Great Britain at international races.





Renouf anticipates a 30 percent growth in the local events market as more runs and triathlons are organised.

Luckily for Renouf, who also served as a commentator for the triathlon events during the 2012 London Olympics, ACTIVE Network has a strong corporate wellness initiative and has won awards for promoting a healthy lifestyle amongst its staff through a programme known as ActiveX.

"Activities vary at each of our offices but include weekly sessions from yoga or Pilates to bootcamps and triathlon training. The company even gives staff two days off per year to participate or volunteer in an event," he shares.

Finding time to run has been a constant challenge. When he started their Singapore office in 2010, he only had a staff of two. Now, he has over 30 people in a rapidly growing business that supports events all over the region.

"One of the best parts of my work is that I get to run in some incredible places around the world: Sydney Harbour, Tabletop Mountain, along the Seine in Paris or the hills above Hong Kong. My favourite run is probably along the Thames and through Hyde Park in London; I have some great memories from commentating at the Olympic Games there last year," says the youthful and energetic bachelor, who runs at least five hours a week when he's not training for a race.

He adds: My most memorable event experience was a half Ironman distance triathlon in Brazil. A bunch of us drove eight hours or so across a huge mountain range to this hilly location that



When he opened ACTIVE's Singapore office, Renouf had 2 staff—now he has 30 people.

seemed to literally rise straight out of the ocean. I didn't race well, but have fond memories of school kids rushing out to give 'high fives' along the course—and monkeys trying to steal our water bottles!"

Racing To The Future

The management graduate anticipates a 30 percent growth in the local events market as more runs and triathlons are organised. But with a finite market of sponsors to support each event, he also foresees a consolidation of larger events with the smaller events struggling to gain road closures or exposure. This fast growth also means more work for Renouf, whose biggest battle now is balancing his running with managing ACTIVE's growth across Asia.

PRACTISE PRACTICALITY

ACTIVE Network's Sam Renouf shares three easy tips on making running more fun:

1 Clear your schedule – no excuses.

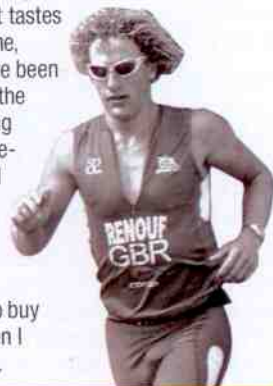
"Unfortunately the best answer is the most simple: What you get out is what you put in; so just keep at it, be disciplined with training in the same way any career-driven person is with their work and you'll be across the finish line in no time!"

2 Set a goal.

"I am very goal driven—which is good for a sports person, but it means if I don't have a goal I'm not very driven! If I'm not training for something specific I will generally run for a few hours a week (depending on where in the world I am), but if I'm focused on a race it's generally every day for between 10-20km."

3 Hydrate, with what you enjoy.

"As long as I'm taking calories in, I prefer what tastes good. For me, when you've been running in the heat nothing beats an ice-cold Coke! I generally take a few \$2 notes and just stop to buy drinks when I need them."



Renouf, however, is determined to keep himself physically active and push his athletic limits despite his tight schedule.

"The last six months have been pretty gruelling for work and I've not done as much as I've liked—sounds like an excuse but it's actually a public announcement," he says with characteristic good humour. "I'm going to get back into ultra-running and try to do some big races next year. I'm not sure which just yet, but I would love to complete the Marathon des Sables in the Sahara."

For now, ACTIVE Network's major challenge is convincing organisers that going online is more efficient than the traditional paper registration form or Excel file. And it's a challenge Sam Renouf is putting all his endurance background into. **R**