

# LEADERS IN GLOBAL CORPORATE TRADING

**ACTIVE**  
INTERNATIONAL®  
CREATING VALUE WITH EVERY TRADE



Thomas Ruderman

**As Chief Human Resources Officer, Thomas Ruderman handles all elements of talent at the company. He has more than 20 years of experience at companies such as GE, CitiGroup, and CIGNA.**

**Is there an effective understanding of the opportunities that exist within Active and what the industry is about?**

There is. A fair number of people we recruit are those going into their first jobs and we try to develop and grow them internally. There are some we hire at mid-level and if they're deep in the media or advertising space, they probably know

of Active.

**What do you do to ensure your employees are engaged?**

We have a comprehensive management training program that helps managers with management, leadership, communication skills, and conflict resolution. Engagement is determined by the relationship with the immediate manager, so those skills are critical.

We just launched a flexible work program, which is a way of further engaging our employees because it's a need they have expressed to us.

We have an active employee wellness program that lets people know we care about them and their health.

And Active Cares, our charitable, community-based initiative, helps employees feel good about working for a company that contributes to the community and the greater good.

**As to overseas activities, how important is it to find local workers who understand Active's culture and is it challenging to find the needed talent in some of those markets?**

While we provide support from our U.S. office as needed, our strategy is to hire locally and we have been very successful in countries such as the U.K., Germany, and France. As we go into new places, we will continue to focus on local leadership because they understand the local markets and will be able to attract the best talent.

**Has the HR function changed over the years?**

Yes, it has changed a lot; it has become much more closely linked to the business and business strategy. We are embedded into the business and are involved in influencing business decisions and shaping strategy. Being a member of the executive leadership team gives me access to information and the opportunity to effect things way beyond the scope of HR.

**How important is it to maintain Active's entrepreneurial culture as you grow in size and scale?**

When you get to a certain size and level of complexity, you have to add a measure of professional management and discipline, but not so much of it that you lose the essence of your culture and what helped get you to this point. It's definitely a balancing act but we've been successful so far.

**When this opportunity presented itself, did you know it was the right fit and has it been what you expected?**

I was brought here because there was recognition that we were at a stage in the company's life cycle where we needed to evolve the culture and upgrade talent. We needed to find new skills that we didn't have within the company while complementing the skills that were already in place. It excited me because it was about helping to take a successful organization to the next level. It's been rewarding and a lot of fun. ●



Dean Wilson

**As Managing Director & Vice President International, Dean Wilson draws on his previous experience as Managing Director of U.K. Operations and running Active Australia. He previously held various commercial roles at Television Sales and Marketing Services Ltd, Channel Four Television Corporation, and ITV Digital.**

**How developed is Active's business in the U.K.?**

The barter industry as a whole is highly developed in the U.K. It's a common business practice and is endorsed by blue chip advertisers as well as the ad agencies that have been quick to

recognize the benefit we can bring to their clients. They recommend us and bring us into relationships with their clients.

**Are you also competing with those traditional advertising firms? Have they come into the space?**

There is only one ad agency that has entered the space; all other agencies outsource barter activity through a company like Active.

**What is the value you bring, especially to the blue chip companies?**

You have two main value propositions: the first one is that we can restore value to any excess or underperforming assets, so that might be something like slow moving stock or distressed inventory; the second is, advertisers can use their product to pay for their advertising.

**Does it cross most industries or are there specific industries you are most focused on for growth?**

It crosses most industries. If there is a media or marketing spend, then there is a value proposition from Active. Manufacturers and retailers are always a strong base for us, but the travel industry has been fruitful for us as well.

**You are also responsible for Australia. Where do you see the opportunities for business in the Australian market?**

We have been there over 10 years and have built some long-term relationships with media vendors and agencies, and within the past year, we have significantly invested in building a stronger and new team in Australia.

The economy in Australia has been good for many years; it hasn't suffered the global recession primarily because China buys so many minerals and iron ore from Australia.

Corporate trade is starting to grow in Australia. Two competitors from the U.K. entered the marketplace a year ago, but we're so firmly established there that they're finding it harder than they thought to get a foothold. Australia is a small market and relationships and trust go a long way.

**Is the messaging consistent in Active's markets around the world or is it directed at the local markets?**

The essence of what we do in creating value mainly through advertising spend is consistent, but how you describe it, sell it, and work with it has to be local. We take our core concept and make it relevant in that market.

**What makes a market the right one for Active and how broad do you foresee opportunities globally?**

We first take into consideration the size of the advertising market in a particular country.

Second, it's focusing on countries that have high consumer spends so there is a requirement for manufacturers and retailers to be in that market.

Third, we look at opportunities for clients across borders. As the global marketplace becomes more connected, our footprint offers a significant advantage in that companies can work with us regardless of where the headquarters are located. ●