

Serving Clients

An Interview with Bill Georges, Global Chief Operating Officer, Active International

EDITORS' NOTE Bill Georges joined Active in 2007, bringing more than 20 years of marketing, advertising, and sales leadership experience to the company. He was previously Senior Vice President, Advertising and Affiliate Sales, for Comcast Networks and Senior Vice President at Liberty Media, spending 10-plus years at both companies. Earlier in his career, Georges played competitive tennis, competing at the U.S. Open and playing on the ATP Tennis Tour. After a sports-related injury, he transitioned to the business world, becoming Vice President of Sales and Sponsorships for the ATP tour.



Bill Georges

as their strategic future and where they're trying to go, and then we have to also get down into the operations of the company to understand what has been keeping them from getting there and how we're going to help get them there.

We are deep within the sales organizations, deep within distribution, really close with the day-to-day people in marketing and media, while we also have to be at the most senior levels so we understand the overall direction and strategy.

Is the concept of corporate trade well understood or is it still an education process?

I don't believe that corporate trade is well understood. I think that the marketplace is starting to better understand that, when they engage with Active, they achieve more. They may not know exactly how we do it, but they know that when we're in their lives, they are going to achieve more and do better, and I think that our brand is really getting associated with that awareness.

Are Active's service offerings consistent around the world?

What's consistent across the world is that, when Active is in your life, you achieve more. From there, we have to figure out how we

accomplish that goal which varies in different markets. The model in the UK is very different from the model in Spain, which is different from the model in Canada and so on.

The goal remains the same, which is servicing clients, and always helping them achieve more.

Will you discuss the strength of Active's workforce?

I think we have a unique and incredible balance of people who have been here at Active for 15-plus years and really know how to leverage and create trade within the marketplace and are able to provide that for our clients. We also have talented people who have joined Active in the last five to seven years that are incredible media and planning and digital experts that became disappointed with where the market had gone and the lack of focus on the client, who have joined us based on our focus and commitment on how to best serve clients.

We have been able to attract those executives because they want to get back to what we believe in, which is that we're here for clients. I think we have an incredible balance of expertise that has been here for a really long time along with new talent in areas of planning and digital and programmatic and data. This allows Active to serve clients in a different way and differentiates us in the industry. ●

How do you define Active's business today?

Active's DNA is built around trade, so our foundation is as a trading company. We never want to lose touch with that foundation, because that is how we create leverage and value for our clients.

The most important focus for Active is our clients, and what we have to do in today's ever-changing environment, especially in the media space, delivery of video, and data as well as everything else that's being thrown at our clients.

We are a client services company more than anything because we have to remember that the client is always at the top of the pyramid. I believe that is the advantage that Active has right now, since many of the holding companies have lost sight of the client. Everything we do is based on making sure that we can deliver value, while providing strategies, expertise and solutions to help clients navigate this ever-changing economy.

How broad is Active's client profile?

The common thread with all of our clients is that they are spending money in media. Outside of that, we don't really have any limitations when it comes to any of the market segments or categories or divisions we work with. There has to be a marketing spend, usually of at least \$3 million all the way up to a billion dollars, and we help them receive extra value from the marketplace.

Does Active build relationships at multiple levels within your clients?

We need to be at every level. In order to best serve a client, we have to understand what the most senior people at the C-level see

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