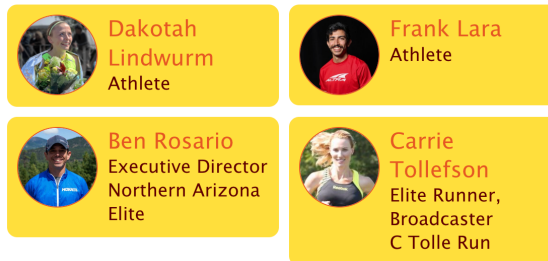


2024 USA Running Conference

Select Session Notes

General Session: Utilizing Elite Athletes at Your Event



Conversations with US Olympic hopefuls Dakota Lindwurm and Frank Lara, with moderation and commentary by Coach Ben Rosario and Carrie Tollefson

Comments and audience question discussions:

- Small races should not ignore making the effort to recruit elite runners
- Fast, flat courses can attract local elites looking for PRs
- Think about asking elites to run, do appearances or even handout finisher medals
- A sample appearance fee can be as low as \$500
- Some elite runners will travel for the fun of seeing new places if expenses are paid and small revenue opportunities exist
- Athletes can be DM'd on Instagram
- USATF athlete agent directory for pursuing elites:
<https://www.usatf.org/resources/athlete-representatives/athlete-representatives-directory>
- Idea of getting elites to commit to an event at least 30 days out to be eligible for prize purse – allows events to promote them more effectively and drive participation and engagement
- Contact elites as they are planning their season
- Market to previous year's winner and top finishers as this year's celebs

Dennis Snow
Leadership Consultant, Former Disney Customer Service Leader



Dennis, a former Disney exec, presented ideas on providing great customer experiences. Dennis appears to be an experienced professional speaker.

Three primary topics of presentation:

- 1. Understand the lens of the customer**
- 2. Pay attention to every detail**
- 3. Create wow moments**

Understand the lens of the customer

- Look at every part of every process from the customer's perspective first
- When people are outside their comfort zone (at a race) don't assume they know anything, and be willing to guide them
- Use Service Mapping – map each part of their journey where they interact with your event or team – but the mapping must be from the customer's perspective
- Identify the difference between mediocre and excellent service, at every point
- Helen story – stuffed animals tucked into bed
- Dog biscuits at the bank window

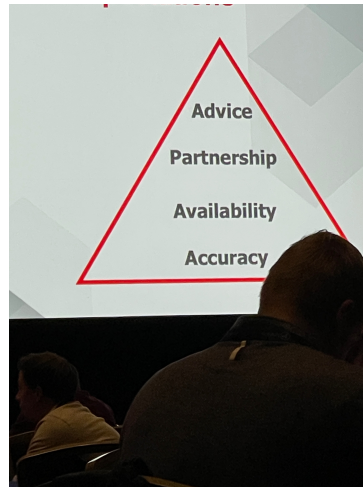
Pay attention to every detail

- Wording matters everywhere – website, signage, instructions
- Do the words make the customer feel valued?
- What are your “smoking Cinderella” moments?
- Use a distractors and commitments model
 - Distractors from excellent service get identified by employees
 - Commitments get made on how to make sure they never happen

Create Wow moments

- Dakota's Grandfather Marathon story!
- Little wow moments add up
- Custodian story

The Customer Expectation Pyramid



- Intense customer loyalty is what you are after
 - Great brands like Harley Davidson (Ironman?) are the pinnacle
-

Chef Yaku Moton-Spruill Beyond the Finish Line: Cultivating a First-Class Post-Race Experience



- “Food, mud, dirt and blood” loved this description
- Events can build community through post race experience
- There are four big reasons people leave the event at its conclusion
 - Dry clothes
 - To get Food
 - Tired
 - Busy
- You can solve three out of four of these with planning and creativity
- Put the food away from the other tents, so people have to walk and meet others on the way
- Picnic tables and benches instead of chairs wherever possible
- Take care of spectators and passers-by as well – the spectators and curious are your future participants
- Keep food hot and fresh

- No hot dogs
- The best food has toppings bars
- Chef loves tacos where event volunteers can talk to participants while they serve along a line of toppings
- Know your audience – have vegan options where warranted
- People will pay more for a good experience, and food can be a big part
- Chef offered to share his knowledge with anyone! Take advantage of it
- Consider offering paid or unpaid extra meal tickets with registration for family, supporters

Event Valuation and Succession Planning: What is your event worth?



Charlie Mercer
CEO
Capstone Event
Group

Link to Charlie's presentation: [Capstoneraces.com/raceowner](https://capstoneraces.com/raceowner)

Link to measuring Net Promoter Scores (NPS), an important metric to illustrate the success and progress of any event.

Here are some of the highlights of Charlie's presentation, which focused on how to understand the value of your event, and ways to increase it.

- Charlie has been working in event management for ten years, and prior to that he spent time at Deloitte as a Mergers and Acquisitions specialist. This allowed him to take relatively complex accounting and valuation concepts and distill them into understandable concepts
- Charlie and his team have managed over 150 events over the past ten years
- They have done several acquisitions and sold events, all with different approaches and metrics
- CapStone's growth model includes organic growth and growth via acquisition.
- The model is not to rebrand, but to keep the branding and community aspects of the event fully intact
- CapStone's stated purpose is to steward indispensable events into the future
- His value was to make event valuation less intimidating and to help make events more valuable
- Acquisitions can be asset sales, equity sales or models that don't involve a full sale
- Earnings measurements of races are generally more valuable than revenue based models

At least two attendees indicated it was the best presentation they'd seen at the conference, and one said it was the best "business of running presentation" they've seen since beginning their running event management career.

*DISCLOSURE: **RaceReach** provides technology services for CapStone Events. RaceReach services includes event registration specialized for clubs and teams (individuals are the easy part), email marketing and participant communication platform, participant texting, volunteer management, fundraising support, merchandise sales and financial management/reporting.*

If you'd like to find out why CapStone has been building with RaceReach for the past ten years, contact Mark at 919.279.0514 or mark.luckinbill@racereach.com.