

*Ryan Pinkham | Dec 11, 2015*

## How the Complete Solution Helps One Race Organizer Get More from His Marketing in Less Time



Started in 2004, [Boston's Run to Remember](#) is a half marathon and 5-mile road race honoring Massachusetts Law Enforcement Officers killed in the line of duty. In its eleven year history, the event has attracted thousands of athletes to Boston's streets and raised funds for a number of Boston-area nonprofits.

"The event gets bigger every year but we are still very much a mom and pop operation," explains Stephen Balfour, executive director of Boston's Run to Remember. "I'm lucky to have a handful of Boston cops and other volunteers who help make this event a success, but as of right now I am the only full-time employee."

### **As the event grows, Steve looks for new ways to recruit runners and communicate with race registrants.**

"Nowadays, race registrations are really all online. Print advertising isn't really doing what it used to do," Steve explains. "We signed up with Constant Contact in 2008. Email has become our best tool for recruiting runners and communicating with people who have signed up."

As the only full-time employee of Boston's Run to Remember, Steve has been in charge of planning and promoting the event. And while email has been valuable for his organization, Steve explains that there was more that he wanted to do with the tool.

"Constant Contact is very intuitive and easy to use, even for someone who isn't the most computer savvy. But I knew there was a lot more that I could be doing," Steve explains. "We also just launched our second event, Run to Remember Los Angeles, so I knew we would need some help."

### **In 2014, Steve discovered the Complete Email solution from Constant Contact.**

With [the Complete solution](#), Steve was matched with a certified marketing expert who worked with him to plan and run his email marketing efforts. Steve would still be able to leverage the great work he had done on his own, but now he had a trusted partner to plan and coordinate his email marketing strategy.

### **Steve was matched up with Jake Burns, an experienced online marketing consultant dedicated to helping small businesses and nonprofits overcome their marketing challenges.**

Jake worked with Steve to understand the challenges he was facing with his email marketing, and to set up a plan to help him reach his goals. One of the first areas of focus was making sure the Run to Remember emails had consistent and professional

branding.

“Jake set us up with a branded template that makes our messages look far more professional than we’ve ever looked before,” Steve explains. “Now every email looks like it’s coming from us, where in the past the look changed from email to email.”

Presented by: **new balance** **May 28-29, 2016****It's Boston's Run to Remember.****Half Marathon & 5-Mile Run**

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## **According to Steve, the updated look has caught the attention of runners and supporters of the race.**

"I've received a number of comments from volunteers and members of our board who have noticed how great the emails look," Steve explains. "People knew I was doing it on my own but it's not my skillset. We've finally gone professional."

With an updated look, Jake worked with Steve to put together a plan for communicating with their different audiences.

"Before we were sending the same message to everyone on our list, which caused a lot of confusion," Steve explains. "We would send reminders about registration deadlines and people who had already signed up would respond worried that we hadn't received their registration. It caused a lot of headaches."

## **To help, Jake worked with Steve to better organize the Run to Remember email database.**

When people registered for the event, they were put into a separate list to receive training tips and advice for preparing for the event. Separate lists were also created to recruit new runners to the Boston Race and the newly launched Run to Remember Los Angeles.

"Before I was only sending once a month and it was really random. Typically it was something I was putting together and sending out at midnight, or whenever I had the time," Steve explains. "Now, we are sending four times a month but we are getting the right message in front of the right people. It has made a huge difference."

The difference can be measured in the response to Run to Remember's emails, which have seen higher open rates and more engagement than ever before. But it can also be seen in the number of registrations for the 2016 event.

"The growth in registration has been absolutely awesome," Steve explains. We have more than 1,000 people registered for the Boston race — well ahead of where we were at this time last year. And we've also seen more than 1,700 people sign up for the LA race, which is great for a brand new event."

## To build on the results they have seen so far, Jake has implemented new tools and strategies to grow the Run to Remember email list.

One of these tools — a website splash page that encourages website visitors to join the race's email list — has resulted in 300 new subscribers in less than one month.

Jake helps Steve tap into his existing audience of email subscribers by putting together emails to thank event supporters and encouraging them to forward the email to a friend or share it on social media.

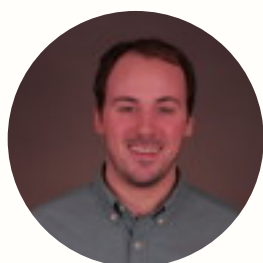
"We weren't focused on growing our list in the past, so it's really been a big improvement," Steve explains. "We would have never known to try these different tools out on our own, which is another benefit of working with an expert like Jake."

As Steve heads into his twelfth year with Boston's Run to Remember, he is optimistic for the future and thrilled by the results he's seen from Constant Contact's Complete Email solution.

"Today everything works together in a way it never did before. We're offering a better experience to our audience and we're seeing the results," Steve says. "Having a point person in Jake who spearheads our marketing efforts has been invaluable to our organization."

## Think the Complete Email solution might be right for you?

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**Ryan Pinkham** 

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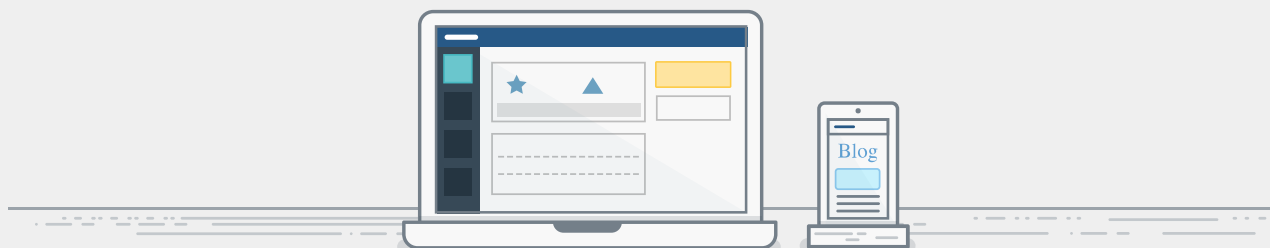
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