

Brad Cooper

As told to **Rebecca Heaton**

Brad Cooper is the CEO of US Corporate Wellness, Inc. in Littleton, and he walks the talk and talks the walk in encouraging his company's thousands of clients to pursue healthier lifestyles. At the age of 43 he's a 2:47 marathoner, has competed in the Hawaii Ironman and is one of the top Masters-level triathletes in Colorado. Oh, and he's even given Lance a run for his money.

Tell us about US Corporate Wellness. We founded the company (uscorporatewellness.com) four years ago to create a personalized approach to helping employees improve their health. There are so many wellness programs available, but most are generic and passive. Instead, we developed a program that forms relationships with all our employees, helping them to become their own best selves. The Children's Hospital is one of our most valued clients. With more than 2,100 employees participating, each person has a *personal* wellness coach. It's truly making a difference. And we're pleased to be one of only a few firms nationally to earn full accreditation through URAC as a Comprehensive Wellness Provider.

What is your background? I'm a licensed physical therapist and certified athletic trainer, and a former health care executive. I realized patients had immense opportunities to improve their health through minor modifications, and the cost savings for both the individuals and the employer would be significant. One thing led to another, and US Corporate Wellness was born. We're now fortunate to be able to help employees improve their lives in many positive ways, and at the same time save companies significant amounts of money in health care, disability, sick time, retention and other areas that directly affect the bottom line.

And you're a triathlete? I fell in love with triathlons in 2003. Since then, I've had the opportunity to compete in many of the classics, from Alcatraz to Clearwater and Wildflower to Kona, making many lifelong friends along the way.



And a marathon runner? I certainly haven't mastered this event, having gone 1:15 for the first half of several marathons before limping across the finish line between 2:47-2:52 each time. One lifelong memory took place during the 2008 Boston Marathon. After another 1:15 first half, I started to fade hard (really hard). Around Mile 20, I literally got a shoulder tap by a guy on a bike asking me to move over for Lance Armstrong. As he went by, I could do little else but watch him pass—until my CEO brain kicked in and I realized it might be a perfect opportunity for some free national television coverage. Wearing the US Corporate Wellness shirt, I slid into the space between the camera and Lance with a goal of hanging on for just a few seconds—which eventually turned into five miles until my legs surrendered and he put 200 yards on me. Then my brain made another switch, to Grandpa brain—when are you ever going to have another story like this to tell your grandkids? One final desperate push allowed me to finish about 10 seconds ahead of Armstrong.

As a busy CEO, husband and father of three, how do you fit in your training? Focus and priorities—and an incredible wife. When training volume is high, I'm up at 4:30 every morning, including weekends. If there's a gap in the schedule, I'm on the bike. I often swim and lift with my kids. And, over time, I've learned that quality trumps quantity, which has helped too.

What does it mean to you to be a competitor? Competition is the driver when it comes to training. A race provides purpose and maximizes training time, which results in more energy, mental focus and a positive outlook. And, it's an opportunity to walk the talk we're encouraging others to pursue nationally.

Are you a competitor, or do you know a competitor who would like to share their story? Send your ideas to imacompetitor@competitorgroup.com.