

# Damian Bradley



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“A determination to never give up.”

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## Founder B-Active Sports

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**D**AMIAN BRADLEY has always been an entrepreneur. As a schoolboy at boarding school, he earned money cutting hair and running an after-hours tuck shop, so it was no surprise that he opted to start his own business at only 26 years of age.

Never one to settle in his comfort zone, after school, Bradley opted to study business management at what is now the Durban University of Technology. Then, in 1995, when South Africa was riding the crest of the Rugby World Cup wave, he was inspired to do a course in sports management for business. After this, he went on to study marketing.

After finishing his studies in Cape Town, Bradley decided it was time to travel. When he needed to earn a living in the United Kingdom, he found a position at a law firm. Not exactly what he'd planned as a career move, but he stayed there for two years before returning to Durban to take up a corporate regional marketing position.

This rich and varied experience has stood him in good stead in running a sports management company. And in 2004, when he found himself retrenched after a corporate restructure, Bradley decided it was time to start B-Active Sports, with a plan for a single sporting event as his starting point.

Before long, Bradley had grown his portfolio to running 20 small events a year, but he realised that it made better business sense to focus on the more successful events, with potential to grow. Building on these allowed him to build on economies of scale, growing his priority events in terms of participants, profitability and reputation.

A pivotal point in the growth of B-Active Sports was in 2011, when the company secured its first major corporate sponsorship. This not only provided a new revenue stream, but also opened the door for future growth. But while this marks a career highlight, Bradley gets a great sense of accomplishment from

watching competitors in his events grow in skill and competitiveness over time, with several having started as novices and growing into international, professional athletes.

As Bradley points out, he and his team have managed to combine their work with their passion, so it's easy to love their jobs and deliver with commitment and dedication.

Bradley's focus is on his clients, the athletes they serve, and his team. Damian's leadership style is collaborative. Teamwork is important to him and while recognising his role in creating the company vision and the energy to make it happen, he believes in leading from beside his colleagues.

"B-Active Sports is a small company. My goal is to grow the team in terms of confidence and competence. I ensure my staff feel secure in their jobs, but at the same time I keep pushing them to develop themselves. I believe this gives them a powerful sense of purpose and job satisfaction. And that's good for them - and for the business." "Right now, I see potential in events outside of our traditional area of strength, and we'll be looking to expand into new areas."

Unsurprisingly, Bradley is a keen sportsman. Before starting B-Active sports, he had been a committed athlete for eight years, competing in triathlon events at national level. This formed his approach to his events. "My own experience as a competitor has always given me the drive and insight to create events from an athlete's perspective. It guides my decisions on the right events to stage, and the various avenues to pursue in my business."

While no longer competing at national level, he is still very active with a great love of surfing, mountain biking and road and trail running.

Bradley is also a dedicated father of two (his seven year-old daughter and five year-old son), and rates getting married ten years ago as one of the best decisions he's ever made.