

AFTER RACING BICYCLES PROFESSIONALLY for two years and realizing that I was no Lance Armstrong, I found another way to make a living on a bike. I had spent 20 years organizing bike treks with friends through the Alps, the hills of Tuscany, and the countryside of Provence. Noticing a growing appetite for such trips, I founded Destination Cycling (destinationcycling.com) in 2002. I now run tours on my bike 70 days a year.

We began offering trips for serious cyclists that duplicated famous races such as the Tour de France in 2005. Our clients are typically *Fortune 500* executives. The journeys are very complex for me to manage. We ride 100 miles or more a day for 21 days. I never know when a tire will blow or a hail storm will strike. Our customers pay us \$30,000 for the experience of a lifetime and, in some instances, six figures for exclusive tours. They expect us to plan for the unexpected.

This is where technology helps. Once a race's official website releases the route for an upcoming event, I upload it into Microsoft AutoRoute, the GPS trip-planning software on my laptop. The program helps me plot our journey with information on everything from local restaurants to hotels. My computer is a Dell Inspiron 600M. It is trustworthy and small enough to stow in a shoulder bag in our van but has good visuals. I book as much of the trip as I can from the U.S., down to the hotel massage rooms where the riders will recover. I also e-mail the GPSed route to my staff—a rotating group of 14 semi-pro riders, logistics experts, van drivers, and trained massage therapists. On the trips our van drivers keep laptops with our itinerary next to them in the passenger seat.

As a trip approaches, I monitor my clients' training. They ride CycleOps Indoor Cycle Pro PT300 indoor cycling machines equipped with gadgets that let me evaluate their physical condition. They e-mail me the data on their weekly rides, and I tweak their training regimes as needed.

When I'm cycling with clients on the bike trips, I wear an ear piece connected to a Motorola two-way radio that lets me communicate with my staff at any time. An ActiveBLU Wireless Bluetooth headset is built into my helmet. It gives me hands-free communication on a Blackberry that I stash in my back jersey pocket. One Sunday about a year ago, our support

van broke down in a village in the French Pyrenees. I quickly used the Blackberry to summon a backup van that found us easily, thanks to my the GPS. The Blackberry also allows me call-forwarding from the home office. I carry a European cell phone, too. Even when I am riding through the breathtaking scenery of the Dolomites in Italy, if a customer needs me, I want to be reachable.

—AS TOLD TO ALESSANDRA BIANCHI

How I Work lets entrepreneurs share methods of working effectively. Please send ideas and feedback to fsb_mail@ti.

Cyber Cyclist

Wireless tech helps me boost service at my bike-tour company **BY JOE TONON, MARBLEHEAD, MASS.**



BUILT FOR SPEED Tonon's tools keep him connected during bike tours.