

An Open Letter to Portland from the CEO of Brooksee

To my fellow runners and the community of Portland,

My organization (Brooksee, LLC) has been selected to produce the city's marathon. We are equal parts thrilled and humbled to have this opportunity. Since the announcement of the selection we have received an incredible outpouring of support, along with an abundance of questions. To address those questions and begin an open and transparent dialogue with the community, I want to provide you all with some information.

Our door is open

First off, please know that my team and I are dedicated to maintaining an open-door policy. We don't just want your input and feedback--we plan to rely on it. We want to hear from you. We want to know what you want to get out of your marathon. If you think this is just lip service, then call me and let's chat about it. My cell is 801-830-0624. Or you can email us at info@portlandcitymarathon.com.

Why do we want to do this?

Over the past few days I've received several media inquiries. Many of them have included some form of the following question that makes me chuckle every time I hear it: "Why did you want to take over Portland's marathon?" Are you kidding me?! Who wouldn't want this opportunity? Look, I understand that the event has had a rough go these last few years. But the past is in the past. Portland's marathon has more potential for growth than any other race in the world. If that sounds like hyperbole to you, then I invite you to wake up and smell the Stumptown coffee. Portland is the unrivaled leader of the running world. It is the birthplace of the American distance running movement. It is home to several of the world's largest brands in the active lifestyle industry as well as the most talented athletes in the sport. People *get* running here. Businesses, schools, non-profits, and kids get excited about it. Add that local enthusiasm for the sport to the intrigue and allure of Portland culture and you have a recipe for an unbelievably unique and nationally embraced race. With proper guidance, this city's marathon will make its way onto the bucket list of every runner in the world.

What is our vision?

Another frequent question I've received is in regard to our vision for the race. Allow me to summarize our vision by sharing our three primary goals:

1. We will make this race **big**. We see no reason whatsoever why it should not grow to the point of being able to take its rightful place alongside other major marathons such as Chicago, New York City, and Boston. Don't talk to me about population size, and don't try to point to declining participant counts in the last few years. It will undoubtedly take several years to get there, but Portland's marathon will be an industry leader. If we build it, they will come.
2. We will make this race **ooze with the essence of Portland**. I used this phrase in a KATU interview the other day and got a text from a friend saying, "I can't believe you said the word 'ooze' on the news." I'm sorry, but there's just no better way to describe it. We will weave the soul of Portland into every fiber of the event to create an experience that is utterly unique and inseparable from its host community.

3. We will make this race **reinvest in Portland**. We are proud to partner with a community that places such incredible emphasis on equity and inclusion. Our goal is to make this race benefit **all** members of the community and include those who have been historically underserved.

Who are we?

We have been working since 2012 to grow our event production and race services business. We own and produce eight large-scale marathons and half marathons in the Western US and Canada known as the REVEL Race Series. We also provide event management services and software to others in our industry. Our leadership team is comprised of women and men who have been recruited from the top race production organizations in the country. In our collective backgrounds we have produced more than 300 unique mass participation running events in some of the most high-profile cities and venues in the world, serving more than one million runners. Seriously - my team is legit.

Will it be part of the REVEL Race Series?

The city's marathon will not be part of the REVEL Race Series. It will be its own stand-alone event and brand. Why? Because Portland on its own is the coolest brand we could hope for.

When will registration open?

One of the most frequent questions we've received is "When will registration open?" Can I just say that I am **thrilled** every time I hear that question? Portlanders (and other runners from across the country) are bubbling with excitement. I am so happy to hear the enthusiasm in their voices when they explain how much they look forward to the event getting back on track. For many of you, this race represents your legacy as a runner. It has been part of your life for years, even decades. We understand that you are all anxious to get going again, and so are we. Now, back to the question. In the words of the legendary Ron Swanson (if you don't watch *Parks and Recreation*, you should be ashamed): "Never half-ass two things. Whole-ass one thing." In other words, we're making sure that we do this right. We could launch a ho-hum website full of "TBDs" and a half-baked plan for the race and start collecting registrations tomorrow, but that's just not how we roll. We are carefully balancing the immediacy of creating and producing a new event in just eight months' time with the long-term vision of what we know this race will become. If we thought we'd only be around for 3-5 years, then things would be different. We'd scramble to put together whatever route we could, kick quality to the curb, and forget our long-term community reinvestment plan. But the reality is that we are here to stay. We're playing for keeps. We understand that what matters most is the long-term impact this race has on Portland, and we therefore refuse to take shortcuts now just to speed up the process of opening the event. So please rest assured that as soon as we feel satisfied that things have been done correctly, we will get registration open. For now, just mark your calendars for 10/6/19.

What will the route look like?

If there's one question we hear more often than "When will registration open?" it is "What will the route be?" Many of you have been kind enough to create extremely detailed route plans that have been sent in to us. Several others have offered input regarding general areas or neighborhoods that they want to see incorporated in the race. Please, please, please keep these ideas coming. Never feel like your opinion will reach unhearing ears. My team and I consider every single shred of input we receive--we'd be foolish not to! If our aim is to create a route that runners love, who better to listen to than runners themselves? We want your input. Where it gets tricky is creating a route that makes **everybody** win. There are real needs and real roadblocks that deserve real consideration. We are working with the City to formulate a route that

will maximize race experience and minimize public inconvenience. Our top priorities for the route from a race experience perspective are to make it (1) fast, (2) inclusive, and (3) iconic. This is perhaps the most serious task at hand. The race will only reach its potential if the route is world-class. Please know that we are considering this a top priority and will offer the best possible route while staying within the bounds set in the name of public consideration.

What races will be offered?

The event will consist of a marathon as well as a half marathon. We will ideally also offer a much shorter distance race that will encourage more participation from the recreational community and beginners, although the short timeline we are working with may preclude that shorter race from occurring in 2019.

Can we pull this off in just 8 months?

Many people have wondered (rightfully so) if we are going to have time to pull this thing off with only eight months to prepare. My answer to this understandable question is a firm "Yes." Every race in the REVEL Race Series was launched with a timeline of less than eight months between launch day and race day. My team has proven time and again that we are capable of performing the task at hand. I do not pretend that Portland isn't different in many aspects, but the principles are the same. We can do this. Now, I do need to carefully note that expectations should be set at an appropriate level. This year's race will be outstanding, but our intent is to have the production value increase and build upon itself year after year. We plan to include as many "bells and whistles" as we possibly can given the short timeframe. Please resist the urge to say, "I'll wait and see how it goes this year and then sign up to run in 2020." We're all in this together! The "rebirth" won't be the same without you. Just as we have been asked to prove ourselves in executing this race, we are asking you to prove how much the vision of this race means to you. If you want your marathon to be world-class, then please understand that that won't happen without your participation. We need you with us from step one.

How can you help?

Many of you have been reaching out to offer not only congratulations, but also assistance. I am constantly hearing "Just let us know how we can help!" Well, since you're offering. . . We need three things:

1. We need sponsors. If we're going to do this thing right, we need support. We invite the Portland business community to join us and help create an unforgettable experience for runners and for the community.
2. We need volunteers. Lots of them. We're calling on youth groups, neighborhood associations, churches, sports teams, etc., to get involved. If you have a group that wants to hear thousands of runners say, "Thank you!" and make some cash while you're at it, let's get in touch.
3. We need runners (refer to my impassioned plea above). Come out to run, we need you!

Sorry, this got really long

Whoa - you're still reading this? Congratulations! Thanks for sticking with me. I'm almost done, I promise.

The importance of being local

You probably noticed that my phone number starts with 801 instead of 503. As much as I wish my team was based in the Rose City, I will not try to pretend that that's not the case. Some people have asked me (rightly so) how we plan to make this race "ooze with the essence of Portland" if we aren't Portland-based. My answer: give us time. When this event reaches its potential, it will require multiple full-time managers who live and work in Portland year-round and focus solely on the production of this race. I fully admit that

one of our shortcomings in the bidding process was that we aren't local. But we are extremely grateful for the warm welcome we have received, and for the opportunity to become Portlanders. If it bothers you that we are not (yet) local, I want you to know that I do not blame you at all, and I honestly would not fault you for withholding your support. We runners like things to be local; it's part of what makes our running communities so unique and strong. I totally get it. But if you are willing to give us a chance, we promise to do our best to make this *Portland's Marathon*. Reach out to us. Educate us. Tell us what we might not know. We'd hate for any of you to miss out on the fun just because we haven't done our part to fit in. In the meantime, please know that Paula and Dave Harkin will be with us every step of the way as we transition into race management. I've given Paula permission to set me straight if we ever attempt to do anything un-Portlandish. We're honored to have Paula on our team and plan to rely heavily on her to make sure we do things right from a local perspective.

How will we benefit the community?

Some people have been wondering what we plan to do to give back to the community. In a nutshell, the answer is that we plan to spread the love. Although it may take several years to build it up to its fullest potential, we plan to create an "Extra Mile Charity Partner" program that gives Portland-based non-profits an opportunity to benefit from the race on a larger scale. Preference will be given to non-profits whose missions focus on providing sporting opportunities to disadvantaged youth, as well as those who provide services for historically underserved communities. These charity partners will be given fundraising opportunities, public outreach and education outlets, broad exposure to race participants and the public, and anything else we can think of that will help their causes. In addition to the Extra Mile program, we intend to create a Portland Marathon Community Council to serve as the main body responsible for ensuring that the race is properly benefiting the community. The council will be comprised of representatives from Portland's business, government, neighborhood, and non-profit sectors.

Our pledge

Finally, I want you to know that we pledge the entirety of our resources and efforts to accomplishing the lofty goals we have set for this race. I have personally spent many sleepless nights brooding over what we could do with this event if we were only given the opportunity. We are passionate about this. We're dedicated to giving you a marathon worthy of your city. Please, join us on this incredible new adventure and help us create what will come to be known as the best race in the world!

With respect and gratitude,

Jared Rohatinsky
CEO - Brooksee, LLC