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*AltRider finds the balance between looks and performance.*

## AltRider: Mentoring as a Mode of Business by Alisa Clickenger

**It's hard to keep up with Jeremy LeBreton. Whether you're chatting, riding, or doing business, he operates at nothing less than full throttle. He's a man who's "all in" no matter what he's doing; energetic enough to pull you along with him, and charismatic enough that you probably won't mind. It's this combination of energy, excitement and drive that's made AltRider a success in just five short years.**

It was a bold move to start *AltRider* during the middle of the economic downturn. The entire motorcycle industry was bracing itself. Jeremy had been vice president of *Touratech-USA* for four years and wanted to seize the opportunity to build adventure motorcycling products here in the U.S. He'd previously worked at *Moeller Design and Development* in Seattle, gaining the skills to design products from the ground up and take them to market. The sum of those two career experiences, combined with his love of motorcycling, were the factors that led him to found *AltRider*.

"The great idea is the easiest part," says Jeremy. His first challenge was financing the vision. He pitched eight different banks before an SBA loan was even considered.



Product development is non-stop at Altrider.

The second challenge was manufacturing. With a low volume, high quality product it was difficult to find an appropriate manufacturing partner. As a result, products were in development for over a year before *Altrider* officially opened its doors.

How does *Altrider* choose what products to bring to market? It's primarily based upon new motorcycle launches. The company has an advanced product development protocol with a multimillion dollar research firm they can tap into any time the need arises. And, "We're so lucky to have the internet forums for research," says Jeremy. "*Adventure Rider*, *ADV Rider.com*, etc., all of which remain independent and not for profit. As a result we have access to tens of thousands of riders, logging miles and commenting on their rides."

Jeremy is keenly aware that a small manufacturing company cannot indefinitely test their products before taking them to market. Although *Altrider* does extensive research and testing before a product is introduced, they don't shy away from revisions when necessary. In fact, Jeremy loves telling people about the changes and why they've made them—something that's uncommon for a CEO.

The firm is one of several that equip *RawHyde's* California motorcycles with ADV aftermarket products. "The *RawHyde BMW Off-Road Academy* is one of the most vicious riding environments there is," says Jeremy. "With dozens of students developing their off-road skills, pushing the limits and constantly

From sketch to physical part, utilizing rapid prototype technology.



putting the motorcycles through their paces, those bikes are sorely abused. What better environment to test accessories for adventure bikes?"

When customers call *AltRider* they talk directly to the folks who design the products and make their knowledge available to every customer. The corporate atmosphere at *AltRider* is a culture of learning. Each employee has a budget for business-related training. "At a more finite level we have to be careful," says Jeremy. "Because for any of the great brands, a sense of arrogance, complacency and dominance is dangerous. It stops the learning process. And when that happens, you stop acknowledging your mistakes—marking the beginning of the end."

Since inception, they've held a company-wide meeting every Monday. Every department reports on the prior week's progress and the top five things their department is working on that week. "It's an investment in time but it totally pays off," says Jeremy. "Because it ties the whole team together both personally and professionally."

Jeremy likens the *AltRider* team to a tight-knit family. The entire staff goes riding most Thursday nights. If international business people are in town, they tag along, too. The company sponsors monthly team dinners to which employees bring their spouses, and it's not uncommon to see babies and dogs at the office. *AltRider* also pays for every employee's *Motorcycle Safety Foundation* classes.

Over the years Jeremy has had several professional mentors, both on and off the bike. British motorcycle racer Andy Ide was one such mentor and he, in turn, introduced Jeremy to other riders. Riding fast and hard, Jeremy has

learned a lot about putting crashed bikes back together from his riding mentors. The folks he rode with taught him not only how to fix broken bits, but also how to prevent them from breaking in the first place. When Jeremy founded *AltRider*, it was this style of mentoring—hands-on passing along of personal experience—that shaped the way the company would do business. It's evidenced in the attitudes of the employees *AltRider* hires, the company's presence on the forums, their *IMS* show presentations, the company's trail advocacy and the nationwide rides *AltRider* organizes.

Learning from several savvy business mentors over the years, Jeremy acknowledges he's been able to grow *AltRider* in an intelligent way from the insights and sometimes the mistakes of others. Jeremy is now in a position to pay it forward by mentoring others, both in business as well as riding and working on bikes.

"Over the years, I've picked up a ton of useful and helpful riding skills. I hand off these little *MacGyver* tips at presentations to keep the knowledge in circulation. If this stuff doesn't get passed along it's going to be lost forever," says Jeremy.

All you have to do is catch up with him.

**AltRider.com** **ADV**

A photograph showing three motorcyclists riding on a dirt road through a forest. The riders are wearing full protective gear, including helmets and jackets. The motorcycles have their headlights on, and the scene is captured with a slight motion blur, suggesting they are moving quickly. The background is filled with green trees and foliage.

Product testing  
in the Pacific  
Northwest.



Jeremy LeBreton, co-founder and president of *AltRider*.

Every year *AltRider* hosts signature rides for the general public. All three of the following have already taken place in 2016, but you can look forward to them in 2017.

### **TASTE OF DAKAR** **Pahrump, NV (March)**

The GPS-led route in the beautiful deserts of Nevada is created by local legend, Jimmy Lewis—one of the first Americans to hold the podium at the *Dakar Rally*. This ride also includes training seminars by Jimmy and his wife, Heather, along with optional additional training classes through the *Jimmy Lewis Off-Road Riding School*; guest appearances from *Dakar* participants (in 2012, they had the youngest Italian to ever race *Dakar*, Manuel Lucchese, fly in from Italy to attend) as the entertainment at night; and authentic southwestern themed meals and margaritas by the campfire.

### **CONSERVE THE RIDE** **Woodward Caves, PA (June)**

Set in the forests of Pennsylvania, it's not uncommon to be riding next to horse-drawn Amish buggies among rolling hills. *AltRider* teams up with the *Seven Mountains Conservation Corp (SMCC)*, a nonprofit organization fueling the fight to keep off-road trails open for public use. The off-road route was created by enduro enthusiasts and former *ISDE* racers from *SMCC*. You'll see epic views of the Susquehanna River, get dirty in the awesomely different terrain, and nosh on hearty foods. And don't forget the *Yuengling* (a regional beer).



Dropping the *GS* is just part of the job, and is encouraged.

## HOH RAINFOREST RIDE

**(August)**

Spend two nights under the vivid stars of the Pacific Northwest in the enchanting forests of the Olympic Mountains—*AltRider's* backyard. Ride an exclusive 200-mile GPS route on diverse terrain planned by David McKay of *GripTwister Tours*. You'll also engage in off-road training seminars taught by seasoned coaches, ride along waterfalls, enjoy the gorgeous views around the Hoh rainforest, and savor freshly caught fire-grilled oysters among other local fare (salmon, too!)

## All *AltRider* rides include:

- 150–250 mile GPS-led routes created by local riders
- Two nights of camping
- Organized nightly entertainment
- Prizes and prize ceremony
- Seminars for riders of all skill levels
- Delicious region-inspired catered meals
- Good beer to be enjoyed by crackling campfires

*AltRider's Taste of Dakar* is a rider training event not to miss.

