

Tahoe firm's climbing method cuts summit times in half

By Eben Novy-Williams, Bloomberg

When Brooks Entwistle, a partner at Everstone Group in Singapore, climbed the sixth-tallest mountain in the world, the 26,800-foot-tall Cho Oyu, he didn't take the typical seven weeks. He took three weeks off and sandwiched the 17-day ascent between a board meeting and a parent-teacher conference.

That timeframe was unheard of in guided high-altitude mountaineering until recently, when Lake Tahoe-based Alpenglow Expeditions began offering its first "rapid ascent" climbs up some of the tallest peaks in the world. In April, the outfitter will guide a group to summit the 29,000-foot Mount Everest in 42 days, nearly half the time of most expeditions. Later this year, Alpenglow will take another group up Argentina's Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in the western hemisphere, in 14 days instead of the usual 20-plus.

For decades, climbing the world's highest peaks has been an opportunity reserved for those long on money and athletic ability. But for those who have both, the biggest factor is time. For about 30 percent more than the normal price, Alpenglow streamlines the process in various ways: expedited permits, aggressive scheduling, and, sometimes, flying directly to base camp in a helicopter instead of multiple days of trekking in on foot.

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