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Compiled by Ontario By Bike c/o Transportation Options 416-827-2774 | 1-866-701-2774 www.ontariobybike.ca

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### Introduction

Achieving success in tourism development and business operations requires applying management, planning and operational tactics as well as implementing innovative marketing and partnership initiatives that connect with a target market. The term "best practice" is commonly used across industry sectors and refers to techniques or procedures that produce superior results due to improved efficiency, alignment of product with target market or an enhanced delivery of services to consumers.

The purpose of this research is to highlight successful operations with outstanding products or services within the cycle tourism sector.

It hopes to provide Ontario tourism businesses and stakeholders with a snapshot of successful initiatives and best practice concepts to help them elevate tourism offerings as it relates to cycling, cycle tourism and business development in Ontario. Businesses were reviewed under the categories of Accommodations, Campgrounds, Cafes/Restaurants, Attractions/Visitor Information Centres and Transportation Services.

The following components were reviewed during an online scan of over 25 businesses catering to cycle tourists and to help structure findings across all business categories:

- 1. Bike amenities
- 2. Cycling related partnerships and packages
- 3. Marketing tactics



### 1. Customer Service and Amenities

Through thoughtful integration, businesses providing services and amenities focused on serving the cycling market are meeting and often exceeding the needs of their customers.

Many businesses are moving beyond the basics of offering a bike rack and public use of washrooms, to more complex operational and service offerings: cafes are building bike shops inside their operation; campgrounds are facilitating transportation services (for guests & bikes) for airport transfers and travel between businesses and trail/route networks; hostels are equipped with free, bike maintenance workstations and restaurants are packaging take-out meals to fit in water bottle cages.

These businesses are attracting cycling clientele and becoming destinations in their own right through comprehensive services and amenities that target a niche tourist or local market.

The result is a loyal community and a strong reputation supported by media attention and word-of-mouth marketing. In many cases, these businesses are increasing their bottom-line through complimentary services.



Source: www.whitefishbikeretreat.com



Source: www.bikehelena.com



'Moving beyond the basics Offer complementary
services'

### 2. Product and Package Development

While many businesses are improving the services and amenities for cyclists, many more are actively developing products, experiences and packages around cycling.

Some are developed through partnerships and third-party suppliers while others are managed in-house. While some are provided complimentary (e.g. guided bike tour included in hotel booking), many are revenue generating.

Accommodation providers seem to be at the forefront developing (or offering) cycling products and experiences. A hotel in Italy offers packages around signature cycling events, providing accommodation and training programs, as well as transportation to/from events. They have also developed companion programming for guests' partners who are interested in non-cycling activities. A bike retreat in Montana is working with local health and wellness provider to offer 'Bike & Yoga' women's-only weekends.

Cafes are offering 'Brunch & Bike' maintenance workshops and are working with local accommodations and bike tour operators to offer 'Ride and Dine' excursions.

Businesses are creating value-added experiences through new product and package development often generating new economic activity, directly or indirectly for their business and communities.



Source: www.whitefishbikeretreat.com



Source: www.belvederericcione.com



'Developing innovative & value-added experiences'

### 3. Partnerships

Strategic partnerships were prevalent in all businesses researched. Alignment with cycling-related organizations was most common, however other innovative partnerships seemed to support community building as well as revenue generating opportunities.

Some businesses are working with national and state-level cycling organizations to raise funds and awareness for cycling programs or advocacy. A brewery is working with a bike building association to host a festival celebrating vintage bicycles and promoting membership to the association.

Another brewery effectively bridges several interestbased communities partnering with local cycling and art-based initiatives. Hotels are working with neighbouring accommodation providers creating opportunities to leverage regional cycling assets (e.g. route, trails, event, etc) and attract visitors from outside the region.

Partnership possibilities are seemingly endless and provide the opportunity to capitalize on the tangible and intangible assets and networks of all partners to create mutually beneficial outcomes.









'Creating partnerships that build community & capitalize on assets'

### 4. Community Building and Events

Many of the businesses researched were actively pursuing initiatives that were focussed on building a local cycling community around their services and products.

From hosting live cycling viewing events to weekly themed rides (e.g. Cycle & Speed Date) to establishing and sponsoring cycling clubs or professional race teams; these businesses are positioning themselves front-and-centre within the market and creating loyal customers who are part of a larger community.

Some of the more impressive undertakings was a craft brewery hosting an annual, 1,500 participant cycling event starting / finishing at the brewery. Other notable initiatives included fundraising programs for local trail and cycling infrastructure projects and local bicycle advocacy.

Building supportive and vibrant communities by aligning services with a lifestyle concept (in this case, cycling) and effectively leveraging interests and passions of customers is proving to be a path to build successful businesses.











Source: www.lookmomnohands.com



'Supporting local community & fostering a cycling culture'

### 5. Marketing and Communications

Websites incorporated local and regional cycling information or links to resources. This is particularly important when located in close proximity to existing trails or popular routes to help lure cyclists off the routes to their businesses.

Most have an active social media presence and, in addition to other content, are sharing local cycling-related events and information through these channels. Many are using cycling imagery and graphics to engage and reiterate their support/involvement in the activity.

Innovate marketing and communication tactics included producing deeper cycling lifestyle content through magazines or podcasts.

Effective marketing and communication tactics employed by the businesses researched seemed to balance inspirational and fun content with practical information and resources.



Source: www.lookmomnohands.com



Source: www.steelcyclewear.com





Source: www.steelcyclewear.com



'Weaving cycling into marketing images & content creation'

### 6. Branding

More businesses are intentionally branding themselves within the cycling niche; many of which are either owned or managed by individuals or teams who expressed interest in cycling.

Some of the more effective branding efforts were overt with an active approach to fostering and building a community around cycling as a competitive sport as well as a recreational activity.

In some cases this was applied through subtly interior design techniques and motifs, while in others through more comprehensive organizational branding such as through tactics discussed in the previous sections (re: partnerships, community building, events, marketing, etc).

Niche branding seems to be an effective way to differentiate from competitors and chain-based organizations and build relationships with one's target market.



Source: www.steelcyclewear.com



Source: www.whitefishbikeretreat.com







Source: www.pedalersfork.com Source: www.whitefishbikeretreat.com



'Building bikes into brands'

# Appendix: Business/Enterprise Case Studies

### Business Name: Whitefish Bike Retreat



**Location:** Whitefish, Montana (USA)

**Business Type:** Accommodation (Roofed & Camping)

Website: www.whitefishbikeretreat.com

**Business Overview:** Opening in 2013, Whitefish Bike Retreat is a unique destination offering roofed lodging and camping facilities for cyclists. While located in close proximity to popular mountain bike trail networks and international recognized routes, the business also attractions long distance touring cyclists and families interested in exploring the local trails in and around the Whitefish area.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Mechanic stand and bike tools & bike wash station
- Outdoor bike racks (at each campsite) & indoor bike & gear lockup (long term)
- Mountain bike rentals
- Summer pump track, bike trails (on property), bike skills areas
- Winter groomed fat bike trails (on property)
- International shuttle service (guests & bikes) to trails, airport and other destinations
- Bike-branded retail (bike boxes, gear, parts, beer cozies, clothing, etc)
- Bicycle motif's and design featured throughout
- Trail maps, road and mountain bike routes and itineraries available online and onsite
- Trail passes inclusive in accommodation bookings

### **Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:**

- Montana Coffee Traders: Offer guests (and for retail) exclusive, local blend of coffee called 'Pedal Push'
- Product and Brand Activations: Product launches & demo days (e.g. Salsa Cycles, Specialized, others)
- Beyond the Boundaries: Bike tours, camps and clinics offered onsite
- Two Birds Nutrition: Health & wellness professionals offering nutritional planning, yoga and bike clinic for women

- Bike branded business
- Website with cycling information and images
- Community building through events and partnerships (e.g. bike companies)
- Packages
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) & Dirt Diaries(blog)
- · Public and media relations



### Business Name: Hotel Belvedere



Location: Riccione, Italy

**Business Type:** Accommodation (Hotel) **Website:** www.belvederericcione.com/en

**Business Overview:** Hotel Belvedere was ranked in the Top 25 Hotels in the World according to Trip Advisor. They offer extensive services and amenities for cyclists, however, also attract other market segments. The property is located in a well-known cycling destination for experienced and recreational road cyclists.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- · Mechanic stand, bike tools and onsite technical assistant
- Outdoor bike racks / indoor bike & gear storage (alarmed & monitored by CCTV)
- Bike wash and assemble/disassemble station
- Bike, helmet, saddle, GPS rentals
- "Super-energetic" large breakfast
- Packed lunches (including energy bars)
- Photo slide show of rides and excursions with option to purchase CD
- Airport transfers and transfers to routes (guest and bikes)
- Daily "bike notice board" as well as cycle maps with detailed routes
- Eight different complimentary guided bike tours (x5 free per guest)
- · International team of expert cycling guides
- Free 12-hour laundry service for cycling clothes
- Bicycle motif's and design featured throughout
- Companion Packages Alternative programming for non-cycling guests

### **Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:**

- De Rosa: Prominent Italian bike manufacturer offers onsite test centre & rentals
- Migani Bike Shop: Local bike shop offering discounted rates for guests
- Dolomite BikeDay: Accommodation/transportation packages for cycling events
- · Various Regional Hotels: Multi-day cycling tours that incorporate partner hotels

- Bike branded business
- Website with cycling information and images
- Building community through events, sponsorships (e.g. De Rosa Recommended hotel)
- Packages
- · Social media (Facebook)
- · Public and media relations



### Business Name: Friendly Bike Guest House



Location: Portland, Oregon (USA)

**Business Type**: Accommodation (Hostel) **Website**: www.friendlybikeguesthouse.com

**Business Overview:** Opening in August 2010, this small guest house/hostel is located in Portland, Oregon and in a neighborhood that itself is a draw for local and visiting cyclists. It was established less than a full city block away from the United Bicycle Institute with an understanding that the institute attracts a significant number of out-of-town students attending the school. While it seems the majority of guests are cyclists, or interested in cycling, online reviews indicate that non-cyclists also stay at the property and some attracted by the apparent 'community feel' of the accommodation.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- · Mechanic stand and bike tools
- Indoor bike lockup and space for bike box/bags
- · Free laundry facilities
- Exceptional service "Props to Chris for returning my rental bike for me when I couldn't" (Quote from guest on Trip Advisor)
- · Bicycle motif's and design featured throughout
- Bike rentals
- · Central location with cycling infrastructure making area accessible by bike

### **Cycling Related Partnerships and Packages:**

- United Bicycle Institute Offering discounted rates to registered students
- Portland Bicycle Tours Promoting services, including guided tours of Portland

- · Bike branded business
- Website with cycling images
- Community building through partnerships
- Requires a three-night minimum stay to foster a community of like-minded travelers



### Business Name: Fulton Brewing



**Location**: St. Paul, Minnesota (USA) **Business Type**: Attraction (Brewery) **Website**: www.fultonbeer.com

**Business Overview**: Fulton Brewing began in 2011 and opened a taproom at their brewery, the first in St. Paul / Minneapolis. Located in an industrial warehouse setting this brewery is active in the cycling community hosting major cycling events and sponsoring local cycling club, in addition to other cycling-related initiatives.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Outdoor bike rack at brewery
- Free work space for bicycle advocates and other cycling-related community events
- Access to water and washrooms
- Bike tools and repair station
- Bike valet at cycling and non-cycling events

### Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:

- Fulton Gran Fondo Hosts major cycling event in community, branded and with pre and post-event parties at brewery. Approximately 1,500 participants
- Sponsorships Providing various contributions (in-kind and cash) to local cycling events throughout the year (e.g. Fulton Downtown Thunderdome Criterium)
- Fulton Racing A program associated with the brewery that sponsors local groups or individuals in competitive cycling and other outdoor sports
- All-City Cycles Partnership with local bike shop who are occasionally onsite with free bicycle inspections and basic tune-ups, as well as collaborating on several initiatives including Fulton X All-City Cyclocross club, and a bike-inspired beer, Cosmic Stallion
- *Minnesota Cycling Federation* Charitable partner of several events, contributing \$1/beer at events to raise money for cycling program and advocacy across the state
- Art Crank Founding and supporting partner of local cycling-inspired art initiative
- *Nice Ride Minnesota* A non-profit organization that runs public bike sharing to Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota. Administers bike valet during events at brewery on behalf of Fulton Beer.

- · Website with cycling information and images
- Community building through partnerships and event sponsorships
- Branded bike beer and retail (e.g. Cycling jerseys)
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- · Public and Media Relations



### **Business Name: Hopworks Urban Brewing**



**Location**: Portland, Oregon (USA)

Business Type: Attraction (Brewery) & Food Service Provider (Restaurant)

Website: www.hopworksbeer.com

**Business Overview**: Portland's largest family-owned and operated brewery developed with the aim to become an urban hub for the local community. The business has expanded to offer two breweries and a bike bar in Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. Hopworks' Bike Bar was strategically built within a net-zero emission building and on what is commonly referred to as North Portland's "bike highway" on North Williams Avenue.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Outdoor bike rack for 75 bicycles
- Free locks for patrons
- · To-go meals that fit in bicycle water bottle cages
- Bicycle motif's and design throughout (e.g. handmade bicycle frames suspended over the bar areas)
- "Plug-out" bicycles to ride that generate power for brewery
- Bike valet (during special events)
- Access to water and washrooms

### **Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:**

- Community Tap Program Fundraising initiative for local charities and non-profits. Cycling-related
  programs supported include bicycle shop, education programs, trail advocates and community green
  spaces.
- Event Organization & Sponsorships Plan and host, or provide various contributions (in-kind and cash) to cycling events and cycling-related festivals (e.g. Handmade Bike & Beer Festival)
- Hosting Rides Partner with local cycling clubs, promoting scheduled rides from/to the brewery
- County Cycles Staff and tools from local bike shop occasionally onsite offering free bicycle safety inspections and basic tune-ups

- Community building through partnerships and event sponsorships
- Bike-branded beers and retail (e.g. Cycling jerseys)
- · Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, video) & blog
- Public and media relations



# Business Name: Barossa Cycle Hub



**Location**: Tanunda, South Australia (AUS)

**Business Type**: Attraction (Visitor Information Centre)

Website: www.barossa.com/barossa-cycle-hub

**Business Overview**: A purpose-built facility located in South Australia, adjacent to the Barossa Visitor Information Centre. The Cycle Hub's goal is to become a destination and position the facility as a start/finish location for visiting and local cyclists looking to ride local road routes, or the off-road and paved 40km Barossa Trail. The project was co-funded by the Australian Government through the Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund Grants Programme, in conjunction with The Barossa Council.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Bike rentals, both traditional and pedal-assist (administered by Barossa Visitor Centre)
- Public parking, washrooms, water / drinking fountain, showers
- · Bike racks and storage (covered and secure) & personal lockers
- Multiple bike maintenance stations
- Shaded cover, shelter & picnic tables
- Vending machines selling bike accessories and simple destination-branded retail
- Regional cycling and visitor information (including print cycling maps, trailhead signage, safety messaging)
- · Complimentary cycle services outside of traditional retail hours

### **Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:**

- Local Cycling Clubs/Groups: Support local bike clubs/groups to host group rides from the Cycle Hub.
- Hosting Events: Regional cycling expo onsite to raise awareness of facility and cycling in the region as well as "Come 'n' Try" events for new or visiting cyclists.
- Corporate/Government Partnerships: Managed through regional tourism organization, strong partnerships with regional government and local businesses

- Community building through partnerships and events
- Promoted on local and regional marketing materials and tourism information
- Dedicated webpage with cycling information and resources, within regional tourism website
- Social media (through regional tourism channels)
- Public and media relations



### Business Name: Pedalers Fork



Location: Calabasas, California (USA)

Business Type: Food Services (Café and Restaurant) & Bike Shop

Website: www.pedalersfork.com

**Business Overview**: Pedalers Fork is a local organic restaurant, bar, 10 speed coffee shop, and boutique bike shop all located in a natural setting, in close proximity to popular road cycling routes, paths and mountain bike trails.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Outdoor bike rack
- Full-service bike shop
- Access to water and washrooms
- · To-go meals that fit in bicycle water bottle cages
- Bicycle motif's and design throughout (e.g. Bicycle frames suspended over the bar and coffee shop areas)

### Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:

- Pedalers Fork 10 Speed Coffee Cycling Club: Registered USA Cycling club promoting competitive cycling
- Women's Mountain Bike Team of Pedalers Fork: Ad hoc, sponsored local women's mountain bike club
- Event Organizing: Mountain Goat Gravel Hunt, a scavenger hunt cycling event along local gravel roads
- Event Sponsorships: Provide various contributions (in-kind and cash) to cycling-related events (e.g. Pedal Cross Mulholland Gravel Grinder & Mailbu Gran Fondo)
- Product and Brand Activations: Weekly cycling manufacturers and brand demonstrations, often paired with culinary or beverage packages
- Local Cycle Clubs: Host and promote scheduled rides from/to the café/restaurant
- Anza Hotel: Partnership with local boutique hotel, cross-promotion and discounted rates
- Women's Cycling Association: Partner with national organization, hosting rides to raise awareness of, and support programming
- Topanga Creek Bicycles: Partnership with local bike shops, promoting services and hosted rides

- Community building through partnerships, events and sponsorships
- · Bike-branded interior and materials (e.g. coffee cups)
- Bike-branded retail (e.g. Cycling jerseys, coffee, water bottles, etc)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Public and media relations



## Business Name: Steel Cyclewear & Coffeeshop



Location: Paris, France

Business Type: Food Services (Café) & Bike Retail

Website: www.steelcyclewear.com

**Business Overview**: Steel is a boutique café offering coffee, sandwiches and baked goods, along with specialised performance cycling gear. Originally, the founders of this café created a cycling-themed lifestyle magazine, followed by the opening of the first Paris cycling café. This shop has also made financial contributions/investments in improving the cycling infrastructure of Paris.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Outdoor bike rack
- Bike repair tools
- Access to water and washrooms
- · Promoted as a staging area for group rides
- · Bicycle motif's and design throughout

### **Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:**

- STEEL Trend: A Communication and consultant agency involved in both cycling and non-cycling related projects
- STEEL Magazine: A project of STEEL Trend, a magazine was produced illustrating the emerging trend of urban cycling through cultural topics, interviews and photographs
- STEEL Cycling Club: An official cycling club with weekly rides hosted from café and other locations
- Promote and build community on online cycling platforms (e.g. Strava)
- *Product and Brand Activations*: Work with cycling brands and related businesses to host branded events at the café, including demonstrations, guided rides and presentations
- Event Organizing: Host a variety of themed cycling events and group rides from the café/store

- Community building through partnerships, events and sponsorships
- Bike-branded interior and retail (e.g. coffee beans)
- Quarterly bike-themed lifestyle magazine publication
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Public and media relations



### Business Name: Look Mom No Hands



Location: London, England

Business Type: Food Services (Café) & Bike Shop

Website: www.lookmumnohands.com

**Business Overview**: Founded in 2010 Look Mum No Hands! combines a cafe, bicycle workshop, bar, and exhibition space. Generally considered one of the first cycle cafes in the world. Located in London's trendy Shoreditch neighbourhood, they have begun expanding with satellite cafés in neighbourhoods of London.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Outdoor bike racks (on street and onsite)
- · Onsite bike shop (with 5 mechanics) and retail
- Access to water and washrooms
- · Promoted as a welcoming staging location for group rides
- Bicycle motifs and design throughout

### **Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:**

- Bicycle Maintenance Course: Basic and intermediate workshops available onsite, with free coffee
- Event Organization: Develop/promote non-cycling events associated with cycling (e.g. documentaries, films)
- Event Sponsorships: Provide various contributions (in-kind and cash) to cycling and related events
- Local Bike Shops & Manufacturer: Partner to host product and program launches as well as guided tours
- *Group Rides*: Create various themed group rides to foster and grow cycling community (e.g. Cycle Speed Dating) that start/end at café
- Artist and Author Collaborations: Partner with local and international artists to display and launch bicycle-themed illustrations, photography, art and books.
- British Cycling & Cycling UK: Partner with some of the nation's largest cycling organizations to host events (re: The Great Escape)

- Community building through partnerships, events and sponsorships
- · Bike-branded business with website with cycling information and images
- Bike-branded retail (e.g. Clothing, coffee, home, kids, etc)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube) & blog
- Podcast
- Public and media relations



# Business Name: The Cap Trail Bike Shuttle



Location: Richmond, Virginia (USA)

**Business Type:** Transportation Services (Bike Shuttle)

Website: www.captrailbikeshuttle.com/

**Business Overview**: The Cap Trail Bike Shuttle is a service that transports riders and their bicycles along the Virginia Capital Trail in Richmond, Virginia. The Cap Trail Bike Shuttle offers several standard pick-up and drop-off locations, however also work with visitors to help trip plan and offer custom services.

### **Bike Amenities:**

- Customized and scheduled pick-up and drop-off locations along 53 mile / 82km multi-use trail
- Climate controlled 12-passenger shuttle van with secure bike storage on a 16-foot-trailer outfitted to carry as many as 17 bikes
- Bike transportation for all bikes including tandems, recumbents and e-bikes
- Complimentary ice water and snacks on every shuttle.

### Cycling Related Partnerships & Packages:

- Package Development: Developed various cycling products partnering with local businesses including restaurants and breweries (e.g. Bike & Beer Dinner on the Capital Trail)
- Local Bike Shops: Partner with local bike shops to host bicycle maintenance course with group rides and shuttle return.
- Basket & Bikes: Partner with local tour and bike rental operator to cross promote and offer complementary services.
- Corporate Partnerships: Working with other tourism businesses to develop team-building experiences for local businesses along the trail

- · Community building through partnerships, events and sponsorships
- · Website with cycling information and resources available
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Public and media relations



### Other Businesses Researched

Additional resources were researched to provide greater insight across businesses in terms of customer service and amenities, product and package development, partnerships, community building and events, marketing and communications and branding.

### Other Accommodations Reviewed:

- Premium Inn, UK www.premierinn.com/gb/en/why/bike-friendly.html
- Onomichi, Japan www.onomichi-u2.com/en/
- Riding Fool, Canada www.ridingfool.com/
- Spoken Hostel, USA www.spokenhostel.org/
- Various www.italybikehotels.com

### **Other Attractions Reviewed:**

- Peddler Brewing, USA <u>www.peddlerbrewing.com</u>
- Summit Brewing, USA <u>www.summitbrewing.com</u>
- Second Wedge Brewing Co., Canada <u>www.thesecondwedge.ca</u>

### Other Cafes / Restaurants Reviewed:

- Angry Cat Fish, USA <u>www.angrycatfishbicycle.com</u>
- Spoke Bicycle Café, USA www.www.spokebicyclecafe.com
- Apex Bar, USA www.apexbar.com
- London Bicycle Café, Canada www.londonbicyclecafe.com
- Fix Coffee & Bikes, Canada www.fixcb.ca

### Other Transportation Service Businesses Reviewed:

- Sherpa Bus, New Zealand www.westcoastrailtrail.com/sherpa-shuttle
- The Shred Shuttle, Canada www.theshredshuttle.com/summer-service
- Baga France, France www.bagafrance.com/en/index.html
- Peak Shuttles, Canada www.peakshuttles.com
- Epic Rides, Canada www.epicrides.ca





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416-827-2774 | 1-866-701-2774
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