

Bicycle Retailer

AND INDUSTRY NEWS

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Studies Differ Drastically On Participation

BY JASON NORMAN

BOULDER, CO—Bicycling participation is either looking quite rosy or downright gloomy depending on which new study you're looking at. Outdoor Industry Association and National Sporting Goods Association conducted the studies.

OIA's study leans toward the positive, estimating that 60 million people participate in cycling.

"Surveys will always have different numbers depending on the methodology and the way the question was asked," said Frank Hugelmeyer, president of the Outdoor Industry Association. "The participation study that we published in June of 2006 has a higher number of bicyclists—it was a phone methodology and captured many bi-

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SKS Striving For Bigger Share Of U.S. Pump Sales

BY DOUG MCCLELLAN

SUNDERN, Germany—When a cyclist in Tahoma or Tallahassee goes shopping for a new bicycle pump, the SKS brand name is hardly top of mind.

Although it is the market leader in Europe outside of France, SKS is "barely a player" in the crowded American market, the company's U.S. manager concedes. But as it prepares to launch a number of stylish new pumps, SKS has set an audacious goal for itself: to become the No. 2 pump brand in the

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Skills Camps Reach Out to Women Riders

BY LYNETTE CARPIET

SNOWMASS, CO—Jen Fisher is taking the concept of women's mountain bike skills camps far beyond the saddle.

An avid outdoor enthusiast, Fisher's resume runs the gamut from white

water rafting guide to ski instructor to surf instructor. More recently, she added the title masseuse, after running her own massage practice for the past five years.

Now, at age 36, she finds herself gravitating back to the outdoors with

her new company, Over the Bars, and a weeklong camp that combines yoga, massage, nutritional counseling and martial arts techniques in centering and breathing with mountain bike skills instruction.

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Learning Curve

Spokeswomen camps create a fun and relaxed atmosphere.



Photo by Robin O'Neill

Retailers Sell Cycling through Indoor Training

BY JILL JANOV

JACKSON, WY—In a high mountain city where most bike shops become ski shops during long and cold winters, Scott Fitzgerald had another idea.

Fitzgerald, a bike enthusiast with deep roots in the Jackson, Wyoming, cycling community, knew that local road riders trained indoors all winter and that spinning classes were packed on snowy days. He also understood that road cycling was becoming more popular in town.

So Fitzgerald came up with a plan to turn this interest in indoor cycling into

a winter revenue stream for his shop, Fitzgerald's Bicycles. He purchased eight CompuTrainers interconnected to one computer through a USB port and opened what he called "an indoor cycling center" inside the store.

"When I found out you could have eight people riding all together inside, it just clicked," he said about the CompuTrainer MultiRider software. "But it was definitely a leap of faith. I didn't know if people would adopt it."

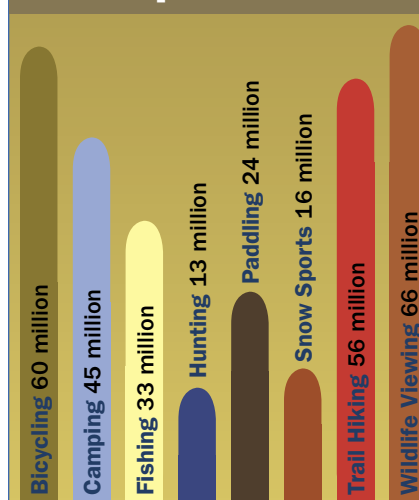
They did. Fitzgerald's four weeknight CompuTrainer classes filled up quickly and customers even reserved the train-

ers for private group rides.

Fitzgerald is not alone in trying to come up with creative revenue ideas to differentiate his business from his

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Active Outdoor Recreation Participants in 2005



Source: Outdoor Industry Foundation

On the Inside

Fulcrum looks beyond high-end road wheels to become a full line component company.

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Pennsylvania stores help police arrest thieves after they stole \$10,000 in bikes.

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Retailers Sell...

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competitors and mass marketers. He and other shop owners nationwide are expanding the definition of a bike shop to include personal training, individual and group coaching, advanced fitness testing, movement and massage, metabolic testing, custom bike building, bike fittings, nutritional analyses and more.

At least 75 bike shops nationwide have set up a version of the indoor cycling center with training devices that include not only CompuTrainers, but CycleOps trainers and indoor cycles, treadmills and even indoor pools with counter-currents that allow customers to swim in place inside the store.

In this new image, the bike shop is no longer just a place to buy a bike and get it fixed. Many shop owners think this approach makes sense for them

and customers seem to like it, too.

Selling the experience of cycling by adding fitness and training facilities began about three years ago. Offerings are growing each year and some shops are tailoring services to specific niche markets such as triathletes, road cyclists, runners, swimmers and endurance athletes to an extraordinary degree.

To this end, shop owners are hiring or contracting with qualified coaches to offer individualized training pro-

grams, custom bike fits, VO2 threshold testing, pedaling technique analyses, power measurements, custom insole fittings and classes that teach customers how to overhaul bicycles, choose equipment and gearing, plan training seasons, eat the right foods and even treat road rash.

"I think that every bike shop needs to have something they specialize in," said Stephen Thordarson, owner of Smart Cycling Bike Shop in the northern Chicago suburb of Glenview, Illinois. "And being a coach for more than 20 years gave me a good background to know what athletes really need."

When Thordarson opened his bike shop last year, he set aside 24-by-10 feet of floor space for his CompuTrainer MultiRider eight-rider center. The center is booked every weekend in the winter and has attracted cyclists of all ages and levels to the shop, including a triathlete who rode an entire Ironman course on the trainer in the store. It took her seven hours.

"Part of why a bike shop would want CompuTrainers is because they produce sales of other items. This customer rode the entire Ironman Florida course and discovered that her really cool triathlon saddle was just not made for her," Thordarson said. "Her bike fit needed changing and her shorts were not that comfortable over the ride."

The cyclist also discovered how much food and drink she needed to complete the ride. All of these discoveries generate sales, he said.

"Many cyclists buy something because they think the product will help them, but discover when it is put into use that they need something different," he said. "I cannot count how many customers have purchased shoes, pedals, saddles, handlebars, stems and seat posts after riding their bikes on the CompuTrainer."

Thordarson said the CompuTrainer center has also generated sales of bike fits because once he analyzes his customers' pedal strokes, they understand how he can help them improve their cycling efficiency.

"We gained six new kids on our team and all their families as customers after they started training on the CompuTrainer," he said. "People coming in the store would see the juniors training or people riding and ask a lot of questions. That prompted them to come to our store for all sorts of things. The level of sophistication of the CompuTrainer equipment has a tendency to give your shop a higher level of credibility."

Cadence Cycling and Multisport Centers in Philadelphia was the first to introduce the CompuTrainer MultiRider in a bike-retailing environment. Today the shop has a CompuTrainer 16-rider setup and storeowners are

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planning to open a new cycling and multi-sport center in Manhattan with 24 CompuTrainer slots.

"We do more than 10 classes a week," said Brian Walton, vice president of performance at Cadence. "We are all about training. Everything we do is customized."

At Vecchio's bike shop in Boulder, Colorado, co-owner Peter Chisholm opened the Vecchio Performance Center in a small building behind the store. There, head performance consultant Jon Tarkington administers blood lactate tests, bike fittings and talks to customers about how PowerTaps and other training devices can improve their performance.

"It's the next step after 'I got a bike. I'm riding a lot. How come I am not getting faster?'" Chisholm said. "Jon evaluates their fitness and recommends products and then we build the products for the customers. It's really helped our business and shows our customers we are concerned about how their bikes fit and how they can get the most out of riding and achieving their per-

he said.

The way David Cathcart sees it, the appeal of offering training facilities and advice is threefold. Cathcart, director of marketing for Saris Cycling Group, maker of the CycleOps PowerTap, said customers are challenged by inclement weather, shortage of quality, traffic-free roads in big cities and limited time to train. Doing measured workouts with a power meter can save time by producing faster, specific gains in power and

performance, he said.

At Zoom Multisports in San Francisco, the five weekly cycling classes led by professional coaches are full every day. Classes are popular on rainy or foggy days and among working professionals who can't exercise until the evening.

"It creates a huge buzz in the store when people are walking by, whether it's a full class or just one person riding," said Keith McDonald, owner of Zoom. "It drives people to the store and once

they get here they take a gander and they start asking questions about gear. I'd say probably 75 percent of the time they buy something."

The shop also has an indoor pool, a service area and a retail shop.

"Our vision right off the bat was to split the store right down the middle with one side retail and the other side training," McDonald said. "We call ourselves California's only one-stop shopping training facility." **BRAIN**



MultiRider centers such as this one at Smart Cycling Bike Shop attract cyclists of all ages and levels.

sonal goals."

At Criterium Bicycles in Colorado Springs, the shop holds CompuTrainer races on Tuesday nights.

"I was surprised that it wasn't the hard-core racers who came out," said Nic Ponsor, part owner and sales manager at Criterium. "It was just intermediate riders who wanted to have fun. There was a ton of cheering and applause in the store and it brought on a little crowd."

Floor space is the major limitation to offering these services, said Chuck Wurster, vice president and general manager of RacerMate, maker of the CompuTrainer. But once the shop figures out a way to set up a training center, they have reported sales increases of up to 40 percent in the winter months,

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