



Bicycle Benefits Ambassador PROGRAM (for individuals and organizations looking to keep the program fresh or bring it to life in their community)

About

Bicycle Benefits is a year-round program/effort which promotes bike riding everyday. Businesses and locations offer a discount or reward to arriving bike riders and to encourage bike riding. The program and associated initiatives, builds ridership, awareness, connections, business and bicycle culture.

Mission The mission of Bicycle Benefits is to create local and national excitement for bike riding as a healthy and fun way to move. We work to change people's transportation behavior and minds with regards to biking. We work to support people who are already biking, get new people riding and blossom business support for biking. We are building a national program and partnerships throughout the US that help to achieve these goals.

What it takes: Self-discipline, good people skills, enthusiasm, organization, persistence, knowledge of the program and a passion for biking.

Position Description Ambassadors use stop-in visits, emails and phone calls to get local businesses to offer Bicycle Benefits. The ambassadors and their organizations can [purchase program materials in bulk](#) and bring the program to life on a local level by distributing materials to businesses. Ambassadors put on related activities and events to draw interest for the program, and biking alike. Ambassadors maintain and grow the local

chapters to the best of their ability. The businesses can purchase the start-up packs, be added to the roster and reorder stickers from a local ambassador or directly from the central office. Bicycle Benefits is optimally the backup and supports the ambassadors in any or all of their local efforts related to the program.

History and Current Status of the program Started by Ian Klepetar in 2005 through his work with the Saratoga Healthy Transportation Network. His two years of working locally included a bike-to-school effort, new bike racks for the city, a bicycle plan, a light-up the night campaign for unilluminated cyclists, and a bike-to-work effort. Through the work of ambassadors and organizations, Bicycle Benefits has grown to include over 100 communities, 2,200+ partnering businesses (2020) and over 100,000 individual members. Charlotte, NC, Madison & Milwaukee, WI, Seattle, WA and Boston, MA all have 100+ participating businesses.

Goals Create sustainable and long standing Bicycle Benefits programs that get more people biking, more often and to more places. Create related activities, rides and events that spark joy, fun and connections. Accomplish a paradigm shift, mind shift and transportation shift from the ground up. Create win-win partnerships with businesses, organizations and cities that are involved. Bring our ideas and concepts to the masses.

Critical Success Factors:

How do I approach a business? With bold enthusiasm towards the program, their participation and its future success in the community. If you appear unsure of what you are doing then this will be communicated to the decision makers. Showing up on bike and getting non-rushed facetime is almost always the best and most effective way to get a positive response from a business that you are interested in inviting into the program. We do have a [template letter](#) that you can use. Go directly to the top of the decision making chain whenever possible. Be persistent or create a

deadline in order to get a decision from the owner. Explain the benefits of participation (see below) and though you are creating something from scratch, indicate the vision, without a doubt that it IS happening and you are inviting them to be part of it.

What businesses? Since the focus of our effort is to get businesses to provide a discount/reward to those who bike to the participating locations our ambassadors are asked to focus on stable and vibrant businesses during the initial outreach. Grocery stores, farmers markets, bakeries, cafes, restaurants, retail stores, popular destinations, bars, breweries and bike shops should be the focus of the initial outreach. Often businesses who are looking for free marketing to increase their customer base will be interested, these are not always/usually a good match. We are looking for strong community partners to change culture, businesses who are influencers and will help build the program, others tend to be high maintenance and frustrating to cyclists looking to redeem their benefits.

Deals that work Participating businesses should offer a discount/reward that will inspire individuals to bike to their location and use the program. Deals such as “Buy 1, get 1 free”, “free item”, “20% Off”, “½ Off your 1st...”, “free item w/purchase” have worked well, get utilized and draw excitement in the program.

- Go big! Your ask should be considerable and leave it to the owner/marketing person to talk you down. The more exciting offers ultimately benefit the business, the program and will create a buzz around the participant's offer. 10% off will allow a business to join but is kind of eh... and though it will depend on what business it is, doesn't usually get new folks in the door. Grocery stores are the only business type that are allowed to offer 5% Off and this is based on their small margins and high volume that they may be experiencing with the program. **note:** if a business **does not** want to purchase the program stickers and sell them, their offer should be above the minimum (15%+) and the local ambassador should make a

determination whether their participation, as only a place of redemption, will add value and give a boost to the local program.

Promotion

- Inhouse: When delivering signage, decals and posters try not to leave them in a pile for employees or owners to lose track of, try your best to personally put them up right away in the most visible place possible.

Write the current offer in the spaces provided on the signage with a Sharpie, (cover it up with clear tape on the window decal to keep it from being erased when surfaces are washed) and



attempt to have them posted in visible areas (counter, door, bulletin board).

- FB, Instagram etc. Start (or become an administrator of) a local Facebook page or social media account and use it to spread the word when new places join, events are happening and to keep the buzz buzzing. Take fun pictures and keep your local people up to date with the program and related activities that you are putting on.
- Cross-promoting Request that businesses or local groups promote independently, through their social media or through their publications: Bicycle Benefits [image files](#) can be used to cross-promote.
- Face-to-face This is really the difference between a successful program and an unsuccessful program. Whenever you get a chance to tell someone about the program, you need to take advantage of it. Everyone either rides a bicycle or knows someone who does and telling folks how the program works and personally selling stickers will tie them into the program right away.

Maintenance Whenever you stop in, see that there is a visible reminder of their participation. See that they have stickers stocked and all the signage they need. Intermittently produce new posters that the business can *SAVE!* and keep posted in a visible spot that includes area participants and how the program works

[Video Tutorial](#)



What are you pointing at? If employees aren't educated about the program, what the offer is, how it works and where the program stickers are kept, the program won't function properly. Be proactive in helping the owners educate and instruct employees about the details and workings of the program. Communication is key as you work to build and maintain a solid program. If you have a few reliable friends to help maintain businesses, this is very helpful! They could ask if the business has enough helmet stickers to sell each time they stop in to redeem their offer.

Restocking of stickers If an individual bike rider attempts to purchase a sticker and the business out, they may give up on their search. Be diligent about restocking businesses when they run out. Insure that the manager/owner knows your contact and how to get more stickers. They may know that you are the person to call or email if they run out but be mindful that running a business is consuming and restocking bike stickers might not get prioritized. Stay on top of it.

Benefits of business participation:

- Increased customer loyalty
- New customers
- Becoming a bike-riding destination

- Joining a city-wide and national roster of bike-friendly businesses.
- Help Community reach higher level of Bike Friendliness
- Revenue from sticker sales
- Free advertising
- Opening up desirable parking through behavioral change amongst customers
- Encouraging increased spending at their business
- Become a regular stop on or after community bike rides
- Be featured on BIKE! BINGO cards
- Priority consideration as a vendor when local bike events happen.
- Media/event opportunities
- Free bike pumps at participating businesses

Starter Packs

The starter packs that are distributed to businesses include 10 of the Bicycle Benefits stickers, 2 large decals, a placard which often gets put by the register and a small decal that usually gets stuck to the back of the register or pastry case.

Organizing

Accumulate business contacts, individual contacts and connections. Connect with those who can help further your efforts to various venues, related groups or help promote what you are building in the community. By doing so you will be more successful and be able to grow your personal effort exponentially. Be open to volunteers, friends and related organizations that will step up to help run and grow the program.

Related Events & Activities

If you want your program to thrive you'll need to host one or more of these related activities:

1. Organize a weekly or monthly bike ride that visits participating locations ie. [Charlotte's Plaza Midwood Tuesday Night Ride](#). Invite EVERYONE to participate, make them well publicized and keep them slow, accessible and fun. If one already exists, collaborate with them.
2. An annual Bike Bingo game (<https://www.cascade.org/node/25936>). Set the game up like a bingo card with participating businesses and area events on the front of the card and details on the back.



Participants bike to locations, show their Bike Benefits sticker, get their card stamped and can win prizes when they fill their card or get a bingo.

3. Other events A biker breakfast, a meet & greet, a kick-off party or other events or related activities that will increase participation.
4. Posters Once you feel that you have solid participation among the business community, make a poster or have us help you make one.

Who is Supporting you?

As you start working, you will find that there are many individuals, businesses, organizations and institutions that will support what you are working on. INVOLVE THEM! Get their information and tell them how they can be most helpful or see how to collaborate. Maybe they know other business owners and can connect you, maybe they can request participation at their favorite businesses, perhaps they have a press contact or write for a local blog. Bicycle Benefits is here to assist but your community is there to help you make the program successful. In addition, we have a [Bike Benefits Ambassadors Facebook group](#) where we can share ideas and get advice from others who organizing local programs.

But they said “no”

There will be hurdles, obstacles and those who discredit the value of bike riding. Shake it off, it's part of moving forward and one of the challenges of growing a program. There will be businesses that don't get back to you and some that say no. Don't let them break you. Keep going, we are building a new model!

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

— [R. Buckminster Fuller](#)

Sometimes we've gotta say “no” Businesses joining for the wrong reasons and providing low/weak offers dilute the program and take focus off the awesomeness created by passionate business partners. In addition, there are certain businesses that might not be a good fit, use your discretion.

Media Once you have a solid group of participating businesses involved, engage the press. Put on a kick-off type event that will draw a bunch of bike riders.

Get pumped up!

We like to offer our partner businesses with bicycle floor pumps that customers and employees can use. If you can get 10-12 businesses on board that think that having a bike pump around would be a good fit for their business, we will ship you a box of pumps to distribute.

Have fun!...Lots of it!