

Winning Ideas for Increasing Participation in Your Bike to Work Team

These ideas were developed over several years by staff at Ministry of Environment. They rely on a critical mass of cycling enthusiasts who are keen to remove barriers to their co-workers participation, and willing to push the envelope a little to do so. For us the results included lots of fun, >90% participation in the leading groups, and BtWW prizes most years!

Establish the Culture: - Leadership, Visibility, Recognition

1. Seek executive support: - this is easier if there's a corporate leader who cycles to work (we were fortunate to have a series of Assistant Deputy Ministers and Deputy Ministers who cycled regularly). Support to do what, you ask? Well here are a few examples of things our executive members did:
 - a. Issued a BtWW challenge to all work units and provided a prize - free food!
 - b. Paid to host the BtWW Skills Course, and allowed staff to take the course during work hours.
 - c. Led or joined work unit teams, and encouraged people to participate.
2. Create visibility: - this includes things like displaying Bike to Work Week posters in the building lobby, elevators and stairwells, as well as near bike racks and shower and locker facilities (all of which existed due to the leadership of the above-mentioned cycling enthusiasts, and the support from our executive)

Remove Barriers to Participation: - Problem-Solve, Get Creative, Have Fun!

3. My bike isn't in very good shape.
 - a. Offer a tune-up course at work (one of our staff is a former bike mechanic).
 - b. Offer to tune up individual bikes and provide needed repairs during the day.
4. I don't feel comfortable with my route/I don't feel comfortable on the road.
 - a. Encourage people to take the cycling skills courses being offered.
 - b. Offer a brown-bag session on route-planning and have experienced cyclists work one on one to problem-solve the difficult parts of someone's route.
 - c. Organize bike-buddies to show up at people's houses or an agreed location, and cycle with them to work, talking them through the challenging parts.
5. I don't have the right equipment. Have we got a deal for you! With more than 150 regular cyclists in the building, we can and did find almost anything people needed to borrow: - rain jackets, panniers, LED flashers, even entire bikes.
6. I live too far away (Metchosin, Mill Bay, Sidney). Have you thought about "Park and Ride"? Buses carry bikes, or we can lend you a bike rack for your car, and you can drive partway, and cycle the rest on Lochside or the Goose. Maybe check it out on the weekend so you know where everything is, and you're not worried about logistics.
7. I still don't feel safe on the road. Well, this may sound crazy, but we have someone who will meet you at your house with a tandem bike, and ride you to work. Tell us what time do you need to be at work, and we'll tell you what time he will be there.
8. Are there any other issues we can help you with?