

Encouraging Employee Bike Use

End-of-trip facilities, services and a company fleet can boost bike ridership



The Impact

Biking is a clean method of transportation that can help businesses reduce their carbon footprint. It reduces absenteeism, contributes to better employee health and lowers health care costs. Bicyclists report arriving to work with less stress than those who commute by car, which in turn can increase workplace productivity. All of these benefits allow bike programs to be used as an effective employee recruitment and retention tool.

With widespread bike adoption, employers can also reduce parking costs — sometimes quite significantly, given that the cost of a parking space in a paved lot can cost about \$2,500 and often as much as \$50,000 in a parking structure. Comprehensive bike programs and amenities can also contribute to LEED points and help fulfill commuter benefit requirements.

We examine both end-of-trip facilities and company bike fleets.

End-of-Trip Facilities

Description

Potential bike commuters look first for easy access to secure locations to store their bike during the workday. Indoor bike racks can give cyclists the peace of mind that their bikes won't get stolen. In addition, the availability of shower and locker facilities makes employees more likely to bike to work. Showers, lockers and towel service allow employees to clean up after bike rides or jogs and to store their "active wear" clothes during the day. Do-it-yourself bike repair stations and/or staffed repair clinics are other highly desired services a business can add to further promote the use of bikes. Businesses can mix and match features and scale appropriately to meet their own specific needs.

Where It's Been Implemented

Many employers have constructed end-of-trip facilities. For example, SunPower has built a bike room with parking for 200 bikes and a do-it-yourself repair station. The company also offers showers, lockers and towel service. Tableau employees have access to secured, ventilated bike rooms that come

with fix-it stands and benches. These services, together with a complete suite of services around biking, have resulted in 14 percent of Tableau employees choosing biking as their primary commute mode.

Pembroke Real Estate sought to transform its historic high-rise in downtown San Francisco into a “bike commuter’s paradise” by building end-of-trip facilities. The company worked with a consultant to study city data, consult with experienced developers, and design a state-of-the-art bike facility fitted with bike racks, showers, lockers and towel-drying rooms.

Key Factors for Success

Suitable indoor space is vital to creating well-functioning bike facilities. There may be extra space near workstations, under stairwells, in storage spaces or in underused hallways. Salesforce was able to turn a long, narrow storage space into an attractive and useful bike storage room. Offering a suite of comprehensive services, including bike safety training, repair clinics, loaner programs and rebates make these programs more likely to succeed.

Key Obstacles

In many buildings, creating end-of-trip facilities can require some reconfiguration, which can be costly and cumbersome. Sometimes a reconfiguration is not possible or is difficult to achieve and might compete with other requirements such as safety regulations and egress requirements.

Return on Investment

Bike facilities encourage biking, which can unlock greater productivity among employees. The return on investments in bike facilities is hard to quantify because many benefits are indirect, but surveys have shown employees appreciate them.

References and Resources

- [Bikes Make Life Better online forum on end-of-trip facilities](#)
- [Bikes Make Life Better guide to bike parking for employers and developers](#)
- [Bikes Make Life Better online forum on end-of-trip facilities](#)

Company Bike Fleets

Description

Company bike fleets offer employees a way to traverse sprawling suburban worksites or urban downtown settings. These bikes are free for employees to use and can drastically cut down on intra-campus travel time. They can also be useful for biking to nearby locations for lunch breaks or errands, reducing the need to use a car. Company bike fleets might also include loaner bikes that allow employees to try bike commuting before committing to a bike purchase. Loaner bikes can include e-bikes for harder or longer commutes and folding bikes for commuters who use public transit.

Where It’s Been Implemented

Kaiser Permanente offers a fleet of 25 bikes that can be checked out of its health center. Each comes with a helmet and a lock, and they are used to travel between buildings, run errands or exercise on a nearby scenic trail. A total of 95 percent of employees say that the bikes offer a nice break during the day.

At Facebook, the campus bike shop operates a fleet of loaner bikes that employees can reserve for up to a week at a time. This allows employees to try bike commuting without committing to buying a bike. Facebook has seen this loaner system transform employees into passionate bike riders.

Key Factors for Success

Company bike fleets are more useful when the bikes are durable and easy to access. Excessive barriers to rental and use limit the number of people who will go out of their way to use a bike. The number of bikes also needs to be scaled relative to the needs of the workforce. Offering a suite of comprehensive services, including bike safety training, repair clinics, loaner programs and rebates makes these programs more likely to succeed.

Key Obstacles

Theft can make it costly to continually operate a bicycle fleet. To overcome this obstacle, company bikes should be equipped with GPS tracking so that the fleet can be managed from a phone, tablet or laptop. A GPS system makes corralling and locking bikes at the end of the day easier as well. At LinkedIn, the GPS bike system reduced the loss rate from 70 percent to 4 percent. LinkedIn also uses the system to better understand bike use habits in order to continually improve their fleet. However, some employees might have privacy concerns related to the use of GPS tracking that could prevent them from using their company's bikes.

Return on Investment

Bike fleet advocates and consultants agree that biking between buildings translates into productivity gains. Although individual results vary, biking generally cuts travel time by two-thirds when compared to walking. Biking also increases brain function. A recent study in the Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research found that those who spent 30 minutes spinning on a stationary bike scored higher on memory and reasoning tests than those who didn't.

References and Resources

- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. [Bike-Friendly Development Guidelines](#)
- BikesMakeLifeBetter.com. [Guide to company bike fleets](#)
- ["Physical Exercise Keeps the Brain Connected."](#) Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research
- ["Biking Can Sharpen Your Thinking and Improve Your Mood."](#) Psychology Today

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