

the independent bulletin

Latest news from the Association of Cycle Traders
November 2008

Precious custom Fetch



Getting you back on your bike

The best customers are those that are actively cycling; therefore keeping customers in the saddle is essential to growing sales. Fetch's specific aim is keeping bicycles and cyclists on the road, retaining business via specialist retailers supported by supplementary income for the retailer.

In November the current 450 Fetch Recovery Centres will benefit from increased free promotion via revised branding and the expanding distribution of ACT's 'Where to Shop' database, now accessible to c250,000 consumers per month.

All Recovery Centres will be promoted as offering insurance replacement bikes for those that have been stolen or damaged. This is a free service for customers who can use their local Recovery Centre to select the replacement cycle and accessories of their choice, with the insurance payment made directly to the retailer.

ACT members pay an administration fee c50% of that paid to insurers by the large insurance replacement merchants.

Recovery Centres that offer Cycleguard cycle insurance will benefit from additional promotion of the service and an introduction fee 50% above the standard commission on their first 15 referrals.

Most importantly, those retailers who actively support their customers as well as the bicycle in cases where a cyclist has been injured as a result of poorly maintained roads or traffic accidents, will receive additional consumer promotion, plus a fee of £150 for every accepted referral.

We have already helped hundreds of cyclists get back on their bike, so to find out more about becoming a Fetch Recovery Centre and the wider benefits that Fetch now offers contact us today.

CEN standards update



Why are we switching to CEN?

To provide a level playing field and consistent standards across Europe, and to reduce the need for legal changes each time standards are modified or updated. The UK Government will remove legislation for BS6102 and bikes will fall under the General Product Safety Regulations, meaning Trading Standards refer to CEN as their benchmark. This is already common practice in many other European countries.

What are the latest developments?

The Department for Transport is finalising a consultation document to address all the key points ahead of CEN implementation. However one of the issues is that the British Standards have certain requirements relating to bells, reflectors and brakes which do not match CEN. Clarification is being sort on these points.

When will CEN be implemented?

January 2009 remains the target date however watch this space.

What happens to stock which is not CEN standard?

It is fully expected that existing stock which is not CEN compliant will have a "grace period" during which it can be sold after the implementation date. The industry will be negotiating with DfT on this. The exact timescales are still to be decided but after this period ends Trading Standards will then refer to CEN.

How do I know which of my suppliers is already CEN compliant?

Most leading bike suppliers are already using CEN and many new models carry a frame sticker to confirm this. If you are not sure then ask, however most suppliers will be aware that in early 2009 their bikes will need to comply.

Campaign on retail crime

The cost of crime against business has increased by 20% since 2004. ACT/ ActSmart met with James Brokenshire, Shadow Minister for Home Affairs in October to discuss the need for business crime to be taken more seriously, including inadequate penalties for shoplifters and the empowerment of businesses and communities to take more action. We want to hear about your experiences with business crime so please contact us.

Cycle sales surge despite economy

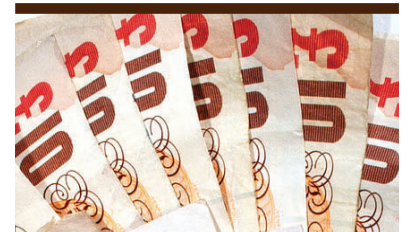
Results from our most recent turnover poll continue to show independent retailers growing their sales, with over 60% of shops reporting sales growth in September compared to 2007.

- > 38% = Turnover up 1 - 10%
- > 13% = Turnover up 10 - 20%
- > 13% = Turnover up 20% or more
- > 26% = Turnover down 1 - 10%
- > 5% = Turnover down 10 - 20%
- > 5% = Turnover down 20% or more

For the past 13 months ActSmart has been analysing turnover in over 250 retail cycle outlets with total annual retail sales of c£90 million p.a. Performance trends vary significantly with 27% of the shops reporting a decrease in September 08 sales vs. 07.

However, the total like for like sales increase in September for all of the research outlets was an astonishing 25% growth vs. 07. September was one of the biggest turnover months of the year, only marginally behind the peaks of May, June and July, with a 7% sales increase in August. In September Halfords reported a like for like sales decline of 1.1% for the quarter to 26th September 2008.

To see the latest poll visit:
www.actsmart.biz/cycles



Cost cutting tips

ONE Reduce energy bills

Our energy consultants - GET Solutions - have a 100% success rate in helping members reduce the cost of their energy bills. If you are not in contract simply fax us a copy of your bill and we'll do the rest. Some shops have seen their bills reduce by more than half, which is a saving of hundreds of £££'s. Fax your bill to: 08704 288 403 or call GET Solutions direct on 02476 470 700

TWO Check your card processing rates

You should review your card processing rates at least twice a year. If your turnover and / or average sales values are increasing then you could get better rates. Fax us a copy of your most current charges (08704 288 403) and we'll see if we can help you get a better deal. Non-members are welcome to do the same and see firsthand the value of membership.

Looking for staff?

Next time you need to recruit staff make sure you use ACT's free cycle industry jobs board at www.TheCyclingExperts.co.uk

Thousands of people every month are viewing our jobs board, giving you another way of finding new staff. It's free for members and very cheap for non-members. Listing a job takes only a few minutes. It attracts users from within the industry as well as outside, which means you can cast the net even wider to find the best people.

Google search keyword	Google search ranking*
"Bike shop jobs"	# 1
"Cycle industry jobs"	# 1
"Jobs in cycling"	# 1
"Cycling jobs"	# 1
"Working in the cycle industry"	# 1
"Cycle jobs"	# 1
"Bike industry jobs"	# 3

* Rankings at 17/10/08

"We had high quality applications when advertising a vacancy. Within the first hour of our job listing going online we were contacted by two very good candidates."
South Downs Bikes, West Sussex

Cycle show



Our attendance at this year's Cycle show in partnership with ATG Training was a real success. The trade day gave us an opportunity to see many current and prospective members, who seem to have had a good summer and are optimistic that they can ride-out the current economic conditions.

The 3 public days had a good buzz and the interest we had relating to Cytech was far beyond our expectations. We actively promoted our public website to increase awareness of the benefits of buying from a specialist and our national shops database.

Over 170 people took part in our "fastest wrench in the west competition", which gave us further opportunities to promote ACT and Cytech whilst also building our consumer database. We hope to attend next year.

Get in touch: ACT / ActSmart
PO Box 5110 Hove BN52 9EB

Trade website:
www.actsmart.biz/cycles

Public website:
www.TheCyclingExperts.co.uk

T: 08704 288 404
F: 08704 288 403
E: info@actsmart.biz