

A note to the world.

What if there were true standards for what it meant to be a bicycle mechanic?

What if education from company to company had the same ultimate outcome? What if Trek's class on certifying a mechanic had the same training results as a similar offering from Specialized? Obviously, the courses would be tailored to each outfit's products and presented at times and in ways that company deemed desirable, both courses resulting in a bicycle safe to ride – built by a “professional.”

We started a [Facebook group](#), in just a few short days we had over 700 members. By the time you're reading this article I am sure we will be over 1,000. We have no agenda presently other than to share ideas, thoughts and concepts on how we as bicycle mechanics want to move forward in our chosen profession.

I've been working in this industry since 1991. My resume long and includes plenty of time in shops turning wrenches as well as working for Cannondale, USA Cycling and Specialized in technical roles.

I had to leave our industry to get the training I wanted. Big box retail provided me this and paid me while learning. They even paid me much more than I was earning working in bicycle retail. I came back to cycling because it's my passion, what I care about and it is what drives me to be successful.

Through my time within our industry, holding what are considered professional roles, the sad fact is I was and am viewed as a bicycle mechanic. I've managed 100 people, hired and fired more people than I probably care to remember and been responsible for up to 10 freestanding retail stores. Still at the end of the day viewed as a mechanic in our industry.

I've dedicated many years to this profession. At the risk of sounding cocky (anyone who knows me knows that is not who I am) I am much more than a bicycle mechanic. Many of us in this industry feel the same way. And have similar outside training that applies directly to what we do as professionals.

We want to form an association or organization or committee that takes our opinions (the opinions of us lowly bicycle mechanics) and helps our industry get better, grow and make more money.

Look at the auto industry – training for mechanics, why? What if you took your Mercedes into a M-B dealer who employed dudes (or dudettes) to work on your car – who never had any official training? Look at the standards within that industry; across brands they are very similar. Did that happen naturally or did someone or some group help to shape that into what it is today? Look at a dealership service program vs. a private and independent shop.

We are as many others have already noted moving into a realm of online business. Mr. Bike Dealer, what is going to set your shop apart? Consumers will always need service. Do yourself a favor. Employ service professionals, not bike mechanics. Education centers – let's work together to create true industry standards.

If you're involved in the cycling industry (mechanics, shop owners, manufacturers, educators) please consider joining the Facebook group to keep up and contribute.

Sincerely,

James Stanfill  
concerned citizen of our world