Po Campo’s Stylish Bags Meet Needs of Female Commuters

BY JASON NORMAN

CHICAGO, IL—As a bike commuter, Maria Boustead’s least favorite part about riding to work was having to transform from a biker to a white-collar worker upon arrival.

“Why does it have to be either-or?” Boustead asked. “I’ve always loved biking to work—it’s fun, it’s good exercise, and it gives me the independence to easily get around town.”

In late 2008 she co-founded Po Campo to address the gap between style and function in urban cycling accessories for women. Po Campo’s bags attach to the bicycle, making it easier to carry personal or work items women need.

“We made it a point to make sure our bags looked just as good on the bike as off,” said Boustead, who sees Chicago as the ideal place to launch the company.

According to the Active Transportation Alliance, the number of Chicagoans biking for transportation grows every year. Ridership increased 30 percent during Bike to Work Week last year.

Women are estimated to comprise 50 percent of Chicago bike commuters, yet few bike accessories are designed to meet their needs.

Po Campo’s Rack Bag is a shoulder bag that attaches to a bike’s rear rack for the commute to work. And the Handlebar Bag is a clutch that attaches to a bike’s handlebars for nights out on the town. Both fit most bike models and racks.

Po Campo bags are manufactured in Chicago and will be sold through local retailers and fashion boutiques.

“Producing the bags in Chicago was a core element of our mission,” said Emily Siegler, Po Campo co-founder.

Number Crunch

Leisure Trends Generates Sales Data

BY RAY KEENER

While snow sports and running have had retail audits (POS data from a representative sample of retailers) for decades, the bike industry has had to rely on guesstimates.

That’s all about to change. Leisure Trends Group of Boulder, Colorado, which does the retail audits in snow, run, outdoor, surf, skate and fly fishing, began tracking POS data last month.

To create a baseline for the retail audit, Leisure Trends recently completed a distribution study. The sales data for the chart this month comes from that study. Charlie Cooper of Leisure Trends explained the process.

“Our distribution study is based on phone interviews with 420 store owners and managers about their sales levels in different categories,” Cooper said. “This study confirms that our retail panel is balanced and reflects the overall state of the 4,250 retailers we call independent bicycle dealers.”

Cooper and his group were glad to see that their numbers correlate well with a retail survey done by the Gluskin-Townley group for the National Bicycle Dealers Association. For example, Gluskin-Townley reported (based on a mailed survey) that 42 percent of IBD sales dollars came from bicycles in 2007. Leisure Trends reported 42.2 percent in 2008.

SmartEtailing played an instrumental role in launching the Leisure Trends audit. Their exclusive agreement ended in March.

“The response and cooperation from retailers has been amazing,” Cooper said. “We were able to start with the trust that the shops have for SmartEtailing and build from there.”

**2008 IBD Accessories Sales Breakdown (in millions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sales (in millions)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessories</td>
<td>$586.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helmets</td>
<td>$170.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>$134.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car racks</td>
<td>$126.2</td>
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</table>

Source: Leisure Trends Distribution Study