

Retail Spotlight

Bike Club Promotion that Works

BY RAY KEENER

In many shops that support local bike clubs, there's an uneasy alliance. Shops want and need the support of the enthusiast members, who come to expect a discount for their purchases.

Paul Tobio, president of Ryder Bikes in Bradenton, Florida, has a different approach that's working well. "We want to help the local club (Sarasota-Manatee Bicycle Club, or SMBC) grow their membership, get new riders into the fold, as well as capture their long-term member's business," Tobio said.

Ryder gives a free \$20 SMBC membership to customers who purchase a bicycle. Ryder pays the club \$10 for each membership they give away. "It assists us to overcome bike price issues, or



what items they get for free," Tobio added. "It prevents having to discount bikes or provide free accessories."

Tony Renkert, president of the SMBC, is equally enthusiastic about the arrangement with Ryder. "We get 20 to 25 new members a month through Ryder. We help show the ropes to new riders, and once they realize how much fun it is, they go back for a

better bike." SMBC currently has about 700 members.

The last word from Tobio: "We see the support for our local club as integral to our growth and to increasing the cycling community in our area. They provide all ride levels on a daily basis, so there is another option for customers to ride with a group and get more involved."