

Editorial

Trek Shows How Savvy Companies Can Communicate to Media

Bike businesses generally lack sophistication when it comes to dealing with non-endemic media. Most companies, although comfortable pitching new products to cycling magazines, are out of their element pitching stories to non-endemic media.

When it comes to touchy subjects, especially where lawyers are involved, companies tend to avoid the media, reluctantly participate in stories or simply refuse to comment at all.

Trek hasn't always been forthcoming

with media. But when it announced it was seeking legal recourse to end its relationship with Greg LeMond, it took a proactive approach that proved effective.

Trek invited journalists to sit in on a conference call, which broadcast an employee meeting where Trek president John Burke announced the company's intention to dissolve the partnership.

Shortly thereafter, top company executives and lawyers joined a conference call to answer media questions.

Trek anticipated media requests by immediately posting a press release, a timeline and legal documents on its Web site.

Trek took control of the situation and delivered the news on its own terms. Its deliberate approach ensured that it was able to present a carefully crafted message to the media.

Through this communication strategy Trek generated significant interest and impressions from major news outlets. Sure, it helped that it had real,

timely news. And it helped that a recognizable cycling personality was implicated in the story.

Still, its approach was hardly innovative; it was merely unusual in this industry. Many publicly traded companies conduct such media briefings when they purchase companies or release earnings, with similar results.

Trek's case shows that privately held companies can apply a proactive strategy to communicate news and stand to reap generous media coverage.