

# DRIVING RETAIL SUCCESS

## TRAIN YOUR STAFF TO SELL MORE APPAREL

**PEARL IZUMI**  
This editorial feature is sponsored by Pearl Izumi with Mercedes Ross.

### DEALER SPOT LIGHT



Lisa Lou Joaquim, Trek Bicycle Store of Fairfield CT

"There are two steps in training my staff to sell apparel and footwear. First, identify the client's needs – Where and how long are they riding, and what temperatures will they endure? Second, educate them on the technical features and always explain the corresponding benefit. For example, 'You will stay warmer, ride longer and feel better'."

### GET STARTED

Have a group session of approximately 30 minutes in the clothing department - shorter, more frequent sessions are better than longer ones.

Pick three to five topics from the list below in areas where you think your staff needs the most work.

You don't need to do this all yourself – assign topics to other staffers who are really good at the specific topic being covered. Use your rep, that's a service they are happy to provide!

#### MEN NEED HELP, TOO!

There is an assumption that when a man is in the department he doesn't need any help. Wrong! Assistance can generate add-on sales. Offer but don't hover. A man may not even want to try things on, suggest it but don't push. Sell tech over fashion.

#### SUGGESTING ADD-ONS

So many of the options in apparel are not that obvious to most customers. They want a jersey or short, they may not be aware how much a pair of leg or arm warmers can expand their temperature range. It's up to you to tell them!

#### GLOVES FOR ALL

Just like when you always offer a helmet when you sell a bike, you should always offer gloves. *"They protect your hands in two ways: From the pressure of the bars, and in case you take a spill."*

#### BODY TYPES, SHORTS AND JERSEYS

The type of apparel you buy depends on more than just your riding style. Someone who is older or overweight may never see Lycra as an option. So before you do anything else, ask: *"Do you prefer the snug-fit look or a looser cut?"*

#### STAFF IN THE DEPARTMENT

It's important that a staff member be present in the apparel department. Assistance almost always creates add-on sales. Merchandising can grease the skids but your staff identify needs, present options and close the sale.

#### STOCKING IS PART OF SELLING

Make sure all the sizes are out and jackets are zipped. Check size rings and fill in stock displayed. Straighten up the section. Make sure shoes are in the correct boxes and gloves are put back where they belong - customers rarely do.

#### COMFORTABLE RIDERS = HAPPY, FREQUENT RIDERS

Bike and accessory sales should lead right into the apparel department: Selling saddles = selling shorts; selling a bike = selling gloves and helmets; selling shoes = selling socks; selling helmets = selling a hat in winter.

#### UNDERWEAR, OR NOT? A TOUCHY SUBJECT.

Suggest, don't insist. Acknowledge their initial reluctance: *'Yeah, it seems strange at first, but sitting directly on the chamois rather than wearing underwear cuts down on seam chafing and adds comfort.'*

#### BUTT CREAM

An easy add-on sale, especially to first-time short buyers, long-distance roadies, mountain bikers, and triathletes. Not all shops carry it, so any customer that tries it will be back for more!

#### WEAR IT YOURSELF!

It always helps if the sales person uses the product. Make sure your employees are aware of all the available pro deals and employee discounts. If a salesperson loves the fit of a particular short, you can be sure they will sell more.

### SELLING APPAREL

#### It's different and it's the same

It's different because it's a fashion purchase at least as much as a technical one. It's the same because you need to educate the customer about the technical aspects of fabrics, cut and layering to justify the investment.

#### GENDER DIFFERENCES

Women shop much differently than men, especially when it comes to garments. They're going to want to try on tons of different garments and combinations. They're going to want encouragement – 'Wow, that looks great on you.'

#### SELLING TO WOMEN

Send them into dressing room with three different sizes of shorts. Tops will fit tighter than most women prefer, explain that's so they don't flap in the wind. Add-on sales: *'Did you know that outfit has matching socks and gloves?'* More fashion than tech.

#### SHOW THAT CHAMOIS

The chamois of the short is like the frame of the bike. Turn the shorts inside out to show the chamois, but do not touch the chamois with your hands. They may not want to have your cooties in that private a place.

#### GENDER BENDER

Women are wonderful candidates for cross-gender sales. Bring them a jacket from the men's department – tights, even jerseys will cross-sell. If women like the look and the fit, the gender label won't matter.



### Quick 'N' Easy

- It's Spring, It's Raining, Ride Anyway! An integrated display with rainwear, booties, and fenders!
- If you haven't already done so, put your winter gear on sale to make room for the new spring stuff!

### Get Ready

#### A few recommendations to get you started:

- Schedule a clinic with your apparel reps.
- Make sure employees are trying out product.
- Put someone in charge of the department.
- Purchase the last of the needed fixtures.

### What You'll See Next

#### Now that the season is rolling:

- What's the plan for merchandising and upkeep?
- Creating interesting stories.
- Creating add-on sales.