

DRIVING RETAIL SUCCESS

HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS RIDE THROUGH FALL AND WINTER

PEARL IZUMI

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

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Dealer Spotlight



Bike Tech has been in business for 25 years. We started small and grew big. Companies like Pearl Izumi, who are committed to helping their dealers grow, by providing hands on merchandising in our store, are who we choose to do business with. We have carried Pearl Izumi apparel for most of our 25 years in business. The partnership has continued to grow and benefits both of us.

This August, Pearl Izumi Driving Retail Success (DRS) retail services asked if they could come in and evaluate our clothing department. Who would turn down an opportunity for the experts to come in and better our stores appearance? This is a win-win situation for both. DRS retail services came in wrote a few notes, took a few photos, and arranged for the changes to take place. Within two days, Bike Tech had a new look. The new look was well received not only by the staff but by our customers as well. The customers had many comments about the new look. These are a few: "You received in new clothing", "did owners change hands?" We even heard "something is different but I can't put my finger on it". New or additional clothing was not added or ordered to make this change however, we did add some additional fixtures to highlight the apparel. We also added signs, new hangers with size rings, mannequins, props and new paint. What a difference!

I can safely say that along with a 30% increase in clothing sales from one month to another, Pearl Izumi's Driving Retail Success retail services do know what they are doing. I know how to run and manage a retail business but my interior decorating is limited. The relationship between the vendor and dealer is so important; we both want the same goal at the end of the day—to increase sales, profit, and stay successful! Bike Tech would like to thank Pearl Izumi for choosing us. We look forward to another successful year and partnership.

Keep Customers Riding Through Those Fall and Winter Months

Yes, we can ride 365 days a year! As rain starts to fall and snowflakes begin to fly, it's vital for your business to maintain apparel sales as a key contributor to the bottom line. So show your customers how to dress up or dress down for foul weather. Tell them, YES, you can ride comfortably in any weather. Push "Riding 365!"

Start with two $\frac{3}{4}$ torso mannequins. Display them on an anchor wall shelf. Dress each in layers, the same ones displayed on the wall—base layers, jerseys, zip-top layers, jacket, tights, gloves, hats, headbands and facemasks.

And shout out: "It's Cold Outside." Use a snowflake-covered pine tree as a prop, easily found at local craft stores. And if there's room display several booty-covered shoes.

If you use one display wall, put men to the left and women to the right. Split the sections and create a visual center with unisex base layers and warmer apparel. Base layers can be left boxed or hung depending upon the vendor. Leg and arm warmers, headbands, hats and gloves are always fun to merchandise so ask your most artistic employee to use them to add pizzazz to the wall.

Next, anchor the wall with jackets, preferably on waterfalls, to showcase the detail these jackets sport. Enhance them with long-sleeve jerseys that complement a color story. Support the wall with floor fixtures. If the wall is too small, use floor

fixtures to display the rest. Do not cram everything on a wall. Sell apparel 365!

Well Trained Staff Sell More, While Others Sell Less

As Winter takes hold, and with fewer employees on hand, train your core staff in all aspects of store merchandising especially apparel. Often, part-time employees are out on the floor during the Summer and had been the ones selling apparel.

So it may be time for a refresher course with the core. Have your rep drop by one evening for a tech talk on

layering and other technical aspects of apparel for Winter and early Spring. Fabric has gone way beyond Lycra®. Each piece has a function just like new components on a bike and it needs knowledgeable staff to sell it.

No matter how great your display, apparel sells if supported by well-trained staff. Hang tags are chock full of information, but consumers seldom have time to read them. Staff knowledge is what pushes consumers past the price barrier. Why? Someone has explained the technical aspect of the

garments and why they cost more. And consumers who ride in inclement weather are serious riders who expect knowledgeable staff.

Everyone must believe that customers can ride 365, so keep displays fresh and neat. It's everyone's responsibility to keep jackets zipped and tights hung properly. Daily section maintenance is just as important as straightening the bikes. Sell riding 365!



Dress up or dress down; show the customer how they can ride comfortably in any weather.

Do It Now!

- Decide on what stocking stuffers you want to display and plan to get that out this month, right at the start of the busy holiday season.
- Print out your gift certificates, and put a sign at the entrance telling the customers about them.
- Bring out your Fall/Winter apparel and get it on the floor

Get Ready

Year end is coming. Schedule time to dedicate a year end review. Just like an investment in your physical fixtures and inventory, consider the ROI you get from this dedicated time spent reviewing the high margin categories of your business. Create a plan for 2012 that will address your business and increase your success.

What's Next?

- How to do an analysis...and how to review your systems for improvement and increased efficiencies.
- How to improve your systems, better traffic flow and product placement

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