

## Step 1 - Write a Plan

All successful events start with a plan. Start planning an event 9-12 months *prior* to the event date to ensure success. This plan will serve as a guide and task list through all the stages of your event planning.

### Why have a Bike-to-Work Day?

- To educate the community that bicycles are a beneficial mode of transportation
- To make basic information on bicycle commuting available to potential riders
- To encourage people to try bicycle commuting
- To increase the general public's awareness and respect for bicyclists

### What should I focus on when planning?

- Determine your specific objective for this month-long celebration of bicycling.
- Brainstorm ideas for possible events to hold during the month. Think of as many ideas as possible. Determine how each event idea promotes the objective outlined.
- Layout a time line for all the necessary tasks associated with carrying out event ideas.
- Prepare a publicity planning task list.
- Plan for recruiting and implementing volunteer workers and committees.
- Determine if city/county permits will be needed for rally events or other event ideas on your list. Determine associated costs and time requirements for securing these permits.
- Project a potential budget for each event idea - think of who may fund or sponsor it.

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## Step 2 - Start Fundraising

Aside from reducing the drain on your agency's budget, fundraising is one way of creating partners and creating support for your event.

Prepare a specific funding proposal for each potential sponsor. Ask for a specific amount of money or product with a plan showing the provider where their contribution will be recognized and how it will positively assist your efforts. Remember partners need to know that you are serious about the event and that there will be a benefit to them for their contribution.

Conduct follow-up calls to those receiving funding applications and answer any questions they may have. Track progress with each potential partner in your database. Note all calls, negotiations, and contributions (money, merchandise, food, etc.).

Send personalized written thank you notes to each partner/sponsor expressing your appreciation. You cannot overdo this step. Send a note when negotiations are successful and again after the event. A happy sponsor will help you again in the future.

### Step 3 - Build Partnerships

Partnerships extend the reach of your event and reduce the burden that hosting an event entails. Partnering with others to sponsor an event builds connections that are beneficial long after an event concludes.

Gather support of local organizations and merchants. Ask them to partner with you for the benefit of the community. Create a database of potential partners such as:

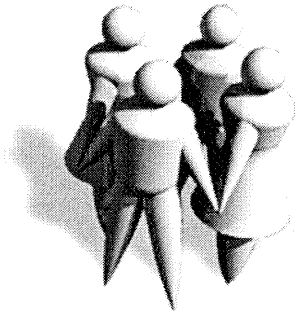
- bike clubs and coalitions
- bike shops
- chambers of commerce
- SafeKids Coalition
- schools
- community centers
- restaurants
- museums
- zoos
- amusement parks
- employers
- video stores
- churches

Make phone calls to generate interest. Be certain to have a specific request in mind before you call. Requests can vary from volunteer labor to food to advertising support, etc. This step should occur in October and November prior to your May event.

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### Step 4 – Recruiting and Working with Volunteers

Volunteers are the oil that keeps the *event machine* going. They serve as resources and organizers that help an event flow and they provide the energy needed to plan an entire event. Volunteers are vital to a successful program, so it's important to know how to find them, work with them, and recognize their contributions.



When asking someone to be a part of the team, make sure your expectations are clearly outlined, as well as the time commitments and tasks involved. Meetings should occur as needed and be convenient for everyone involved.

Some people might not have time for regular team meetings, but wouldn't mind if you called on them to help with specific tasks. These roles might not be apparent right away; once you begin planning, you will be able to identify who can help with what.

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## Step 5 - Promote the Event!

Communication is critical to the success of events. It is the greatest factor in the number of participants you will attract. Some tips on effective communication include:

- Keep contacts up to date on the status of activities.
- Create a lively and informative website.
- Prepare logos and graphics for a unified promotion. The importance of quality graphics and simple, clear text cannot be over-emphasized! Enlist the help of professionals, if possible.
- Dedicate volunteers to focus exclusively on the distribution of promotional materials in the most cost effective way.

### Advertise! Advertise! Advertise!

- Prepare a press kit to be sent to every media outlet available two weeks before the first event and put this information on your website. Follow-up with personal phone calls a week later. Follow-up again to say thank you each time they give your event press.
- Prepare several press releases and a resource list of who should receive the press releases.
- Conduct League BikeEd courses (listing of instructors available in this book and at [www.bikeleague.org/instructors/index.cfm](http://www.bikeleague.org/instructors/index.cfm)) to provide National Bike Month™ participants with skills to enhance their riding safety while bike commuting.
- Send a brochure from your event and supporting information to the League of American Bicyclists. Mark the materials "Attention: Bike Month."

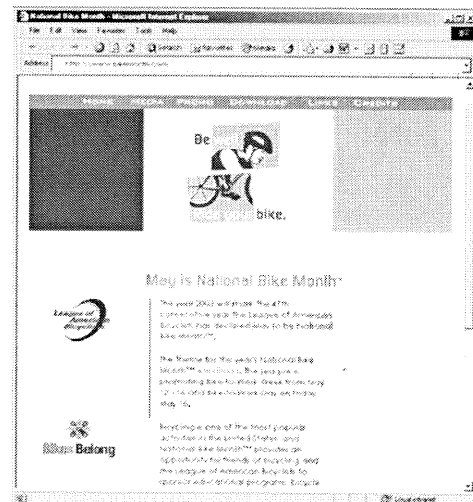
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### www.Your Successful Event.com

The internet has become one of the most significant tools for information dissemination in recent history. Your promotional efforts would certainly be hampered if you neglected this important resource. Not only can you promote your own event, but you can research what other groups are doing in these areas and make contacts to help you make your event better.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of your website, you should set it up as part of a local organization's website. Work with your local government or advocacy organization to secure space on their server to allow you to not only directly link your pages to these organizations, but house them on their servers. Most local advocacy organizations will be able to lend you the technical expertise to help get your website designed and on the web.

It is also important to let the general public know about your website. The internet is full of chat rooms, message boards and list serves. List serves offer an easy way to reach



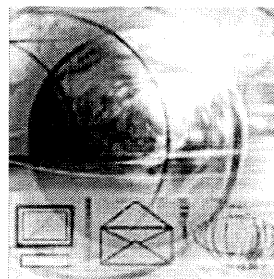
Visit [www.bikemonth.com](http://www.bikemonth.com) for more info!

hundreds of interested people with one simple email. All you need to do is send an email to the specific list serve and everyone who subscribes to that particular list will receive your message and be able to contact you. This might also help you find volunteers and sponsorship opportunities.

Contact organizations that might provide a link to your website on their website. Local bike shops, bike clubs, advocacy organizations, radio stations, television stations, public safety agencies, and health clubs can easily provide a link to your event website. All you have to do is ask!

### **Contacts**

Make a list of all the newspapers and magazines, and all the TV and radio stations in your area. Check the yellow pages for listings of media outlets, or better yet, visit your local library for a copy of the latest Bacon's Directories or Editor and Publisher Yearbook and Broadcasting Yearbook. These reference books list media outlets by state. Contact those on your state list to find the names and contact information of correspondents who deal with the following:



- News: general, recreational, environmental, transportation, health, and fitness
- Events: listings and local coverage
- Community Affairs
- Features (especially health, environment, and recreation)

Also, list any journalists who have written about, or have shown an interest in bicycling in the past. Make a list of names, phone numbers and email addresses for your contacts and list how they prefer to be contacted.

Appoint someone from your organization to act as the media contact, and try to maintain regular contact with journalists, perhaps by inviting them on rides or to events. Mail them copies of your magazine or newsletter.

Continuity of contact is important. Journalists like to know their sources and trust them to be accurate, reliable, and timely. The better the reporter knows you and trusts you as a source, the greater the chance you will be used as a source for future stories and story ideas.

### **The Event**

Make sure your event happens as described in the news release - right place, right time. Have your club's media people present and make sure s/he is briefed and knows what is happening. All media people should be directed to this one person, who should be easily recognizable by wearing a large nametag, hat, or other highly visible item of clothing. This person should have extra copies of the original release and any other relevant information.

### **Step 6 Enjoy the Event!**

A well-planned and implemented work plan will enable you and your volunteers to have an enjoyable month celebrating bicycling! Remember to have fun!

Weather can dampen spirits quickly so a rain plan or alternate location is a key part of your planning task. Intense heat is a concern as well –notifying paramedics and having them on site is a good idea if there is a risk of injury or illness.

### **Step 7 – Reward Volunteers and Recognize Sponsors**

Recognizing and publicizing the help you have received from volunteers and sponsors is essential. Volunteers will appreciate hand written notes while sponsors will look for recognition in media coverage before, during, and after the event.

## Step 8 – Evaluate Success

A tool will be needed to monitor participation of each event in order to evaluate campaign effectiveness. This tool will vary depending on whether you have city-wide or company-wide events.

Participant evaluations are just one type of program summary you should conduct. The second is an evaluation by the event organizers. This should cover all aspects of planning and implementation, including volunteer recruitment, publicity, parking, supplies and equipment, registration, etc. It can be accomplished as a form circulated to all planners and workers (whether paid or volunteer) or by conducting an evaluation meeting. This evaluation should highlight areas that needed more attention and point out how manpower can be better utilized. If this is to be an annual event, goals for next year should be recorded while this year's event is still fresh in everyone's mind.

### Evaluating Success

It is very helpful to have feedback from participants and organizers of this year's events. The comments of those who attended will help identify specific bicycling obstacles and potential solutions.



Evaluation needs to be planned for well in advance of the actual events. Businesses and organizations that participate should report back to you afterward so you can compile statistics on the numbers who participated, the miles commuted, gasoline saved, pollution prevented, etc. This information should be sent to the Mayor and local media.

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There are two main types of evaluation:

1. Participant feedback is necessary in determining the success of your program.
2. Event Organizers' Summary of all aspects of the program.

Although you can accomplish this very informally by making observations during the event, most likely you will only be able to gather general information such as number of participants and whether people appear pleased or disgruntled with your efforts. Observation alone won't tell you much. Written questionnaires will.

\*\* See Appendix 1 for // Tips On Surveying Participants

## Step 9 - Prepare for Next Year

National Bike Month™ and Bike-to-Work Day are a great way to kick-off or revitalize bicycle-commuting programs. Maintain the momentum by developing recommendations for on-going strategies to encourage and facilitate this healthy alternative form of transportation.

You will want to begin to plan now for next year. Construct a working timeline similar to the one on page 11 to begin the organizational process about nine to twelve months ahead.