

Boosting Your Bike Program

How you can energize your employees to commute by bicycle. [A review of Bicycle Commuter Programs at Specialized Bicycles.](#)

February 2008

Your Company Can Do It.

- You train and invest in your employees so they can do their job better.
- You provide benefits for your employees and their families.
- You ensure the work environment is healthy, productive, and geared to produce innovative ideas.

If your company has goals to achieve these items, a commute program can help - especially bicycling, which promotes health and wellness in addition to serving the functional means of getting to work.

Often overlooked by their supervisors, an employee's daily commute can be a productive, stress reducing, and health benefiting activity instead of draining, frustrating everyday drudgery.

Bicycling can be a perfect substitute for driving. You can travel a long distance, get a workout at the same time as you complete a functional trip to work, and foster a space in your employee's workday when they enjoy being outside and getting a workout.

A San Francisco Bay Area company that has been developing bicycle commute programs for a long time is Specialized Bicycles in Morgan Hill. There are components of their program that can be transferred to any company in the Bay Area.



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Components of the Specialized Approach.

When it comes to providing bicycle commuters with the motivation and facilities they need, Specialized serves its employees with a unique blend of incentives, facilities, amenities, and recognition to keep participation and motivation high.

The Specialized program can be split into four distinct groups, all of which are important in keeping people motivated to bike to work. These four groups are *strong company programming*, *employee recognition programs*, *physical facilities*, and *leadership and advocacy efforts*. Together, each of these groups represent the gears that keep bicycling commuting going strong at Specialized.



First Gear: Strong Company Programs and Events

The Specialized Commute Club

In 2006, almost 100 employees (out of 167) participated in the Specialized Commute Club. The Commute Club is a growing group of employees who are rewarded every time they use a bike, car-


pool, or bus to get to work. Every one-way trip they make they earn a dollar. Trips are recorded in an internal spreadsheet that is developed to automatically sum the results of the program in units of miles saved, dollars earned, and CO2 emissions saved per participant and company-wide.

Contact [MTC's 511.org](#) if you'd like information on how to develop a tracking tool like this for your company (see contact information below). If developed correctly, it can be a quick and easy way to keep track of your employee's progress and update them automatically on the prizes they've won, how many miles and greenhouse gases they've saved, and much more.

Annual Bike to Work Day



On Thursday, May 17th, 2007, Specialized sponsored another successful Bike to Work Day (BTWD) event with 71 percent staff participation. Specialized plans ahead well in advance for Bike To Work Day, coordinating mini-challenges and incentives to individuals and teams with the longest commute and first time commuters. They have a breakfast provided for all participants and encourage employees to have fun, share experiences, and take a few minutes out of their workday to talk with each other. A small ceremony is held to recognize unique individual efforts and report back to the company how many miles were saved from the event and also market the Commute Club program overall.

	BTWD 2007 Stats	<i>119 Specialized Employees 1,892 miles saved 1,700 lbs CO2 saved</i>
	<i>Industry Commute Club Challenge winner for their company size (100+ employees)</i>	

Shifting into First Gear: What should your company do?

- Find out how many employees are already interested in commuting by bicycle. **511 can help** by developing a customized survey for your employees.
- Once you know your employee's interest, initiate a company-wide program that encourages bicycle commuting through recognition and prizes.
- Take the survey results to management and let them know employees have an interest in commute programs.
- Budget how much time and materials you'll need to develop the program and give prizes.
- Keep track of your progress with online web tools that **511 can provide** to prove the importance and impact of your program. 511 will also automatically report your carbon emission savings – an important component as all companies in California must begin to comply with the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.
- Promote Bike to Work Day and give your employees breakfast and recognition on the actual day of the event.

Quick Facts: Commuter Club 2006

<i>100 participants</i>
<i>39,000 miles saved biking</i>
<i>104,000 miles saved carpooling</i>
<i>1,430 miles saved, on average, per participant</i>
<i>68 tons CO2 (18.5 tons bicycling, 49.5 tons carpooling)</i>
<i>Cost of Incentives: \$9,120</i>

Second Gear: Employee Recognition Programs

Possibly even more significant to individuals than the financial incentives from programs like Commute Club and Bike to Work Day is the ongoing recognition of individual efforts by leadership at the highest levels of Specialized. As a company, Specialized stays competitive by being innovative and having a passion for riding. In this regard, programs are run continuously and leaders recognize employee's personal triumphs.

The primary recognition program for 2008 will be *The Clean Air Champions*, where individuals are recognized for their contribution to cleaning up the air by biking, taking the bus, or carpooling. In return for their efforts, they will be given prizes and rewards.

There is also new rider training and a mentoring group called *S Girls* to introduce more women cyclists to the basics of bicycle commuting. *Noontime and group rides* also abound in the office culture, and these are supported by management through allowing flexible work schedules and a casual dress code.

Shifting your company into Second Gear:

- Record individual efforts and announce them to others.
- Facilitate and empower employees to share their knowledge and desire to have more people commute by bicycle. Create things such as:
 - Newsletters or emails highlighting an employee's story. Have them write it.
 - Develop a blog to for internal use. You can develop a blog for employees for free by going to <https://www.blogger.com/start>
- Consider the employees at your company and their motivations for certain programs.
 - For example, with an environmentally-motivated group you could reward individuals by summing-up their efforts and instead of paying them cash for each trip, use those dollars as contributions to upgrades of company assets, such as tree-planting for an outdoor lunch area, recycling programs, company lighting retrofits, or computer monitor replacement.

Third Gear: Physical Facilities

Given that many bicyclists commute a long distance into Specialized each day, shower and locker facilities are a must. Free towel service and well maintained, clean locker rooms make freshening up after commuting into work by bike an accepted and expected routine. When facilities such as these are provided for commuters, they feel comfortable entering the workplace in bicycle clothing and breathing hard from a good ride if they know they can cleanup and dress appropriately for whatever the day's business may bring.



Every bike has a place to park! Andrew Hammond rides every day.

The bike parking available at Specialized is another important attribute of the company's program to encourage bicycling. Bike parking is both a product of management policy as well as provision of racks, lockers, and other storage facilities. Specialized maintains an indoor bike parking policy that enables employees to bring their bikes into their workspaces as long as they don't impede traffic in hallways or corridors.

In Third and Ready to Roll: What could my company do?

- Log onto the 511.org bicycling website at bicycling.511.org.
- Find out what trails and bicycle routes are near your company using our online map.
- Find out more about bicycle parking. If you are interested in building bicycle parking at your company's location, check out these very helpful guidelines: <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikepark.pdf>.
- Develop a policy on bicycles in your building. Can employees bring them inside? If so, where is a safe place to store them securely?

- Invest in a shower and set of lockers in one of your bathrooms or another suitable area that is not well utilized currently.
- Designate or build space in the office for employees to store spare clothing for days when they commute by bicycle.
- Offer a Guaranteed Ride Home for bicycle commuters in case of an emergency or bad weather.

Fourth Gear: Leadership and Advocacy

Advocacy and education regarding bicycling and environmental awareness are core values at Specialized and they can lead towards more involvement and participation in employee commute programs. Reflecting this commitment and to keep participation levels high in the commuter programs, Specialized created a full time Director of Advocacy and Environment. One of the job responsibilities performed by Ariadne Scott, the current Director at Specialized, includes managing the Commute Club incentive program and recognizing individual efforts through Bike to Work Day and the other groups mentioned previously.

However, working directly with employees on commuter programs is only one of Ariadne's many responsibilities. The Director is also responsible for raising local, national, and international awareness of the environmental benefits of bicycling. This includes serving on the board of national advocacy groups such as Bikes Belong and attending the annual National Bike Summit in Washington, DC. Much of the work Ariadne pursues to increase bicycle commuting has also resulted in various awards and recognitions as detailed below.

Awards and Recognitions

Meritorious Achievement Award, Sponsored by Breathe California in 2006.

Morgan Hill Sustainable Quality Award 2006 & 2007, Presented by Congressman Jerry McNerney in Morgan Hill on Earth Day, 2007.

2007 Bike to Work Day Mayoral Ride in California with San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newson, Sacramento Bike to Work Promotion with Speaker of the Assembly Fabian Nunez, Recognition of bicycle commuting and the Specialized Globe bicycle.

These company-wide recognitions are another important factor in motivating employees to alter their commute habits, particularly when their efforts are recognized by highly visible leaders such as Congressmen and local Mayors.

Finally, Specialized is also a leader in promoting environmental awareness and the green benefits of bicycle commuting to the public through its retailers. Annually they award their “Greenie” prize to a retailer who actively promotes the environmental and health benefits associated with bicycle commuting. Specialized works to publicize their annual winners via the internet, industry magazines, and other public media outlets.

Specialized is also directly involved at the local level in planning for bicycle transportation facilities and developing bicycle-oriented education programs. Specialized has been an active member of the City of Morgan Hill’s Bicycle and Trails Advisory Committee, particularly when the city was developing its Bikeways Master Plan in 2000 and 2001. Improving bicycling facilities surrounding the Specialized office helps employee recruitment and retention, which is an important effort for any company that has employees who are passionate about environmental sustainability.

In Fourth Gear: What kind of leader are you?

- Develop a policy with management to dedicate staff time a small amount per month towards an employee commute and/or wellness program.
- Be a local advocate for improvements to bicycle and other commute options infrastructure in your community (bike lanes, rail stations, HOV lanes, etc).
- Lead the way towards developing a carbon-reduction program that considers the employee commute. The State of California has set an ambitious goal to reduce global warming emissions – you can help by reducing carbon through commute programs.
- Promote the health aspects of bicycling by picking an individual, tracking their progress, and then reporting their health improvements to the whole company.
- Show the significant dollars you can save by not paying for gas, parking, insurance, maintenance, leases, and the many other costs of owning a car and commuting with it every day.
- Work with your retailers, distributors, clients, etc. to raise awareness of environmental programs and carbon reduction efforts. Show them how they can make a difference through commute programs.

This information brought to you by:



Contact 511.org if you’d like more information on bicycle commuting. We can work together to make your commuting program realize its full potential!

Checkout our website at [http:// bicycling.511.org](http://bicycling.511.org) or just give us a call by dialing “511” anywhere in the Bay Region!



For more information on Specialized’s programs, contact:

Ariadne Delon-Scott
Director Advocacy & Environment
adscott@specialized.com
phone: (408) 779.6229 x2249
www.specialized.com