



NATION BIKES

#FREERIDES

MEDIA RELATIONS PLAN

KIERRA SMITH
COM542 | MEDIA RELATIONS

SITUATION:

Amsterdam led the revolution of the bike-sharing in 1965 as activists painted bicycles white and left them unlocked for citizens to use (Goodyear, “The Real Story”). Once activists noticed that the bikes were being damaged and stolen, they immediately ended the program (Goodyear, “The Real Story”). Roughly 40+ years later, the District of Columbia was the first city in North America to introduce a modern bike-share system that catered to growing the needs of its citizens (Goodyear, “The Real Story”). Since then, bike-share systems have been popping up all over the world in every major city (Goodyear, “The Real Story”).

National Bikes is a bike rental service offered in Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland. National Bikes offers 24-hour and 3-day memberships to all of its riders. Recently, the Capital Area Bicyclist Association (CABA) has imposed regulations that require riders in Montgomery County to wear a helmet while operating the bikes. Because of the new policy, National Bikes has faced a large amount of backlash from the organization.

National Bikes support the use of helmets and encourages its customers to utilize helmets and other protective gear while operating the bikes. Unfortunately for National Bike, wearing helmets while operating the bicycles has never been a legal requirement until now. With the new policy in place, the organization is well aware of their inability to provide helmets for rent due to health risks. With fears of a decline in ridership due to the new policy, National Bikes would like to overturn this law in order to prevent future regulation that would inhibit National Bikes to operate freely in Montgomery County.



GOAL #1

To support the company's goal to bring awareness to the new policy and what it would mean for National Bikes bike-sharing program.

FIRST OBJECTIVE: To increase the target audience knowledge of the new policy by 25 percent by May 2020.

TACTICS:

1. Create a "Fight the Policy" section on the organizations website.
2. Utilizing Constant Contact, create email-newsletters surrounding the new policy and encourage members to sign the active petition.
3. Conduct a Public Opinion survey surrounding bicycle accidents and publish a news release to all local platforms (Washington Post/The Express, The Hill, Washington Times and NBC4).

SECOND OBJECTIVE: To empower community members to utilize their voice and collect more than 200 letters to be sent to city officials by May 2020.

TACTICS

1. Purchase advertising space within Metro stations to encourage community members to write to their city representatives (Evan Glass and Tom Hucker of Montgomery County City Council).
2. Develop a direct mail piece to be sent out to residents of Montgomery County to attend a community listening session surrounding the new helmet policy.
3. Send out a "Save the Date" to local journalist to participate in a Facebook Live Stream of a community "listening" session regarding the new bike policies.

GOAL #2:

To support the organization goal to present National Bikes as a healthy alternative of transportation

FIRST OBJECTIVE: To display bike-sharing as a gateway to a healthy lifestyle

TACTICS:

1. Generate a news release of the National Bikes app update that include graphic pop ups encouraging users to wear helmets.
2. Partner with Kate Courtney an American cross-country and mountain bike cyclist in a health benefit PSA
3. Invite media to cover “Morning ‘Trek” a bike ride-a-thon From Montgomery County into DC to celebrate National Bike to Work Day on May 15th

SECOND OBJECTIVE: Inform riders and the media on how to be safe riders and utilize bikeways

TACTICS:

1. Host a helmet silent auction where media and public officials will be in attendance.
2. Film a public service announcement on tips to be a safe cyclist.
3. Develop a free video game app educating players on how to be a safe rider.
4. Send out an invitation link to local journalist to participate in a satellite media tour of the variety of bikeways available for cyclist to avoid high traffic areas

GOAL #3:

To position the organization as advocates for safe cycling in high traffic areas

FIRST OBJECTIVE: Increase the media knowledge of the organizations efforts to inform riders on ways to manage the road as a cyclist

TACTICS:



1. Send out a press release which will lead to an interview on Day time television slots with the CEO of National Bikes.
2. Pitch to the media, an “op-ed” piece about the safety concerns and the development of safe bikeways in Montgomery County written by Gwen Wright, Montgomery County planning director
3. Partner with Destination DC for a social media campaign encouraging riders to post pictures on their commute with the hashtag, #FreeRides to inform community member that riding Helmet Free should be a choice.
4. Host a helmet giveaway to the first 200 members who have reached 100 miles while renting with National Bikes.

GOAL #4:

To support the organizations goal to inform target audience and media of the economic and environmental benefits of bike-sharing in major cities.

FIRST OBJECTIVE: To help media have a better understanding of the future of the bike-share programming.

TACTICS:

1. Arrange a broadcast interview on The Today Show with Gwen Wright, Montgomery County planning director to discuss the impact and future of National Bike program.
2. Contact Ann Hyman, president of Potomac Peddlers Touring club to conduct a feature story on the benefits of increased bicycle access.
3. Instruct the graphic design team to create a financial infographic to be released to all local media.

KEY SPOKESPEOPLE:

- CEO of National Bikes
- Montgomery County Planning Director, Gwen Wright
- Cross-country and Mountain Bike Cyclist, Kate Courtney
- President of Potomac Peddlers, Ann Hyman

TIMEFRAME:

JANUARY:

- Jan. 2nd | Send out the public opinion survey.
 - Edit website to create the “Fight the Policy” section.
- Jan. 6th | Draft create email-newsletters surrounding the new policy utilizing Constant Contact.
- Jan. 7th | Begin to send out newsletters.
- Jan. 10th | Purchase advertising space within Metro stations.
 - Draft a direct mail piece to be sent out to residents of Montgomery County to attend a community listening session surrounding the new helmet policy.
- Jan. 13th | Direct Mail Pieces (save the date) sent to print.
- Jan. 14th | Send out a “Save the Date” to local journalist to participate in a Facebook Live Stream of a community “listening” session regarding the new bike policies.
- Jan. 17th | Facebook Live Stream of a community “listening” session.

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 4th | Send out a news release of the National Bikes app update that include graphic pop ups encouraging users to wear helmets.



- Feb. 10th | Film a PSA with Kate Courtney an American cross-country and mountain bike cyclist.
 - Film a public service announcement on tips to be a safe cyclist.
- Feb. 12th | Work with app developers for a free video game app educating players on how to be a safe rider.
- Feb 14th | Send out invitations for silent auction.
- Feb. 21st | Host the helmet silent auction.
- Feb 27th | Send out an invitation link to local journalist to participate in a satellite media tour of the variety of bikeways available for cyclist to avoid high traffic areas.

MARCH:

- March 11th | Pitch to the media, an “op-ed” piece about the safety concerns and the development of safe bikeways in Montgomery County written by Gwen Wright, Montgomery County planning director.
- March 17th | Send out a press release which will lead to an interview on Day time television slots with the CEO of National Bikes.
- March 23rd | Feature story with Ann Hyman, president of Potomac Peddlers Touring Club
- March 31st | Instruct the graphic design team to create a financial infographic to be released to all local media.

APRIL:

- April 6th | Launch social media campaign with Destination DC with the hashtag, #FreeRides to inform community member that riding helmet free should be a choice.
- April 17th | Host a helmet giveaway to the first 200 members who have reached 100 miles with National Bikes.

- April 29th | Broadcast interview with Gwen Wright, Montgomery County planning director on The Today Show.

MAY:

May 8th | Send out “Save the Date” to all local media to cover “Morning Trek.”

May 15th | National Bike to Work Day - “Morning ‘Trek” a bike ride-a-thon From Montgomery County into DC.





REFERENCES:

Goodyear, S. (n.d.). The Real Story Behind the Global Bike-Share Boom. Retrieved March 2, 2020, from <https://www.citylab.com/city-makers-connections/bike-share/>