

Why Your BUSINESS Should be BICYCLE FRIENDLY

In today's world of competitive business and high employee turnover, what keeps employees happily anchored to their jobs? Is it a comprehensive and inexpensive health insurance package, accessible transportation options, company morale? Actually, it's all of these things and more.

One way businesses can cover many of these aspects is to encourage bicycling as a viable form of transportation. Studies have shown that an employer's emphasis on fitness will decrease health insurance costs, lower absenteeism, increase productivity, and will also reduce parking costs! If employers offer a few simple benefits to those who ride to work, the rewards will be reciprocated. There truly is no better return on an investment.

So how do employers begin to encourage bicycling within the workplace? Businesses can start by offering employees the Bicycle Commuter Tax Benefit*. Effective January 1, 2009, this benefit can help defer commuting costs such as bike equipment and maintenance. Commuters are eligible to receive \$20 per month or \$240 a year when they cycle to work a specified amount of time (set by the employer).

Another way to get the wheels turning is to offer employees bike parking. Secure and convenient

parking inside or outside the workplace demonstrates support of bicycling for employees and guests. First and foremost, employees want to know that their bicycle will be there when they are done with work. Secure parking is essential to a commuter's peace of mind.

Also, be sure to promote Bike to Work Day, the third Friday in May every year. This nationally recognized day will get those closet cyclists out on their bikes and lead the way for the beginners. Send around a company email to promote the day, put up fliers or support a local event. Providing a commuter breakfast as simple as bagels and coffee is another great

way to acknowledge your commuters' efforts on Bike to Work Day or any day.

Don't forget, a company bike club is a fun way of gathering workplace bicyclists. Club meetings are a great catalyst to creating a network of like-minded commuters, recreational cyclists and interested beginners. Invite company management to events and meetings so they are aware of the level of interest within the business.

With these few steps to incorporate bicycling in the workplace, businesses can broaden transportation options, improve employee health, increase company morale and improve the business's level of social responsibility. Bicycling makes a better workplace for everyone. ●

**For more information on the Bicycle Commuter Tax Benefit and the League's Bicycle Friendly Business program, visit www.bikeleague.org/resources/commuters and www.bicyclefriendlybusiness.org.*



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Photo courtesy of Quality Bike Products



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