



Creating Opportunities Along the Nation's Trails

425 West Pittsburgh Street | Greensburg, PA 15601 | (724) 216-9160 | www.trailtowns.org | www.progressfund.org

Tips for Tapping into the Trail Market

Using Your Trail to Build Your Business



Be knowledgeable about the trail, your community, and the region. You can best serve your customers by knowing the product - in this case the trail system and the towns along the way. So get out there to explore and have some fun! Also, **brush up on upcoming events and activities** that your customers may want to check out during their ride!

Offer ample bike parking. Bike racks make a statement that cyclists and their bikes are welcome at your business. Overnight bike storage is a must for lodging properties.

Lodging properties: If Rule #1 is to provide secure, overnight bike storage, Rule #2 is to allow bikers to stay for only one night. Two-night stay requirements can really hamper trip planning along long distance trails.

Post a “Bikers Welcome!” sign in your window, or better yet, “Cyclists Welcome!” so that people know that you’re targeting Treks, not Harleys.

Keep a bike pump and basic tools on-hand. They may not be needed often but will be appreciated when they are.

Bike shops: Offer locks with your rental bikes so that your customers can relax and visit other businesses in a care-free state of mind.

Consider visitors’ needs when setting your hours. Some cyclists come off the trail later than expected and need basic services. Post your hours in plain sight and extend hours when needed.

Advertise in regional guides and cycling oriented outlets. These guides help visitors plan their trip and where to stop along their journey.

Advertise in visitor centers and bike shops to the extent that is permitted locally. Reach out to businesses in nearby towns to trade brochures.

Implement a referral marketing strategy. There’s no advertising as valuable as word of mouth, so incentivize your customers to recommend your business to others.

Create a “photo-op” in your business. Many cyclists take photos along the trail, why not in front of their new favorite Trail Town eatery or B&B.

The Trail Town Program® is an initiative of The Progress Fund. Sign up to receive Trail Town News at www.trailtowns.org.



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Partner with other businesses to create trip packages that are exciting and take the headache out of planning. Offer to transport people, luggage, and gear.

Join the Trail Town Certified Network. You can appeal to an eco-conscious market (most cyclists) and improve trail friendly practices while improving your bottom line while networking with other Trail Town businesses.

Sell small items that bikers can carry and **offer shipping for larger items.** Also stock easy to carry snacks like trail mix, apples, and protein bars.

Keep a guestbook and send out special promos. Attracting repeat customers is a big part of your tourism business. Imagine sending a personalized appeal that reminds past guests that it's time to start planning their annual bike trip.

Commit this sentence to memory and use it daily: "Please recommend us on Trip Advisor." TripAdvisor is the most used travel site. Other venues include Google Places, Facebook, Twitter, Yelp, Urban Spoon, and Virtual Tourist.

Seek honest customer feedback via surveys, customer polls, online reviews, and giveaways.

Restaurants:

- **Post your menu** so that it can be easily seen from the sidewalk.
- Consider a **dress code** that is welcoming to patrons who may be wearing bright-colored, tight-fitting bicycle attire.
- Go the "extra mile" and offer meal **delivery** to nearby campsites and other lodging properties.
- Offer **menu items that are bike-themed** or pay homage to local culture.
- Serve up takeout orders in **eco-friendly containers.** Nothing guilties an eco-conscious customer more than using Styrofoam.
- **Include fresh, local foods** on your menu. Consumer demand for these is not a fad; it's a growing trend. People want to enjoy foods that taste great AND feel good to eat.
- In addition to healthy foods, **include hearty meal options** on your menu. Cyclists need full and balanced meals. Protein-rich vegetarian options should be included in your menu.



Just be friendly! Have a positive attitude about your town and a welcoming demeanor. Visitors almost always notice the small town hospitality along long distance trails, so let's keep up the good work!