

Best practice example – Czech Republic

Bike trainings for safer and happier customers

With the emergence of pedelecs it has been of great interest to attract not only people who already use a bicycle, but also new customers. After all, getting people to switch from cars to pedelecs will help the most in reducing city congestion and CO₂-emissions. However, this new target group has often very little practice in riding a bicycle and especially in a city like Prague, which has very bad infrastructure for bikes, this is a huge problem. It happened to us quite frequently that a customer who just a week before left our store with a new pedelec came back disappointed to return it, as they got scared off by city traffic.



To address this we have therefore introduced trainings for driving in a city environment which has been quite successful so far. In the last two years we offered four trainings with groups of 5 to 8 people plus a few company trainings. As all the participants had already bought their pedelec from us, we did not have to provide additional ones, making this an experiment without much to lose for us.

The trainings consisted of a short introductory presentation, where some important differences of driving a bike and a car in city traffic were made clear. After this, a short practical training in our courtyard was immediately followed by hands-on action in Prague traffic. With these trainings we have two main goals. Firstly, it should help the participants feel and actually be safer when cycling in traffic. Secondly, we wanted to give them the ability to be faster and therefore get the most out of their newly acquired pedelec.

Skills taught included basic things like how to make car drivers aware of one's presence through hand signs and signal colours, but also specifics on the best way to accelerate with a pedelec. It

is important, though, to be aware of the different skill levels of the participants. During our trainings we taught people who never sat on a bike more than a couple of times in their lives to people who cycle very frequently. To get the most out of the trainings it is therefore important to offer something for both groups, so no one gets bored or left out.

BOX OF ADVICE

- + Organize a special event with testing pedelec for your organization – for your employees, partners. Contact local company selling/renting e-bikes and ask for a price list for a day rental of several pieces of e-bikes. Ask for a trained assistance (put in budget not only renting e-bikes but costs for hired staff as well), find a common public place which is cross by bunch of people every day and make an public advertisement of a event (placed in w.e. time is convenient) in local regional newspapers, magazines, radio. Municipality should be visible and know as a administration body taking part in green transport actively.
- + When you have partners/co-workers that are new to biking it is important to probably prepare them for moving around in the city, especially in cities that do not have good bike infrastructure
- + Demonstrate to them that driving a pedelec in the city can be just as fast as or faster than travelling with a car, by showing them short cuts and other ways to be quicker
- + Organize the trainings for free when customers buy a pedelec, as these trainings should not cost you much, except a little time
- + Be aware of the different skill levels of the members of a training group
- Do not have groups of more than eight people for trainings, as this has proven for us to be hard to coordinate in traffic

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