Cycling Industry Must Address Lack of Diversity: Bicycle Association report urges sector to change or risk loss of future sales

Wednesday 8 March, 2023

8 March 2023 – The Bicycle Association (BA) today marks International Women's Day with the launch of **Diversity in Cycling**, a project aimed at tackling the lack of diversity in the cycling industry, and unlocking additional growth by reaching out to new customer audiences and recruiting more diversely, particularly at leadership level.

To tackle the lack of diversity in the cycling sector and in cycling overall, the BA urges all cycling businesses to sign a **Diversity Pledge**, aligning the industry behind a shared commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace culture. BA Leadership Group members have already signed the Pledge, including: **Brompton; Cycling Sports Group; Frog Bikes; Giant; Halfords; Islabikes; Liv; Raleigh; Schwalbe; Specialized and Trek.**

The diversity findings highlighted by the BA report are stark:

- Men occupy the majority of roles in the cycling industry and make twice as many cycling trips as women
- Women account for only 8% of cycle workshop roles and 19% of customer-facing roles
- The number of women in senior leadership roles in cycling is scant
- Only 14% of ethnic minority groups, 12% of people with disabilities and 19% of LGBTQ+ people cycle regularly

In addition, everybody working in the industry is invited to take a **perception survey** into the experiences, wants and needs of people around diversity, equity and inclusion. The survey is an international collaboration between the BA, Cycling Industries Europe and WORK180.

British and international cycling bodies are supporting the BA in a shared commitment to tackle diversity, including the Association of Cycle Traders, the Bikeability Trust, British Cycling, Cycling Industries Europe, Cycling UK, and Sustrans.

The BA would also like to hear from cycling businesses who have achieved success in improving diversity, equity and inclusion in their workplace, to build **case studies** to inspire others to follow suit.

Nikki Hawyes, Country Leader of Cycling Sports Group and Chair of the Diversity in Cycling Advisory Board, said:

"Fixing our diversity problem is important not only out of a moral imperative to better reflect our society and allow everyone to be their authentic selves at work. It is also vitally important for sustainable industry growth. In order to grow cycling, we need to reach out to a new, more diverse group of people and inspire them to take their short journeys by bike. This will help meet our net zero commitments by 2030. The potential growth opportunity is huge: an additional £2-3 billion per year for the cycling industry.

Throughout my career I've often been in industries and teams, where I am in a minority group and, at times, felt disadvantaged because I am female. This is what drives me to support DEI initiatives so I can give my time and experience helping other marginalised groups have a voice and be heard. I encourage all cycling organisations to sign our pledge and join us in making a strategic commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, to unlock additional value for our industry and the wider economy."

Media:



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Sally Middlemiss, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead at the BA, said:

“The business case for diversity, equity and inclusion in the UK is 'stronger than ever', according to new research by McKinsey. Diverse businesses are more profitable; they recruit the best talent; make better decisions; have more motivated employees; and have a superior understanding of customers' needs. Meanwhile, an Accenture study found that 41% of shoppers removed at least 10% of their business from a retailer for their lack of focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The business benefits to embracing diversity, equity and inclusion are clear, but there is a worrying disconnect within the industry - our latest census showed that just 21% of the industry considered women as a growth customer segment, while 72% did not identify any underrepresented demographics in their customer base. Only 9% of census respondents ran events targeting people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.”

Initially, the **Diversity in Cycling** project will focus on collecting data and insights from both employers and underrepresented groups in our industry, to benchmark, measure progress and capture case studies and role models. The project then aims to provide targeted support to employers, sharing best practice from within and outside cycling to help them implement their strategic commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion; while building an inclusive professional network for women and other marginalised groups.

Aneela McKenna, Chair of British Cycling’s Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group and founder of Mòr Diversity, said:

‘’Diversity and inclusion should be everyone’s priority. If we want to bring about sustained and meaningful change, the industry needs to build inclusion at all levels of cycling - in its workforce, decision making structures and business practices. A fundamental part of this is to continue to engage and empower groups and individuals in the right way to build our future leaders and help us truly reflect the society at large.

I would encourage everyone who works in the industry to sign up to this important pledge and to work together through collaboration and partnerships, learning from each other to help our industry grow and be the best it can be.’’

The lack of diversity in the cycling industry is part of a wider systemic issue, and is mirrored by a similar imbalance in participation in cycling across most parts of the UK today. Latest research from Sustrans, the walking and cycling charity, shows that only 11% of women cycle regularly, compared with 23% of men; while just 14% of ethnic minority groups, 12% of disabled people and 19% of LGBQ+ people cycle regularly.

Sarah Mitchell, Cycling UK Chief Executive said:

“In the UK, all segments of society are under-represented in cycling, but there is still a perception that cycling is predominantly an activity done for exercise by white men. That’s not a criticism of those who are riding, nor their reasons for doing so, but when cycling is dominated by one segment of society there is a risk that others may not feel that riding a bike is something they can and should be able to do. We need to question why that is and what can be done to correct this imbalance. The benefits of more people cycling will be a healthier, happier population with additional environmental and economic benefits. This is good news for all of us.

“The UK’s lack of significant change in the diversity in cycling is one of the barriers which holds us back from becoming a cycling nation. It is encouraging to see the cycle industry now looking at its responsibility to help make this change happen, as charities and NGOs cannot do it alone.”

Lauha Fried, Policy Director at Cycling Industries Europe and Founder of Women in Cycling, said:

“With collective purpose and ambition, we can build the momentum to create a diverse, equitable, inclusive cycling industry culture at international scale, advancing the careers of underrepresented groups, enabling everybody’s voice to be heard, and inspiring more diverse people to enter and lead the sustainable, resilient, competitive cycling industry of the future.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About Diversity in Cycling

Diversity in Cycling is a project created by the Bicycle Association. It aims to unite and align the cycling industry behind a shared commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, inclusive industry, unlocking more value for all. Read the full report on Diversity in the Cycling Industry here.

About the Bicycle Association

The Bicycle Association (BA) is the national trade association for the UK cycle industry. It represents the best interests of the UK cycle industry to government, stakeholders and the general public. The BA’s purpose is to grow the UK cycling industry, increase everyday cycling and remove barriers to cycling for everyone. www.bicycleassociation.org.uk

Global research shows that more diverse organisations are more successful: growing sales and reaching out to new, diverse customer audiences; improving profitability through increased innovation and better decision making; and recruiting and retaining better talent:

- Research by Accenture found that 41% of shoppers removed at least 10% of their business from a retailer for their lack of focus on diversity, equity and inclusion
- Inclusive business cultures lead to 38% better assessment of consumer demand
- Companies with ethnically diverse teams are 36% more likely to have above-average profitability
- The top 25% of companies in male-dominated industries that have the most gender-diverse executive leadership teams are 47% more profitable than those in the bottom 25%
- Companies with a gender inclusive business culture have a 59% probability of achieving more creativity, innovation and openness
- More inclusive teams improve employee engagement and satisfaction and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism

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