LET'S RIDE

Olympic City: Sydney
Country: Australia
Edition of the Games: 2000 Olympic Summer Games

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

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Let's Ride is a national junior riding programme designed by Cycling Australia (CA) to be a fun learning experience for kids. The programme teaches them to ride safely by developing their knowledge, skills and confidence – giving parents peace of mind.

Learning to ride safely is a skill that must be taught as children grow and gain independence. With 1.9 million Australian kids riding bikes every week, and no official programme to teach kids the necessary life-saving skills, there was a huge gap that needed to be addressed.

Cycling Australia has undertaken an extensive research and development process that led to the implementation of the Let's Ride programme. Independent experts, representatives from state cycling bodies, potential instructors, marketing agencies and internal experts have all contributed with their own expertise in shaping the programme for maximum appeal to kids and their parents.

The Let's Ride programme offers activities before, during or after school hours. Cycling Australia accredited instructors can come to your school to deliver the industry leading six-week program or Let's Ride offers schools the option to deliver the skills course internally by providing the school with a comprehensive and yet easy to use package. Let's Ride Delivery Pack contains all of the resources and content required to deliver the program.

Cycling Australia has also partnered with the Australian Sport Commission who had an existing school sport programme to help combat the increasing levels of obesity that has been observed among the youth. Through this partnership, schools can access the governmental funding to cover the cost of their students who are interested in participating in the programme.

Operationally, 30 delivery centres have been created in the different areas, of which 19 are in Sydney. Linked to local clubs and schools, these centres are mandated by Cycling Australia to handle the delivery of the programme in the various districts.

The program was piloted in 2015 and launched nationally in 2016. Since then, the program has operated in all states and territories across Australia. Having great success during this time the program is on the cusp of reaching 10,000 participants.
OBJECTIVES

Promote a healthy and active lifestyle

The Let’s Ride programme provides a unique opportunity to target children and to promote cycling as a fun way to practice sport and to use bikes as an alternative means of transportation. It further offers a way to educate the youth and to encourage them to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle. Ultimately, this could help combat youth obesity, which is becoming an issue not only in Australia, but worldwide.

Develop human capital and generate social cohesion

The programme targets both parents and children. In order to make the road safer for biking, it is important to educate both these groups. For kids, knowing how to ride a bike independently does not necessarily translate to road awareness and safety. The Let’s Ride programme aims to fill this gap.

By offering programmes through schools Cycling Australia and the Australian Sport Commission created a new approach towards teaching children how to ride. The programme aims at educating children on the proper techniques and road safety measures that are needed in modern day cycling.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Internal & External Stakeholders

Cycling Australia
Australian Sport Commission
Local town councils in Sydney
New Wales State Government
A marketing company
Olympians

Finance and Cost

The estimated cost for the research and the development of the programme is US$ 186,000. This was funded primarily by Cycling Australia and the Australian Sport Commission.

On a yearly basis the estimated cost to manage and deliver the programme is expected to be US$ 223,000. The intention is to increase the percentage of direct paying participants (cost US$70 for the six week course) from 10% to 40% so that
there is less dependency on federation and government funding thus creating more self-sustainability for the programme.

Use of the Olympic Brand

There are no specific Olympic branding elements incorporated into the programme.

Human Resources and Time

The programme took fourteen months to develop. There was one full time staff member dedicated to developing and launching the programme, with the support of a number of external contractors.

EVALUATION

A post participation survey is sent to the parents whose child took part in the programme. The coaches aim at finding out what the kids think of the programme by asking specific questions.

In addition, meetings are organised with the delivery centres every six months to get their feedback on how the programmes is working in the various local towns.

KEY CHALLENGES

Defining the programme

In a typical week, one out of every six Australians will ride a bike. Biking is really popular in Australia and it is important to teach children to learn how to ride. Before defining the programme comprehensive and robust research was required to ensure the right set-up. Thousands of parents, teachers and kids were involved in the process. Independent experts also contributed in the research by sharing their knowledge and assessing potential solutions. This was a long process but a lot of crucial information and guidance were gained, which helped shaping the programme for maximum appeal to kids and parents.

Maintaining Quality

Due to the fact that the programme is delivered by various centres, it is a challenge to make sure that the programme is consistent across the country. The objective is to keep up the standards level of delivery regardless of where the programme is held. Parents and children should get the same level of response, knowledge and experience.

The online registration which coaches have to complete at the end of each session helps the governing team to monitor the progress of the various sessions taking place and therefore, if they feel that something needs to be adapted or changed, they can deal directly with the appropriate centre or coach.
KEY LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research, research, research!
The information gathered during the research phase of the programme proved to be quite relevant and useful. It allowed the team to know what age groups to target, how the concept of learning to ride was perceived in the market and how to build the communication strategy.

The research showed that 1.9 million out of 2.6 million children in Australia are riding bikes. However, it also showed that the majority were taught by parents who did not know the proper techniques and safety measures needed in cycling. These results helped the team obtain the much needed financial support from the government.

Target the right audience
For a programme such as Let’s Ride to be successful, it is important to know who the target audience is. By conducting extensive research, this information can be obtained and used to better reach the set objectives.

The results of the research showed that parents were the most likely persons to teach their kids how to ride. This was a critical information for the development of the programme. The focus of the communication has therefore been geared towards the parents. It also helped tailor the programme for the different age groups to meet their different needs.

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