

Rescued bikes for your business needs

Bike Rescue is a York-based project which collects abandoned or donated bikes to repair them and obtain new bikes to sell to local business and non-business customers, such as students. Buying a Rescued Bike instead of a new bike, often shipped from outside EU, results in great carbon emission savings, as well as cost savings!



Description of the case study:

Background

Bernie Cullen, founder and director of Bike Rescue, started in 2006 to collect broken or abandoned bikes from her friends and neighbours to repair them in her backyard. She then received support by the local city council to use City of York Council that offered two free units near the city centre. Nowadays, Bike Rescue is located near the Ouse river into the Hub Station, recovered from an ancient warehouse in disuse, and diverts 12 tonnes of bicycles from the waste stream, every year.

A talented group of staff carries out bike reparations in a small warehouse before those are sold to the public in the Hub Station for a reasonable price.

Process

In order to implement the Bike Rescue, most of the efforts focused on the application to obtain financial resources from councils, banks and other funding bodies.

Due to the low income raised exclusively with the selling of rescued bikes, the repairing work has been mostly undertaken by volunteers, who do not work on a regular basis into the shop. This requires constant recruitment and training of new volunteers.

Another main component of the process is the collection of rescued bikes, and to make sure that a sufficient amount of bikes is available in the warehouse.

Effects/Results

Buying a Bike Rescue has both economic and environmental benefits. The price of a Bike Rescue is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a new bike full price.

Furthermore, this product has virtually 0 carbon miles since the old bikes are collected within York area and recycled in York warehouse using as many as possible parts stripped off other old bikes by locally-based experts. Very few components manufactured outside EU (mostly China) are added to the rescued bikes.

Similarly, energy savings are achieved if the embedded energy is not produced by using bike components obtained from other abandoned bikes

Facilitating factors

Among the facilitating factors to the widespread and success of the Rescue Bike there is the existence of a demand from the market to buy rescued bikes, and not only for economic, but also environmental reasons.

The support from the City Council to have the initial location within the city centre, surely helped the development of the business, and therefore the dissemination of the rescued bikes.

Volunteers working in the preparation of bikes, largely contributes in reducing the cost of production of a rescued bike, allowing competitive prices for the customers.

Barriers/challenges

Funding, legislation and equity have been the most important barriers towards the development of the business. Firstly, due to the absence of collaterals, and the low turnovers, banks have always been hesitant in releasing funding to the business. It has been very challenging to secure a sufficient amount of funds to run the shops. Furthermore, the cost of highly skilled staff and costs to bear to guarantee the constant development of skilled staff represent a challenge in the running of this type of business. As mentioned above, it has been necessary to diversify the business activities in order to guarantee the running costs were covered. Secondly, there are licenses that the business has to obtain, such as the waste carrier license, before it can start operating. Finally, there have been challenges in the past to do this kind of business as a businesswoman, due to the high percentage of businessman in the sector.

What was the type of green solution? Please select the type of solution.:

Technology/Product [1], Organisational methods and (green) business plans [2]

What does the featured solution contribute to?:

Environmental protection,
Resource efficiency

Which technology area(s) does the case study belong to?:

End of life product recovery [3], Material reclamation [4]

How was the green solution financed?:

Private funds [5]
Third Party Financing [6]

Emission reductions description:

Not yet calculated, but imagine the difference between a bike shipped from overseas against a bike assembled in York with local workforce using components that were going to landfill

Material consumption savings description:

About 80% of the bike components is taken from bikes that were going to landfill

Cost savings description:

Up to 50% cheaper than buying a new bike

Technical and capacity requirements?:

The personnel working on the reparation of bikes needs to be highly skilled with constant development of those skills, since a good judgement of the status of the bike is necessary, especially when need to identify from where to take each component of the new bike.

Regulatory framework prerequisites and constraints?:

Some licenses that the business has to obtain, such as the waste carrier license, before it can start operating.

Operating and maintenance costs:

Yes, high O&M costs

Would you characterize the green solution as:

Medium capital intensive investment (i.e. €10,000-€30,000)

Partners:

Company name

- [Bike Rescue](#) [7]

Relationship type:

Company that produced the green solution,
Company that supplied or installed the green solution

Source URL: <http://greeneconet.eu/rescued-bikes-your-business-needs>

Links

- [1] <http://greeneconet.eu/type-green-solution/technologyproduct>
[2] <http://greeneconet.eu/type-green-solution/organisational-methods-and-green-business-plans>
[3] <http://greeneconet.eu/technology-area/waste-treatment-and-recycling/end-life-product-recovery>
[4] <http://greeneconet.eu/technology-area/waste-treatment-and-recycling/material-reclamation>
[5] <http://greeneconet.eu/financing/private-funds>
[6] <http://greeneconet.eu/financing/third-party-financing>
[7] <http://greeneconet.eu/bike-rescue>

