

When Millimeters Matter

Tiemeyer's Custom Fit System Can Boost Retail Profits

BY JILL JANOV

ESTES PARK, CO—Of the hundred frames David Tiemeyer builds each year, none are alike.

Tiemeyer contends proper fitting equipment is essential to maximize performance. And he makes a convincing argument that millimeters can make a difference in wind resistance, power, speed and comfort.

His Tiemeyer Position Cycle optimizes a cyclist's position by measuring performance under controlled conditions of heart rate, cadence and power output on different geometries.

His fitting process, which costs \$250 when purchased with a frame and \$500 without, includes anaerobic threshold testing, anatomic fitting and an evaluation of a cyclist's current position.

Tiemeyer's Position Cycle fine-tunes seat tube length, toptube length and seat angle through telescoping seat stays.

He then applies the information derived from his fit system to build an aluminum frame.

Since 1989, Tiemeyer Cycles has sold custom track, road, triathlon and time-trial framesets directly to consumers. Now, Tiemeyer is turning to retailers to help create sales.

Tiemeyer wants to train retailers to fit their customers and send the measurements to him. Retailers can purchase Tiemeyer aero frames starting at \$1,375.

Retailers profit from the sale of the



David Tiemeyer said custom fit benefits cyclists.

fit, but also from the sale of the frame, headset, fork and components, he said.

By offering Tiemeyer custom frames, retailers can expand their lines without holding inventory and without exclusivity agreements or minimum orders. Tiemeyer also offers discounts on higher quantities.

"A dealer who offers a custom frame to their customers is offering a value

added. This is something mail order can't do and I know that dealers are struggling to compete with mail order," Tiemeyer said.

And prestige comes with offering custom frames, he said.

"Dealers may shy away from it because of the complexity, but I have found that fitting a customer and optimizing their position, so they know they can generate the power and feel comfortable, gives them a guarantee that what they are purchasing is what they need," he said.

The customer signs off on the position and Tiemeyer duplicates it.

"I constantly hear and get emails from people telling me that they improved their personal best record by so much time or distance," he said. "It has been a word-of-mouth business, so when orders keep coming in that's an indication to me that customers are satisfied."

Tiemeyer's first job in the indus-

try was at Colorado Cyclist where he supervised bike assembly and wheel building.

He worked at GT as a production manager and later as a project engineer for both GT and Schwinn. He has designed and built bikes for world champions and Olympians competing in Atlanta, Sydney and Athens.

Tiemeyer jokes about a sign commonly found on bike boxes, that depicts a person next to a bike with a one-inch vertical distance between crotch and top tube. The caption reads 'Proper Fit.'

"A human being can adapt to virtually anything. I have adapted to a one-size-fits-all car that I drive with knees pressed up against the dash so that I am at a comfortable reach from the steering wheel," said Tiemeyer, who has a long torso and is 6 feet 4 inches tall.

But adapting doesn't help cyclists become as comfortable or as fast as they can be, he said.

"I truly enjoy working with cyclists to optimize their positions. I really am jazzed when athletes achieve personal records shortly after receiving bikes that I have built for them," he said. **BRAIN**