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Your cycling guide to business success

Last Sunday I undertook one of Australia's largest community bike rides. The Wilson HTM event started at Southbank in Brisbane and finished 100 kms later in Southport. A flat, mostly smooth course was made easier by a pleasant early morning temperature and marshalls directing riders along the course. Thanks to a favourable tail wind, many riders I spoke to recorded fast times for the trip.

For reasons only keen cyclists and ardent goal setters will understand, I ignored the Helensvale train station and headed back to Brisbane by bike, retracing my earlier route. This gave me the opportunity to witness the procession of riders still on their journey to Southport.

As my return leg continued, the numbers of the opposite side of the road dwindled and the rider characteristics changed. Lycra-clad cyclists on European frames gradually were replaced by "weekend warriors" on mountain bikes, before giving way to clunky machines ridden by people in general sports gear. Cheery, confident looks were replaced by florid faces. Comfortable cadence dropped away to walking beside bikes up modest inclines. After a while I stopped calling out encouragement because frankly, many of the "tail end Charlies" should never have set out on this journey. A number of these riders were destined not to finish and looked in need of rescue.

This got me thinking about people in business. It's great to set ambitious goals and ultimately achieve them through dedicated training and preparation. The right equipment helps too. In this regard, it's often not necessary to have "bleeding edge" technology, just well fitted equipment appropriate for prevailing conditions. On the other hand, little or no training invites injury. Rusty skills risk an accident. *"Seemed like a good idea at the time"* can backfire – witness the fellows on a tandem dressed as Batman and Robin, toiling away in the midday sun. So too, businesses started on a whim and very little else will usually fail. Others can get unwittingly drawn into such ventures. Last Sunday, riders with babies mounted on handlebars and parents with primary school-age children should have known better. In business, family members donating labour and/or guaranteeing loans are similarly dragged in.

So, let's see how ready you are for business success based on a cyclist's checklist for a big event -

- knowledge of the course and conditions
- people to guide you along the way
- intensity and purpose to your training
- adequate supplies for the journey
- contingency plans in case of problems
- appropriate equipment
- stay in front to avoid congestion in the middle of the pack ☺

