



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS WITH TCB SKI, BOARD & BIKE, OHAKUNE

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Web Address: www.tcbskiandboard.co.nz

Owners: Mike, Vicki and Ben Wiggins

Services Offered: Ski, snowboard and bike retail, hire and servicing. Accessories retail.

TCB stands for “Taking Care of Business”. Their great customer service and motto conveying their “passion for what we do” is certainly evident when it comes to looking after the needs of skiers and snowboarders in the winter months. Now, TCB is taking care of cyclists and mountain bikers all through summer as well.

The New Zealand Cycle Trail development and the opening of the Ohakune Old Coach Road proved the catalyst for TCB to grow its seasonal snow sport business to include bike retail and hire and has helped enable the business to successfully operate all year round.

OPPORTUNITY

Identifying the opportunity

TCB began as a ski and snowboard retailer and hire centre in 2006 after owner Ben Wiggins saw an opportunity to provide an ‘upmarket’ service to skiers and boarders in Ohakune. Ben went into partnership with his parents Mike and Vicki Wiggins and the

business went from strength to strength, with turnover doubling in each of its first 3 years. However, seasonal businesses have a unique set of financial challenges and retention of essential staff was an ongoing difficulty.

In 2009, Mike became the founding Chair of the Visit Ruapehu Trust and it became clear that Ruapehu could grow tourism, with the Mountains to Sea Trail achieving Great Ride status with New Zealand Cycle Trail. Mike and Ben saw the opportunity to expand the business from a seasonal winter operation into a year round venture.

SOLUTION

Offered Products

TCB added mountain bike rental to its mix and bikes and bike accessories were integrated into to the retail side of the business.

TCB then extended its seasonal focus and it opened for its first summer of trading in 2009/10. Trading was initially quiet however it began to slowly grow following the opening of the Ohakune Old Coach Road section of the Mountains to Sea trail in July 2010. By summer 2011/12, the region’s cycling trails were promoted on television, business proved steadier and Easter 2012 saw a record number of bikers enjoy the trails around the Ruapehu region.

Marketing Focus

To make it as easy as possible for visitors to enjoy the Ruapehu region, TCB began working with other operators to offer cycling 'packages'. The packages targeted visitors outside of typical holiday times for the Ruapehu region. Combining local service expertise to make life easier for customers has proved popular. It alleviates the need for visitors to spend precious time organizing their gear - they can instead get into exploring the region.

- Accommodation, transport and bike rental packages were offered on a daily deal site "Grab One" with great success.
- TCB has featured in regional tourism marketing: A domestic TV campaign, the Ruapehu Great Ride's brochure, the Visit Ruapehu website, internet campaigns on Facebook etc have all enabled promotion of business offers and have had a positive effect on the region and the business.
- Promotion of summer events through the skifields' website (which has high winter usage) has grown awareness of Ohakune as a summer cycling destination.
- Visit Ruapehu, the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) has been instrumental in bringing together diverse businesses in the region for mutual business benefit.

RESULTS

TCB began in 2009 as a winter only business offering seasonal employment.

- It now employs four full time staff all year round and is a 7-day-a-week business.
- With a growing number of cycle visitors TCB has now established a full cycle service and repair centre, complimenting their retail offering.
- TCB's original business plan was to break even in five years. They are delighted to have achieved their aim well ahead of plan in year 3.

The flow on effects to other businesses, accommodation suppliers and operators has been substantial:

- The area has become a viable summer visitor destination.
- Other businesses in the Ruapehu region, such as café's, accommodation, retailers etc are also now staying open throughout the summer, bringing a more sustainable base to the region as well as ongoing employment.
- Events (not only cycle events) promoted in the Ruapehu Region are achieving more and more people in attendance. The reason cannot be directly attributed to the cycle way, although Visit Ruapehu say the interest could be a 'flow on' or indirect effect from the cycle-way promotions.

Quote/Unquote Ben Wiggins

What's TCB's key to success:

TCB's Ben Wiggins says "It has been absolutely critical to work collaboratively with others to provide a quality experience for visitors and make sure everyone is catered for. We could not have achieved what we have on our own...by sharing and working together we have all been able to build stronger more sustainable businesses."

What is your current focus area:

"We are continuing to work with other like minded operators to develop a variety of experiences for visitors to the area. The opening of the Wanganui River Road offers further opportunities for this summer and onwards. TCB's is now looking to invest in a new fleet of 50 rental bikes".

Ben's Last Words/Favourite one liner to share:

"Livin' the dream in Ohakune" and a passion for what we do! Come and visit us