

RideLondon-Surrey Case Study

Gary Cheffie, manager of the Fox & Hounds, Surbiton

The RideLondon-Surrey 100 and RideLondon-Surrey Classic events were a chance for pubs on the route to celebrate the riders coming past their front doors and to encourage their customers to get into the spirit of the weekend.

In Surbiton, the cycling events offered a great opportunity, which was pounced upon by the Fox & Hounds manager Gary Cheffie.

“Back in 2012 we were really busy over the two days of the Olympic road races,” says Cheffie, “so this was a chance to recapture some of that brilliant atmosphere.”

The organisers of the RideLondon events provided the pub with a celebration pack, including a banner, balloons and flags, which Cheffie used to deck the pub out.

“The banner from RideLondon was an excellent idea as it saved us between £200 and £300, and the rest of the items in the pack were more than enough to kit the pub out. We also had our own banner printed.”

Cheffie ensured that, with the road closures for the event coming into force early in the day, he was well prepared so he could easily avoid moving around once the route was closed to traffic.

“The key is to make sure you have everything you need the day before; essentially enough drink and enough

staff,” he says, “and to make sure you have the right number of staff working so that you can cope with the influx of people. With myself and one other, we could get through the rush very quickly, and we took a lot of money in that hour, so for us it was a very positive thing.”

Cheffie also made the most of social media to let his local customers, as well as spectators from further afield, know what the pub was planning for the big day. “I used our own Facebook page and also posted on the RideLondon page nice and early to drum up trade and encourage people to come to watch,” he explains. And he also built a relationship with Surbiton Cycles, a specialist cycling retailer in the area, adding their logo to his banners and promoting the day through the shop.

Fundraising teams from the Rainbow Trust and Princess Alice Hospice based themselves at the Fox & Hounds to cheer on their cyclists during the RideLondon-Surrey 100, with the bulk of the crowds arriving later in the afternoon and using the pub as a great place to watch the professional peloton, which included Sir Bradley Wiggins, go past during the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey Classic.

“We had more than usual in terms of customers early on the Sunday, but we got really busy when the professional riders came through,” he says. “We had the TV coverage showing in the pub so customers could see where

the pro riders were on the route and gauge when they would be coming past us. We found that if people could follow the race on the big screen, and see what the riders were up to, it really helped them to get involved and support the event. When the pro race came past, I took £1000 in an hour.”

One of the most important factors in making a success of the day for Cheffie was having a good understanding of how his local clientele would want to engage with the event. “Pubs need to know what their customer base want – and don’t want,” he says. “You’ve got to know your customers to know how best to get them interested in an event.

“It’s also a good idea to talk to the local papers in the area, who could do a spread showing the pubs on the route and let people know the best places to watch and other information, such as the locations of the closest transport links and crossing points. The more you can engage the local media to let people know what’s happening, the better.”

“The pack that RideLondon gave to us was a great start and then it’s really up to you how far you want to go beyond that with making an event out of it. We will probably get our own t-shirts printed for the 2015 RideLondon festival.

“It was definitely a positive thing for us and I think it was also a great thing for the area. You see a lot more cyclists here now, so it has definitely given the sport a boost. I’m all for it.”



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