

By Pixel and Pedal:

Digital designer uses skills to help Climate Ride move forward and becomes a B Corp. in the process

Inspiration flows from many sources, but a runny nose isn't typically one of them. But it was a bad cold that set Tim Frick, a principal at Mightybytes, a web and digital consulting firm, down a path that ultimately resulted in a strategic partnership between his company and the socially responsible nonprofit organization Climate Ride.

Mightybytes is one of only 11 Certified B Corporations in Illinois, which reflects the company's own commitment to social and environmental responsibility. To become a B Corp, a company is required to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance and is legally required to consider the impact of its decisions on everything from its employees to the environment.

Building community and working with organizations that are making a real social and environmental impact are a key tenet of the B Corp framework, which is where Climate Ride comes in.

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“On my very first Climate Ride in 2010 I reached a milestone, but not in a good way,” recalls Frick. A long-time cyclist, he was participating in a 300-mile ride down the California Coast organized by Climate Ride, a nonprofit organization that hosts life-changing experiences to raise awareness and funds for over 30 different environmental organizations. Recently, it crossed the \$1M mark.

On the second day of the ride, Frick says he was so under the weather that he was not able to finish — the first time ever he “bonked” while cycling. “I still wasn't feeling up to riding the next



day, so I asked if I could ride shotgun with the Climate Ride support team.”

From his vantage point, Frick says he was able to observe first-hand how a Climate Ride is executed and what he saw impressed him. “I could not believe how focused and well-organized the team was.” For him it was life-changing. “You're going through this primordial

experience, basically it's just you and nature and you start getting these goose-bump moments. I mean, goats walked right up to us and we fed them bananas! That's when I decided I would encourage others at Mightybytes to do the 2011 rides and together we raised nearly \$18K.”

It was around the same time that Mightybytes was getting certified as a B Corp. “What's great about the B Corp assessment framework is that you have to score at least 80 points (out of 200) to get certification. Once you've cleared that hurdle you are presented with a number of key areas where your company can improve,” says Frick. “We sat down with our entire team and asked them to get creative on how we might improve our score and be a better company. Partnering with Climate Ride seemed a natural fit, especially since they lacked the digital design and creative resources that we could we offer.”

Mightybytes provided its creative services to Climate Ride and continues to support its website. But the partnership goes much further. “We collaborate with them on a more strategic level as well, brainstorming about new ride ideas, better beneficiary partnerships, and innovative ways to encourage stronger rider engagement. It's an open, ongoing discussion geared toward fostering new collaborations that benefit both organizations,” explains Frick.

What's his advice for other companies looking to partner with a nonprofit? “Partnerships like this clearly work best when companies can offer their expertise in a certain area to benefit a nonprofit partner,” says Frick. “My advice to business owners,

entrepreneurs and other people involved in forging these sorts of partnerships is to stay within your wheelhouse. Offer something of value to your nonprofit partner that you have shown measurable success in. And feel free to get creative with the details. Getting company or department-wide buy-in is critical too.”

Frick says that he is lucky that he works with a small team of like-minded individuals who are very creative, so ideas are always flowing about how to improve all areas of the business. “That’s why we brew beer, for instance. It’s a great opportunity for the entire team to come together around improving our process, developing products, sharing new ideas, and in general being a better company overall.”

The bigger challenge, he points out, tends to be planning for and executing all those great ideas within the resources the company has. “Time, finances, and other elements all play a role in balancing what we want to do with what we can realistically do,” he says.

And a lot they do. As captain of Team B the Change (B Lab’s team) Frick is currently fundraising and training hard for the upcoming California Climate Ride in May. The money raised will go to B Lab, Chicago’s Active Transportation Alliance, and Climate Ride’s Growth Campaign, which was put together to grow Climate

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Ride as an organization, so it can in turn develop more rides and support more sustainable beneficiaries around the United States.

Frick is also presenting at the upcoming Business4Better Conference on May 1-2, 2013 in Anaheim, CA. In his session “By Pixel and Pedal: Saving the Planet Through B Power,” he will be discussing MightyBytes’ evolution as a socially responsible B Company as well as his own personal transformation. And more about those goats, please!

ABOUT BUSINESS4BETTER



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