

A Material for the Wheels bike hire case study

Introduction

The case study which is used as the basis for examples and exercises in this book is a typical bicycle hire shop. If you have ever hired a bicycle, you will already be familiar with some of the details; in fact, if you have ever hired anything, such as a car or even a video, you will see that the basic processes are very similar.

The bike hire shop is called Wheels, and was started by Mike Watson, the current owner, about ten years ago. Mike has always been a keen cyclist, and still competes regularly in local races and rides for charity. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of all types of bike, and is very proud of the range and quality of his stock. The business has done well, and now occupies large premises near the centre of town with a big storage and workshop area in the basement. Wheels attracts a lot of passing custom because of the position of the shop, and also gets many returning customers who know that they will be given a good quality bike that will suit their needs.

As well as Mike, who is very much involved in the day-to-day running of the business, there is a full-time shop manager, Annie Price, the head mechanic, Naresh Patel, and three other mechanics who work part-time. There is a computer in the reception area, and all the Wheels bikes are recorded on file, with details such as the bike number, type, size, make, model, daily charge rate and deposit. Unfortunately, however, that's all there is on the computer, and the actual hire and return procedures are carried out in much the same, slightly disorganized way that they always have been.

Mike has recently come to realize that, although he has a successful business, he will not be able to expand as he would like to unless he gets his business processes up to date, and that to do this he will have to make much more effective use of the computer. He decides to hire a small local firm to investigate the way things are done at the moment, suggest possible improvements, and develop a computer system that will bring the Wheels business into the twenty-first century.