

Annie: Yes that's it really.

SD: Thanks, that's very helpful. So what happens when the customer comes back with the bike?

Annie: Well they come in, usually all hot and sweaty, but never mind that. I get the bike number and I check that the bike they're returning is the one on the card. And I have to check the return date as well, because if they're late they have to pay extra.

SD: And you return the customer's deposit if they bring back the bike on time?

Annie: Usually, but not if the bike's been damaged of course. One of the mechanics gives every bike a quick check to make sure it's in reasonable condition. If there's a problem we keep some of the deposit and if it's really bad then we keep all of it. We once had one that was a write-off; goodness knows what the customer had been doing with it. The bikes are insured of course, but keeping deposits helps keep down the claims.

SD: Can you tell me about your customers in general, do you think they're happy with the hire system as it is, or do you get a lot of complaints?

Annie: I don't think it's too bad, though we do get complaints occasionally. I don't think the system's very efficient; for example, it can be really slow if I'm trying to work out the cost of hiring more than one bike. If it's my day off and one of the others is in charge it's even slower because they're not used to it. Sometimes I think the customers are just too nice to complain. They can see that I'm doing my best and they don't want to get me into trouble. I think if you asked them they might say that there are quite a few things that could be improved.

SD: Well I'm thinking of doing just that. Would it be all right to leave a short questionnaire on the counter for customers to fill in and return to you? I think it would give us a good idea of how your customers view the hire system and where they think the problems are.

Annie: That's a great idea. You can leave them on the counter and I'll make sure that every customer gets one...