

Whitney Henry

Intro to Advertising 20230-01

Prof. Jacquie Lamer

26 March 2020

Marin Bikes and Commuters in Sacramento

Target's Psychographic Summary:

- Health-conscious
- Trying to reduce their impact on the environment
- Looking for a way to save on expensive vehicle costs
- Has access to workplace facilities for cyclers
- In a location with a solid cycling infrastructure
- Seeking a versatile bike with a physical design that caters to commuting/other needs
- Commute is not short (~5 miles)

Target's Demographic Summary

- *Household income:* \$20k to \$70k
- *Gender:* Male
- *Age range:* 22 to 30

Target's Geographic Location – Sacramento, CA – entire 50 mile radius DMA

Target Audience - Commuters in Sacramento

- **Psychographic Elements of Commuters** – As fuel prices continue to fluctuate unpredictably, health concerns loom, and environmental worries are plastered across the headlines, it's no surprise that people are reevaluating the way they get to work. Some go by bus to lessen their footprint, and some by subway, but there's a growing number of

individuals who have chosen to make their way to work by bike. In fact, the United States Census Bureau reports that 872k people now commute to work via bike – that's 0.6% of the work force in the entire country (Burrows). While this doesn't seem like an impressive amount of commuters (especially in comparison to the amount of people who still drive/commute otherwise), this number is up by nearly 36k people from 2017's statistics, which came in at roughly 836k (U.S. Census Bureau).

Reasons for switching to a bike commute vary person to person, but the most common identified rationale are health, financial concerns, and environmental impact. In regards to health, there is a plethora of reasons for commuters to switch to biking. It can increase your expected lifespan by 3-14 months, reduce the possibility of age-related health problems, lower blood pressure, and improve mental well-being. Additionally, higher cycling rates have been known to lower the number of traffic accidents per city (Balton).

When addressing financial concerns, biking can save you from parking costs (~\$3,000), paying fuel/maintenance/parts for vehicles (~\$6,777 just for a small sedan), and even from gym memberships (~\$1,200) if you bike enough. On top of that, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 brought forth employer reimbursements for bicycle usage, maintenance, and storage, which could additionally supply up to an extra \$20 per month to their employed bike commuters (Balton). Even after all of this, there are more benefits too – not only does cycling benefit you financially, physically, and mentally, it also reduces carbon-dioxide emissions due to the carbon-free nature of the bike (Marzabadi).

Like everything, there are specific features that consumers are searching for in

regards to cycling and its infrastructure. Things like facilities designated for bikers at places of employment and adjusted bike lanes could theoretically lead to an increase in commuters switching to cycling (based on commuter reports). In fact, a majority of non-cycling commuters say they would consider switching if infrastructure was improved, and this increase was actually demonstrated in a real-life situation where a study found that an increase in bike lane lengths by 1% stirred a 0.31% increase in bike commuters (Balton). Everyday citizens/commuters cannot control these factors (for the most part). What they do have a say in, however, is their individual bike's features.

Average commuters (those riding ~5 miles per trip, seeking versatility/multiple uses, etc.) are generally looking for a physical design that caters to their ride. It needs to be just agile enough to take corners appropriately – not lazy when turning, but not too aggressive either. The handlebars that are usually dropped on a road bike need to be raised to a flat position in order to correct posture and enhance the rider's field of vision. The frame needs to be light enough to carry in multiple situations (up a set of stairs, down into the subway, for example) yet hardy enough to brave the inevitable pothole (or two). Tires need to be puncture-resistant to avoid persistent flats, and wide enough to make up for a lack of suspension that would otherwise cost more. Above all, commuters want the bike to be comprised of quality parts – brakes, gears (the appropriate amount), shifters – they all need to be of durable quality while still keeping cost efficiency in mind. After all, they don't want to underpay or overpay for a bike like this (Ryan).

- **Demographic Elements of Commuters** – By limiting the demographics to three indicators, we get to take a straightforward look at just who is cycling to commute. On average, cyclers tend to live in lower income households if being compared to households

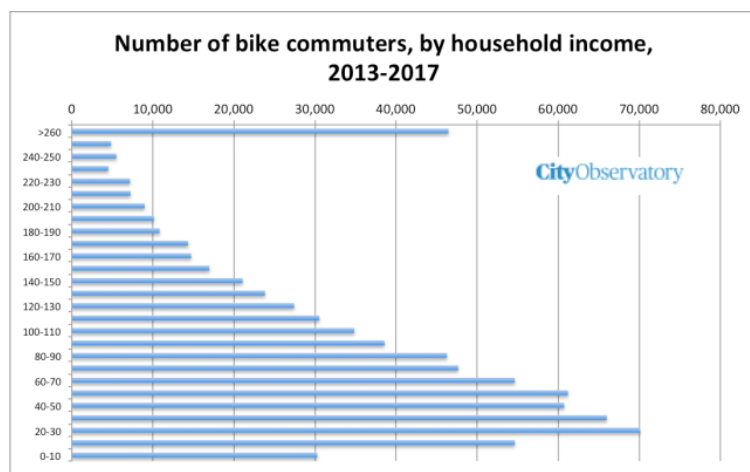


Figure 1.

who use a car to commute. The median household income of bike commuters is \$72k, ranking at \$10k less than car commuters. Looking below that median of \$72k reveals that lower income households do hold a solid concentration of the percentage of bike commuters. (see **Figure 1**). To be fair,

however, there are also a higher concentration of households in the lower half of the median as opposed to the upper half – this accounts for the dramatic difference (\$70k range as opposed to \$200k+) and explains why the median is so low on the graph's range (Cortright). Since such a concentrated amount of the audience resides in the \$20k to \$70k per year range, that's where a significant amount of people in similar situations can be targeted without going to an unnecessarily broad range.

On the topic of gender, men have out-cycled the female demographic group by over double the amount. Out of the workforce I mentioned earlier in the report, 0.8% of men, or ~630k, were taking their bike to work between the years of 2013 and 2017. Paling in comparison, only 0.3% of the women in our workforce, or ~244k, chose to take the same route in that period. This means men dominate the target audience, holding a ~61% share. For age? The age range that reports biking to work the most is commuters aged 16 to 24 years old. This is roughly much older Gen Z, younger Millennials, which are two very different groups to market to - while some are still in high school working minimum wage jobs (therefore unable to purchase bikes in the range discussed in later sections), others are already in the first few years of their career or several years into the

workforce. This makes it difficult to target that range collectively. Luckily, the number of cyclers in the 25-44 year old range follows close behind the former range, coming in at 0.7% (Burrows). This range encompasses millennials almost in whole. In the lower half of the range is the younger millennials, who present as a much more consistent, cohesive marketing group across the board (relative to the 16-24 range). Therefore, a better range to say would be 22-30 year olds.

- **Geographic Target: Sacramento, CA –**

When it comes down to it, Sacramento is by far the best choice for a geographic target. Though bike shops offering the products from Marin (discussed in later sections) are not quite as fruitful as San Francisco's, you've still got seven bike shops within a ~50 mile radius of city center. If you go any further towards San Francisco, traffic starts to get a bit nutty

(I'm looking at you, Vallejo and Concord). One city just outside of Sacramento – Davis – is especially important for geographic location. It's located just 15 miles from the heart of Sacramento, and has been crowned by the Census Bureau in reference to bike commuters. Why? Because in a study of cities with a populations of 60k+, they were revealed to be the frontrunner in percentage of residents commuting by bike (see **Figure 2**). Almost 20% of those residents reported cycling to work. Second place didn't even come close to competing with Davis' crowd – second was to Boulder, CO, who only

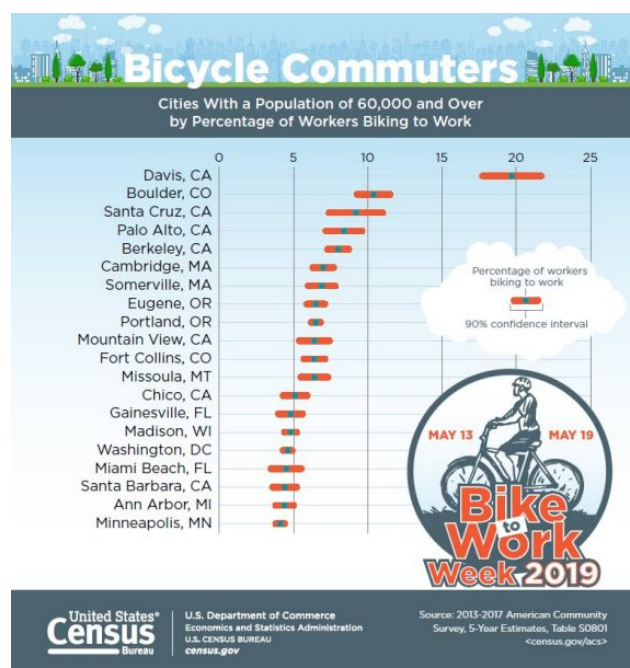


Figure 2. Census Bureau Commuters graph

reported just over 10% of residents doing the same (Burrows). We want to go where the bike commuters are, and it looks like they're in Davis. This brings the biggest target into that 50-mile radius encompassing Sacramento's designated market area.

Marin Bikes Company Profile

- **Company Overview and History** – Founded in 1986 by Bob Buckley, Marin Bikes started out of its namesake county in the San Francisco area of northern California. Originally focused on mountain bikes, Buckley's mission with Marin Bikes was to create affordable, long-lasting bikes with exceptional quality. As the bike community expanded, Marin expanded with it – 1991 saw the introduction of the first road and hybrid models from the company. Since the very first day, they have been pioneers of the bike industry with almost every feature of the physical design, and they're one of the few California companies that hasn't faded out of existence since the introduction of the mountain biking craze back when they first started. Their bikes have seen use by very successful professional bikers, and they're all about their community. Just look at the names of some of their models – they're named after key Marin County landmarks (The Marin Story).

First and foremost, Marin Bikes stands by their motto of 'Made For Fun.' As they state in their intro video centered on their YouTube channel, the company is comprised of a small team who puts aside their egos to unite as a team for a creative, potent workplace. They have fun together too – at least once a month, they skip out of work early to go ride together as a team (Marin Bikes - Made for Fun). It's a great way to keep everything light and actually follow through on their claim of being fun – some companies talk the talk, but Marin walks the walk when it comes to their motto. They share engaging, lighthearted content on their Instagram channel and let professional Marin bikers take

over their [Instagram](#) for a couple days to share some behind-the-scenes fun at bike festivals and other events (see **Figure 3**). And for their audience that is at events like these in person, Marin often has a representative present with bikes available for test rides (Find A Dealer - Events).

Marin Bikes is very aware of their following's interests and how to protect those



Figure 3. @marthagmarthag takeover of Marin Bikes' Instagram channel

interests. They take an active role in improving the mountain biking/general cycling community. They are members of local, national, and international initiatives designed to make the world a friendlier place for cyclists. Some groups they take part in are the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Bay Area's Access 4 Bikes, National Interscholastic Cycling Association, and International Mountain Bike Association. These groups advocate for creating sustainable mountain biking paths, bike-friendly policies,

development of scholastic mountain biking programs, equitable access to nature trails, and improvement of cycling infrastructure.

- **Products** – Marin Bikes offers four key bike categories on their website, each with subcategories within in that go into the specific needs of each rider. Those main categories are as follows: Mountain, Pavement, E-Bikes, and Kids. Mountain bikes are broken up into Full Suspension and Hardtail subcategories, with 15-16 lines to choose from that have a collective ~33 iterations between them (20 of these are 2019 iterations of eight different lines). E-bikes doesn't have subcategories, and hosts a simpler list of three lines with six iterations distributed evenly between the trio (two for each model). The Kids bike section is the simplest, though – three lines, one iteration each.

Pavement, however, is broken up into two subcategories like Mountain – Fitness/Transit and Drop Bar. Drop Bar hosts six lines with 15 iterations to share between those lines. While some drop bar bikes like the Gestalt X are built for rough off-roading, some other lines like the Four Corners series are designed for multiple uses both in town and in the country. In Fitness/Transit, there are six lines with around 25 total iterations within those lines – between Fitness/Transit and Drop Bar, there are 26 new iterations from just last year. Fitness/Transit boasts urban, short commute bikes like the Muirwood or comfort riders like the Stinson, but one in particular that applies well to the target audience is the Fairfax 1, a fitness bike designed for multipurpose use both on long commutes or leisure weekend rides. Reasons for ideal application will be discussed in final section.

- **Price** – Bike prices vary a lot by category, though mostly due to entry-level vs. experienced needs. While low-end mountain bikes can run at around \$200, high-end can

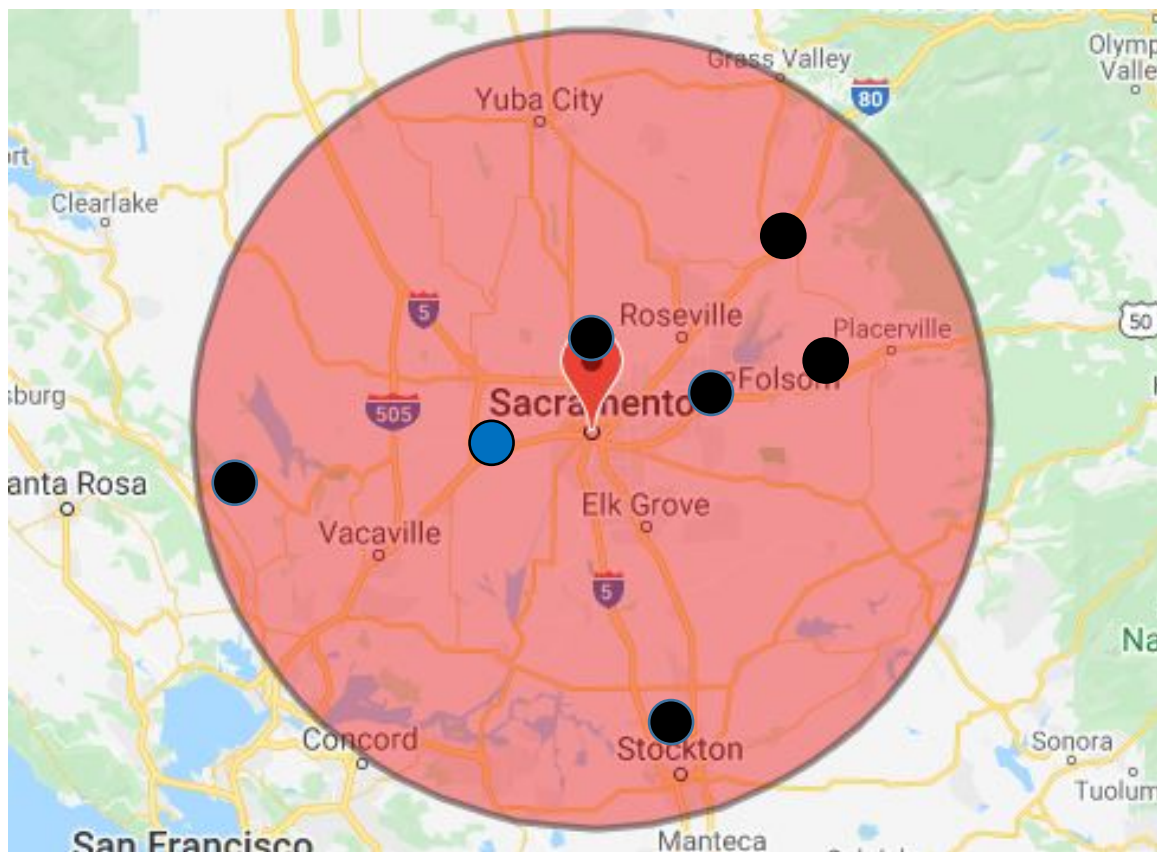
get up to almost \$12k – most, however, hover around the mid-hundreds to middle-upper thousands (Mountain Bike Report). Marin mountain bikes fall in the mid to lower part of that range, with some going for almost \$7k while others ring in at a less daunting \$450. And with e-bikes, they obviously come at a higher price tag to begin with considering the additional technology they have – e-bike riders say that any reliable sort of e-bike wouldn't be priced any lower than \$1k, and some models can go upwards of \$7k (Richard). Again, Marin sits right in the middle – the market price of their models only run from \$2k to \$7k, and no higher. Their prices appear to cater to all kinds of riders.

Those accommodations don't stop with the Fairfax 1, a pavement bike of Marin's that markets for \$450. Competitors similar to the Fairfax 1 often price at \$100 higher despite obvious flaws, and for seasoned riders looking to upgrade, they even go for \$600+ more (Ryan). Marin Bikes has stayed true to their original mission of keeping cycling affordable – they make quality bikes that are still accessible to lower-income households like the target audience.

- **Place** – This company started out of the San Francisco area, so it only makes sense that a majority of their dealers reside there. Outside of the seven dealers within the Sacramento 50-mile DMA, there are 15 in the San Francisco area and two in the Santa Rosa area. Locations include Novato, Berkeley, Palo Alto, Oakland, and San Rafael, among others. As mentioned in the **Geographic Target** section earlier in the paper, there are seven dealers in the Sacramento area. That's a solid amount of locations to provide for commuters from all corners of the city. Napa has Snow Drift Ski Shop, Stockton has Robby's Bicycles, Cameron Park has Bison Bikes, Auburn has Atown Bikes, and closer to the heart of the city you've got Bob's Cycle Center in Fair Oaks, Ken's Bike-Ski-

Board in Davis, and Natomas Bike Shop in South Natomas (see **Figure 4**). Alternatively, they can be purchased online through Marin's website and shipped to your house.

Figure 4. 50-mile radius of Sacramento's center. Dealers within the radius are marked by black dots on the map. Davis dealer location is blue.



Why Commuters are the Perfect Target for Marin Bikes

The needs and wants of the target audience are almost perfectly aligned with the products and services that Marin provides. Commuters don't have just one feature in mind when they're considering switching to bikes – there needs to be a multitude of aspects covered in order to be convincing enough for the switch. Marin can address all of these concerns, and most can be completely satisfied by Marin's products/advocacy.

- Consumers are looking for commuting options that benefit their health

Marin offers bikes, which are arguably one of the healthiest (if not the healthiest) ways to get to work. Benefits of using their bikes could include a 3-14 month addition to lifespans, the reduction of risk concerning age-related issues, lower blood pressure, and improved mental health.

- Consumers are aware of their impact on the environment and want to reduce their footprint

Use of Marin bikes cuts down on the consumer's carbon-dioxide emissions, thus reducing their environmental footprint.

- Consumers want to reduce their spending on vehicle maintenance/fuel/other fees

Again, Marin offers bikes – bikes can cut almost \$10k a year in costs related to vehicles, and can even (in certain instances) earn the rider up to \$240 extra a year from employers. Bikes are also a smaller initial investment than the average cost of most cars.

- Consumers are seeking facilities like showers at work in order to switch

Though Marin cannot guarantee this for every consumer, their advocacy groups focus on improving the cycling infrastructure for cycling commuters. Bike facilities in workplaces could definitely be an issue that they could address through their campaigning.

- Consumers need a good cycling infrastructure in their city

Same as the last bullet point, Marin's involvement in a number of groups that advocate for better cycling infrastructure makes Marin the perfect business to target this audience.

And in reference to the actual bike's design, consumers are looking for:

- Geometry that makes it agile, but not too aggressive on corners

The Marin Fairfax 1 is specifically designed to be responsive without being squirrely or sluggish. As the Wirecutter review put it, the chainstays were 432 mm and flattened, making them shorter and therefore more powerful when accelerating. Also, the seat stays join the seat tube at a relatively low point, increasing responsiveness (Ryan).

- Handlebars that are not dropped

The handlebars on the Marin Fairfax 1 are raised, not dropped. This means that the rider is naturally more upright as they ride, which is both more comfortable and better for the rider's line of vision.

- Lightweight frame that is still hardy

Marin Fairfax 1's frame is made of lightweight aluminum, which is easy to carry but still strong enough to take a beating from various sources.

- Puncture-resistant tires that give a good ride

Initial reports on the tires of the Fairfax 1 are that they seem decent – time will tell whether the tires will be puncture-resistant. But Fairfax 1's tires are wider than standard, which allows for a lower air pressure and provides for a smoother ride that otherwise would have to be accomplished with expensive suspension.

- Quality parts (brakes, gears, etc.) that improve the experience of riding

The Marin Fairfax 1 is composed of multiple quality parts that make sense, including the saddle, shock-dampening steel fork, and the universally compatible seven-speed cassette that gives better control in all situations without being too heavy. And as mentioned before, their wide tire rim allows for a smoother ride.

WORKS CITED

- Balton, Jeff. *Bike Statistics & Facts For 2020 (E-bikes Included)*. 21 February 2020. Bicycle Guider. 26 March 2020. <<https://www.bicycle-guider.com/bike-facts-stats/>>.
- Burrows, Michael. *Younger Workers in Cities More Likely to Bike to Work*. 14 May 2019. United States Census Bureau. 26 March 2020. <<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/05/younger-workers-in-cities-more-likely-to-bike-to-work.html>>.
- Cortright, Joe. *Who bikes? | City Observatory*. 28 May 2019. City Commentary. 27 March 2020. <<http://cityobservatory.org/who-bikes/>>.
- CostHelper Fitness. *How Much Does a Bike Cost?* n.d. CostHelper. 28 March 2020. <<https://fitness.costhelper.com/bike.html>>.
- Marin Bikes. *Find A Dealer - Events*. n.d. 28 March 2020. <<https://www.marinbikes.com/find-a-dealer#events>>.
- . "Marin Bikes - Made for Fun." 20 December 2019. *youtube.com*. Video. 28 March 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=577&v=VK0vrUCLhXA>.
- . *The Marin Story*. n.d. 28 March 2020. <<https://www.marinbikes.com/the-marin-story>>.
- Marzabadi, John. *Commuting by bike offers environmental and health benefits*. 5 May 2014. Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. 26 March 2020. <<https://www.c2es.org/2014/05/commuting-by-bike-offers-environmental-and-health-benefits/>>.
- Mountain Bike Report. *Average Mountain Bike Price (with 22 examples)*. n.d. 28 March 2020. <<https://www.mountainbikereport.com/mountain-bike-price/>>.

Richard, Michael Graham. *Should I buy an electric bicycle? Here's everything you need to know to get started!* 7 April 2015. 28 March 2020. <<https://www.treehugger.com/bikes/should-i-buy-electric-bicycle-everything-you-need-to-know-primer-faq.html>>.

Ryan, Christine. *The Best Hybrid Bike | Reviews by Wirecutter*. 7 May 2019. Wirecutter - NY Times. 27 March 2020. <<https://thewirecutter.com/reviews/best-hybrid-commuter-bike/>>.

U.S. Census Bureau. *National Bike Month: May 2019*. May 2019. 26 March 2020. <<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/2019/bike-month.html>>.