

# Why bike fitting is more relevant now than ever before

The demand for bikes, and everything related to it, spiked to unprecedented levels during the Corona epidemic between 2020 and 2022. By the time the cycling industry had caught up with fulfilling this increased demand, Corona was under control however and cycling specific demand had returned to normal. This resulted in a full supply chain that is only now beginning to return to normal.

This of course has had a significant impact on bike manufacturers, bike shops and everyone else involved in the cycling industry. Below we have listed some of the changes that have affected our industry. Some are more specific to the bike industry than others, some can be (partly) attributed to the pandemic and some are general changes that were already happening. However, all of them make a strong case for a more service driven approach with fitting services creating a great opportunity for IBDs to distinguish themselves and showcase their expertise, skills and experience.

## Changing consumer/dealer behaviors

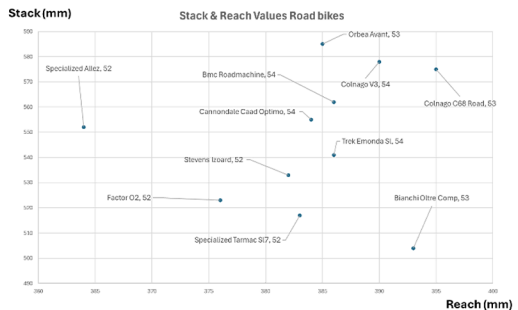
More than ever, consumers are price conscious, but also service aware, meaning that although they of course still like a bargain, they also don't mind paying for service, advice, and experiences in store. Dealers are taking advantage of this by focusing on in-store service, adding value with reliable advice and offering experiences through shop ride outs or other in-store events and activities that enable them to engage with their customers.

## Changing bikes

In recent years, bikes have changed significantly. Ten years ago, gravel didn't really exist as a category and road was essentially 'race'. These days, brands allocate their road bikes into categories such as Aero, Comfort, Endurance or Sport. Model years are increasingly a thing of the past; integrated cockpits are more and more present on mid to high-level road bikes and every bike category has an 'e' variant.

## Same size, different values

With these different types of bikes and bike categories, we have also seen a big increase in different bike geometries. Ten years ago, you could be confident that a 57cm bike in one model/brand was the same as a 57cm bike of another. Today, bikes of the same size can have significantly different dimensions. In some extreme examples we can see differences of more than 5cm in the height or length of frames that different manufacturers advertise as the same size. Of course, there is no wrong or right to this, but it does highlight a lack of clarity for a consumer if they are being fitted on a 57cm frame for one bike, but a 53cm for another.



\* Stack and reach values of common road bike models from some of the bigger bike brands. All models are sold as 52cm, 53cm or 54cm indicating the significant different geometries being used for bikes of the same size.

## A dealer's advice

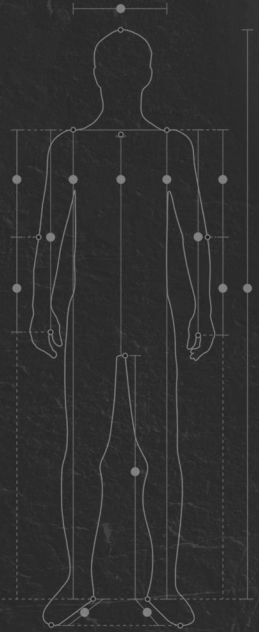
These factors add to the confusion that customers face when buying a new bike. A dealer's knowledge of the brands they sell and their ability to offer a robust and reliable fitting service that helps the customer select the correct bike, in the right size, with the best possible set up, is invaluable.

## Bikefitting.com's solution

With a forty-year history in the field of bike fitting and since 2012 part of Team Shimano, Bikefitting.com understands how a good bike fit can optimize a rider's cycling experience. Multiple developments in recent years, have led to the complete rebuild of the Bikefitting.com proposition, making it easier than ever before to add a range of fitting services to a dealer's service portfolio.

Although technology, AI and self-learning machines are all the rage, Bikefitting.com still sees a significant place for experienced, well-trained and friendly staff. They ensure fitting services are provided with the customers' needs and specifics in mind, measurements are performed correctly, and advice is given within the right context.

The new Bikefitting.com software provides dealers with a faster and more user-friendly platform than ever before to include fitting services within their service portfolio. It includes consumer focused reporting, new and updated algorithms and a database that includes all the latest trends and product data. A complete Customer Management system enables dealers to create a history of fitting, size and set up advice for each of their customers. In addition, a Saddle Selection module applies the tried and tested Bikefitting.com's Saddle Selection algorithms and logic to more than 1000 saddles in the database. This creates neutral advice for the best available saddles across all (in stock) saddle brands, keeping in mind the customer's needs, preferences and requirements.



## Commercial opportunities

Aside from the added value that comprehensive and reliable sizing and fitting advice provides, there are also commercial cross and upsell opportunities for IBDs. A customer that visits a bike shop for specific advice will, in some cases, pay for the privilege of receiving it. As a dealer, this provides a unique opportunity to get to know this customer in more detail. What do they need, what are they looking for and how can you best serve them in their search for the optimal cycling experience?

Be it different bars and stem to help get into a better position on their bike, a saddle that stops them getting a sore behind or new shoes with well-fitted and positioned cleats, the chances are that a customer that walks into a store for advice on sizing and bike set up is more than willing to invest in the solution that they are being offered. You, as an expert dealer, have the answers to their questions!

