

Retailers join forces to bring affordability to custom bike biz

San Antonio Business Journal - by [Tricia Lynn Silva](#)

Having spent several years creating custom bikes built for comfort, local businessman Kevin Saunders recently came up with a plan for easing the pain on consumers' wallets as well.

Saunders, who is the founder/president of **KGS Bikes**, has rolled out a new product called the FrameUp.

The system combines Saunders' customized designs with a mass-production approach to creating the bicycle.

"I design the frame, install the saddle and handlebars — so that it's perfect," Saunders explains.

From there, all that's left is to find a mechanic that can put the basic parts on, and a new customized bike is born.

KGS Bikes is located at 16611 Huebner Road, on the city's far North Side.

Enter Allen J. Hodapp, a co-founder of **Cycle Logic**, and the individual providing the labor/know-how for putting together the bikes that Saunders designs. Hodapp's shop is located at 12319 Wetmore, in North Central San Antonio.

For consumers, the FrameUp design offers a more affordable alternative in a customized product. While the bikes that Saunders designs and assembles start at \$6,000, the FrameUp bikes start at about \$2,200.

Why the need for a custom-designed bike in the first place?

The traditional, one-size-fits-most design of mass-produced bikes is basically flawed, says Saunders. Over time, a rider will experience some discomfort as a result of this design — discomfort that many riders have come to accept as simply part of the workout.

That's not the case with a KGS-designed bike — because the design takes into account factors such as a person's size, weight, fitness level and how that person sits on the bike.

Sums up Saunders: "The comfort and efficiency are unmatched."

And the lower price point with the FrameUp allows more people to "experience the benefits of custom and learn what a professionally designed bike feels like," Saunders adds.

In tandem

Then there's the advantage that the set-up provides for the two businessmen behind the system.

For Saunders, the new venture enables him to focus on his passion for coming up with a product that is completely in tune with the rider.

In the past, when Saunders was in charge of the whole process — from design to production — it would take him a day to create just one bike.

Now, thanks to the venture he's formed with Hodapp and Cycle Logic, he can "create" four to six times more bikes.

Meanwhile, Hodapp's business now has a competitive advantage as the sole seller of Saunders' designs.

"He can offer something he couldn't before," says Saunders, adding that the partnership also gives Hodapp the ability to forge a long-term relationship with the customers taking advantage of the FrameUp service.

"We're taking the two parts of the puzzle for custom bikes," adds Hodapp. "We're focusing on what we do best. For KGS, it's the engineering and design side; for me, it's the more technical, mechanical side."

The two forged their partnership for selling the FrameUp product this past September.

"I predicted I would team up with that guy," Hodapp adds. "Someway, somehow."

Saunders has begun to look for partnerships that would enable him to take the FrameUp product to other cities — namely Boerne and Austin.

But he's taking his time to find the right partner.



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Kevin Saunders, a bike racer-turned bike designer, has come up with a product that offers pedaling comfort at a lower price.

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“It needs to be someone who understands custom bikes and understands the value of a long-term relationship with the customer.”

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