



BIKE-A-THON

OVERVIEW

Bike-a-Thon is a common event seen across many chapters of Pi Kappa Phi around the country. Bike-a-Thons can range anywhere from 8 to 48+ hours. It can be continuous, or it can be broken up over several days. The majority of chapters incorporate fundraising into their event to raise funds for The Ability Experience. However, there is an awareness component to it as well. The bike draws attention so we can raise awareness through conversations and sharing about The Ability Experience.

CONSIDERATIONS

Before you pursue a Bike-a-Thon, here are some things you will need to figure out.

- **Timeline:** How long is your Bike-a-Thon going to be? Remember that the success of a Bike-a-Thon is not determined by it being the longest possible. Consider the culture on your campus around philanthropy events, your chapter's level of participation, and how long other large events on your campus are. Also don't forget to take a look at the busy times people are on your campus. Additionally, keep in mind that the event can be broken up into many different ways (remember this also depends on space on campus):
 - 4 hours = 1 day
 - 8 hours = 1 day
 - 12 hours = 1 or 2 days
 - 16 hours = 2 days
 - 20 hours = 2 or 3 days
 - 24 hours = 2 or 3 days
 - 36 hours = 3 days
 - 48 hours = 3 or 4 days
- **Space:** this is critical in having a successful Bike-a-Thon. You need to find a high volume/high traffic area on your campus. You cannot expect your event to be successful if you are tucked away in a random place on campus that not many people pass by. Exposure will be crucial in getting people involved that are outside of the Greek community. If you are planning a continuous Bike-a-Thon, be sure there is a space you can reserve overnight. This could determine having to break it up into a couple of days instead.
- **Budget:** Having a budget for a Bike-a-Thon is important. If you are not able to get materials donated like stationary bikes or trainers, there could be a high cost to putting on such an event. However, there are many organizations that you can pitch to see if things can be donated (e.g. on-campus gym, local volunteer relationship, local bike shops, fitness equipment centers).
- **Participation:** Chapter buy-in is incredibly important. If your chapter is not going to participate your event cannot be successful. You will need manpower to have brothers on the bike, at the table, and talking to people passing by. Outside participation is just as important. Whether it is just people walking by, making a donation, or people from other organizations biking with you, making sure you have outside participation will make a successful event.
- **Materials:** You must have a table, chairs, stationary bikes or trainers, marketing materials; and a tailgate tent, canopy, or other coverage from the sun or rain (if outdoors). You may find it helpful to have some food and snacks available, too.
- **Marketing:** The rule of thumb is that you never do an event without a minimum of 2 weeks of marketing prior to the first day of the event. Without that there is not enough time to get the

word out about your event. Before you start marketing, figure out the date, time, and location of your event. Then, start with social media! Create a Facebook event and have brothers invite people to the page. Don't forget to post your chapter's Classy page on there as well. Design graphics to be posted to Instagram and Facebook. Draft up a blurb that brothers can post on their social media letting them know about the event with their personal fundraising link included. You can also draft an email that chapter brothers can send to friends and family letting them know what they are doing and how they can support. Finally, reach out to other organizations on your campus and find a time that you can come to their meeting and discuss your event.

- **Fundraising:** This is a huge part of a Bike-a-Thon event. Having each brother set a goal of fundraising \$25, \$50, or \$100 can really help your event be overall more successful. This will provide you with a solid base to start your event with. Incorporate an incentive for the chapter brother who raises the most. Some ways that chapters incorporate fundraising during their event is to sign each sorority and fraternity up with a Classy page under their chapter one. Then other chapters can use their individual links in a fundraising competition offering up a reward or prize to the winning chapter. For sororities you can offer up a mixer or as a prize you can donate a set amount back to the chapter's philanthropy. Adding in some small competitions throughout the day(s) can also help with the excitement of the event. Maybe for an hour whoever donates the most during that time gets double the point value of what they raise, or they get a serenade from the chapter. Another idea to boost fundraising would be to reach out to a local restaurant to see if you can incorporate a profit share into it as well. By setting up your Bike-a-Thon outside their establishment you will help drive business to them and they will donate some of the proceeds back to you.

TAKE IT VIRTUAL: STORY FROM EPSILON OMICRON (VILLANOVA) CHAPTER

Every year, the brothers of Pi Kappa Phi at Villanova put on Tour de Pi Kapp, a 24-hour bike marathon in the heart of Villanova's campus. We get stationary bikes in the middle of campus, get groups of 3-4 brothers biking every hour, and rotate in a new group of brothers to bike after each hour, until we reach 24 hours. We obviously were not able to put on the same event on campus this year given the current situation of the world. However, this year we did a VIRTUAL Tour de Pi Kapp. In the new format, the bike marathon was for 12 hours instead of 24. Additionally, only one brother biked at a time, and this time for 20 minutes a piece. This meant that 36 total brothers biked in the Virtual Tour de Pi Kapp, which was about the number of brothers that had bikes at their current places of residence. Each brother took a video of himself biking and sent it to our chapter's Instagram page. At the end of the day, the entire Instagram story was of 36 brothers biking from all over the country for one cause.

If other chapters would like to put on a similar event, I have a few recommendations:

- First take a poll of your chapter and see how many brothers have bikes. Try to take this number and schedule the bike marathon once this number is obtained.
- Pick a host to introduce the event, recap the biker's performances every hour, and introduce the bikers that are about to bike. Provides a nice break in the action and gets some laughs.
- Get the brothers of your chapter to repost the story on their own personal social media accounts to start a buzz around their own network.
- Try to get sorority Instagram accounts to repost the stories. This is something we really didn't do and could have made our event even more of a hit.
- Put the Classy link in the Instagram page's bio and make sure that every brother mentions to donate in the videos they send in.
- Send out emails to everyone's parents/guardians detailing the event, why you're putting the event on, and the link to donate to your chapter's Classy page. This is where we got the largest donations from.