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Retailing

Local bike shops and manufacturers are racing to keep up with demand



Minneapolis-based manufacturer Handsome Cycles is selling inventory faster than it can be replaced this season.

HANDSOME CYCLES

By Carter Jones – Digital Producer, Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal

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Bikes are flying out the door at shops around the Twin Cities, and manufacturers are struggling to keep up with demand as consumers seek to enjoy the outdoors during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Minneapolis-based manufacturer Handsome Cycles has seen a 64% growth in sales over this time last year. Handsome Cycles co-founder Jesse Erickson said the demand this season is like nothing he's ever seen.

"We went into the season with what we thought was decent inventory, but we're totally sold out of two of four models," Erickson said. "Stock is good with some, but it's starting to get spotty."



Handsome Cycles co-founder Jesse Erickson builds a bike in his kitchen alongside his two children.

HANDSOME CYCLES

Tangletown Bike Shop in Minneapolis said it has sold nine months of inventory in six weeks and won't see new bikes until July or August, at the earliest.

Joshua Klauck, owner of Angry Catfish Bicycle Shop in Minneapolis, said sales are up 40%, and he can't get anymore base-level bikes.

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Chuck Cowan, general manager of Behind Bars Bicycle Shop in Minneapolis, said May is usually when sales start to kick off. However, demand was up in March and April as the state's stay-at-home order went into effect. So far, Behind Bars has moved 60% to 70% more bikes this season compared to last year.

Children's bikes were the first to sell out, as parents pushed their kids out the door when schools closed across the state, Cowan said. Bikes priced under \$1,000 are also becoming harder to keep in stock.

When Cowan first saw the increased demand, he preemptively put hundreds of bikes on back order, but there's no guarantee they'll arrive this year. That's because there's also a problem with the supply chain of bike parts and components.

"Big manufacturers like Giant can build all the frames in the world, but they can't get parts to finish bikes," Cowan said.

While the inventory at Handsome Cycles is dwindling, Erickson said his orders are being fulfilled on the normal schedule. Handsome Cycles are manufactured in Taiwan, which had fewer disruptions and opened up faster than plants in China, he said.

"We're thinking this demand will be solid through summer and don't imagine it falling off, especially as major events are being canceled," Erickson said. "Riding bikes around with family is going to be a key component to summer fun."

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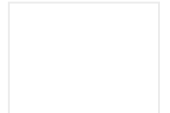
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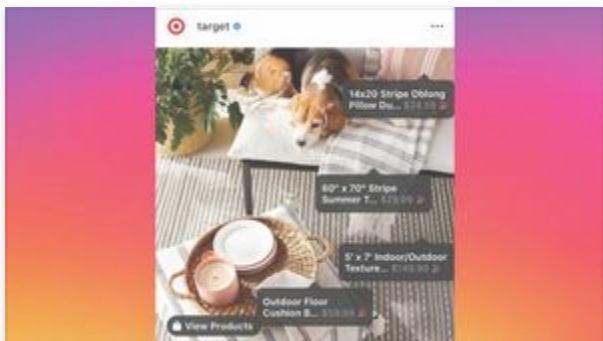


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