A bicycle built for business

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Rob Lynch (MBA ’12) didn’t just start a new business in New Orleans. He helped start a new industry.



Rob Lynch (MBA ’12), owner of Bike Taxi Unlimited, spent a year and a half working with city officials to draft an ordinance legalizing pedicabs in New Orleans. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Lynch is the founder of Bike Taxi Unlimited, which last year became one of three companies awarded the right to begin operating pedicabs in New Orleans.

“We get people from A to B with kind of an interesting look at the city,” Lynch says of his pedal-powered rickshaws. “It’s all about showing people a different side of New Orleans.”

A graduate of Loyola University in New Orleans, Lynch worked as a financial analyst in St. Louis for four years, but he eventually grew tired of the corporate grind. When his brother told him about the thriving pedicab business in Charleston, S.C., Lynch, an avid cyclist, realized the tourist-friendly mode of transport would be a perfect match for New Orleans.

He spent two years living in a friend’s basement and subsisting on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to save money for the venture, and then another year and a

half working with city officials to draft an ordinance legalizing pedicabs.

“The New Orleans ordinance on pedicabs is one of — if not the — most comprehensive in the nation, and that has a lot to do with local officials here wanting to do it right,” says Lynch. “I brought other pedicab ordinances from across the country to their attention and worked with them to form something that would keep everybody safe and let the industry survive.”

Lynch’s hard worked paid off. Bike Taxi Unlimited carried its first passenger in September 2011, and since then the company’s distinctive yellow pedicabs have become a familiar sight around town and at events like Jazz Fest and the French Quarter Festival.

Lynch recouped his initial investment in December, sooner than he had projected, and he says the business has done so well he plans to expand into two additional cities as well as start a new venture designing and selling pedicabs to operators across the country. Regardless of how much the company grows, however, Lynch says he’s committed to New Orleans.

“New Orleans is going to be the home base of where I do everything,” Lynch says. “I love the city. I’ve loved it ever since I came to college here, and I want to stay here.”