

Rider Education Report

My day job requires me to follow a project from its inception until its delivery to the customer. As a direct result, the customer becomes accustomed to contacting me with all of their questions about the product we are providing for their application. They will often then contact me during the installation, especially if things are not going smoothly as they commission the product. Many times, the roadblock the customer experiences is a result of their failure to plan their side of the project properly. Fortunately for me, we have an After-Sales department, and I can hand the customer off to them. 😊

The best riding I have ever experienced has been the direct result of good planning. Benjamin Franklin has been credited with being the first person to suggest “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail”. You can search the internet to confirm that many people have an opinion about this idea, but it seems to me that the concept is clear. I accept this idea as a rule in life, and I work hard to live by it. Lest you think this is untrue, just ask my wife.

As motorsport enthusiasts, we can all benefit from good planning. And I do not mean only when we are working on the details of some big tour from a bucket list. We can, and should, plan our everyday riding. Of course, there is no way to know every scenario we will encounter before our ride begins, but there is plenty we can do to plan and do the best we can for a successful and safe experience.

Our environment is constantly changing. Modern day forecasting is relatively consistent and, at least in my experience, provides enough accuracy to allow me to plan what equipment I need to wear and what additional accessories I will pack just in case. I find it especially important to look at the average weather scenarios for a given region. Knowing the average temperatures and precipitation helps in planning your equipment. Being comfortable is important for more than just your mood; it is important for safety, because if you are not thinking about staying warm or staying dry, you can concentrate better on the traffic conditions around you.

Traffic conditions are also constantly changing, but weekday traffic tends to present a predictable pattern and allows one to plan around it. Knowing where the usual bottlenecks occur allows us to plan a different and safer route. And listening to a local radio station that offers traffic reports will aid in choosing one of your planned alternate routes at the appropriate moment.

Maintenance of our transportation is always important for the best experience. Most every vehicle sold in the last century has been given a recommended service interval for various items to keep the vehicle trouble-free. It is important to know the number of miles and/or the duration of the trip to plan for proper maintenance. Longer trips require proper calculations to ascertain if maintenance procedures should be performed before or planned to be performed during the adventure.

Personal maintenance may be the most important planning you can make. Maintaining a proper diet is one way to plan for when the only food available is farther away than you thought and not as nutritious as you might otherwise need. A medically approved exercise program is one way to plan for a longer day than expected due to a traffic delay, or a more physical ride than expected due to strong weather. And participating in the occasional, at least annual, “on-bike” training is planning for the inevitable sudden traffic events that require the “muscle memory” such training provides.

I am my best customer when it comes to making a fun route for riding. Unfortunately, I do not have an “After-Ride-Planning” department to solve any issues I may encounter. While it is true that what doesn’t kill us makes us stronger, I like to avoid any uncomfortable drama on my trips by planning for as many scenarios as possible, so I have options for which I am equipped. I accept that I may experience failure in my plan, but I cannot accept failure because I did not make a plan.

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