EPOMM
European Platform on Mobility Management

Carpooling

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Dear reader,

the programme of the European Conference on Mobility Management (ECOMM) in London is now online. You can register, book a hotel and get information on the venue: the conference rooms in the renowned Chelsea Football Club Stadium.

We would appreciate feedback on the e-update and the website; also feel free to forward it to other persons so they have the possibility to subscribe. If you do not want to receive the e-update any more, please unsubscribe. If the format of the e-update on your screen is not OK, please click here to see the full screen version.

The previous e-update was about carsharing. This time we will focus on carpooling. Carsharing is when an organisation owns cars and customers use the same car consecutively. Carpooling is when several people use the same car at the same time (one of them usually being the owner).

The potential of carpooling is, theoretically at least, enormous: the average occupancy of a car is 1.5 persons, in commuter traffic even lower, around 1.2 persons per car: most cars are almost empty. If more people would carpool, huge benefits would arise: less cars on the street and in parking lots and ensuing less emissions. Personal advantages are lower costs and for the passengers less driving stress.

However, this potential is not tapped, to the contrary, the level is falling (for example: in the Netherlands, in 1995 almost 700 000 persons carpooled to work, in 2003 that number had declined to less than 500 000).

Some companies or local authorities have introduced facilities to encourage commuter carpooling. These can include internet- or intranet-based carpool-matching facilities, defined pick-up points, preferential parking for carpools and general advice.

Contrary to the commuter carpooling covering regular daily trips, there is also long-distance carpooling, often also called ride-sharing or lift-sharing: this covers trips from one city to another city.

Numerous organisations, concepts and websites have been developed to cater for one or both of these groups: only a very few of them are successful, notably Mifaz and Pendlernetz in Germany, and National Carshare in the UK. As most people in the developed countries have a mobile phone today, *"dynamic ridesharing"* has risen as further technological assistance: theoretically, mobile phones "know" their location and thus could match potential carpoolers automatically using the phone (see a description here).

For all these platforms, it is important that handling is easy and that there is enough marketing for the site especially at the beginning - as the system only works when there are enough rides offered. Experience from all countries shows that it is extremely difficult to get many people to carpool on a regular basis - EPOMM has tested many sites, most of them do not seem to be actively used.

Carpooling is very often an integral part of company MM. In such a case, use of an already existing platform such as Pendlernetz can be helpful. However, organising pools through personal contact is most often crucial for success.

More in depth information on carpooling can be found here in the online TDM encyclopaedia

Carpooling in the Netherlands

In spite of a substantial decrease in carpoolers, still nearly half a million people carpooled to work in 2003. These are 16% of all people driving to work with their car, making 12% of the total number of car kilometres in commuter traffic (carpoolers on average drive longer distances). These numbers show that carpooling may not be underestimated as a means of dealing with accessibility problems. Research has shown that there are 1.2 million solo drivers that have potential for carpooling, These are people with regular working hours, a positive attitude towards carpooling and willing to try it. An active carpooling policy would be meaningful and effective. Some examples for carpooling: The Province of Gelderland has taken the initiative to promote carpooling in their region. This resulted in the campaign 'Solo in your polo?'. On the campaign website you can subscribe in a carpool databank, you can look on the map for carpool pickup spots, you can download carpool pickup spots to your car-navigation system and there is a tool to calculate the costs and benefits from carpooling. Similar national websites where you can find a carpool partner are http://www.carpooldate.nl/ and http://www.ride4cents.net.

Personalizing Carpool campaigns in Germany

With a new car-pooling campaign, Stuttgart's car-pooling service "Pendlernetz Stuttgart" is searching for new users. Additionally, all users are asked to report about their experiences with "Pendlernetz Stuttgart". All participants of the campaign will take part at a lottery and the winners will be presented in the second part of the marketing campaign on posters and postcards in the Stuttgart region as "The Face of Pendlernetz Stuttgart 2008". The aim of the campaign is to get feedback from users who and to recruit new ones. The idea to collect opinions and pictures of car-pooling users and to publish their faces on posters and postcards should make the car-pooling service more personal and make potential carpoolers feel more involved.

Swedish Car Pooling Service

In Sweden, commuter travel has an average of 1.2 people per car, and that figure is decreasing (see paper).
The Swedish Car Pooling Service would like to change something about that. Since 2001 they have started with an Internet service that connects car poolers with each other. To reach their goals, the service works together with municipalities that in one way or another are working actively on traffic assignments. A critical success factor is that companies have to cope with environmental legislation, that the employers must market the service so that the employees know that the service exists and also encourage staff to car-pool. For example an employer offers car-poolers staff parking places closest to the entrance.

Cell carpooling in France

One of the three major cell phone operators in France, SFR, has created the first dynamic ridesharing service dedicated to 350,000 students from 28 campus in the Paris region. The aims of this new carpooling service is to provide the students with home-to-school trips and promote "sustainable mobility". The service is available through their website and from mobile phones. Students can find passengers or a driver at anytime from their cell phones. The service will be fully accessible to all cell phone users starting from mid-February 2008. Students do not even need to enter their starting point, the system knows their location. Subscribers to other phone operators will have to send a text message including the word TECOVOITURAGE to 30130, and they will receive a link to access the carpooling website.

Talked about

NFP-workshop: the National Focal points of EPOMM held a workshop on the Green Paper on Urban Transport. As a result from this discussion, an official EPOMM contribution was sent to the European Commission on 15 March.

COMMERCE: The project, in which EPOMM is a partner, launched its first newsletter.

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