Get Emotional about Sustainable Transport & Soft Mobility

www.trendy-travel.eu
Introduction

Aims and Objectives

The main objective of TRENDY TRAVEL was to utilise various emotional approaches to make sustainable transport modes like walking, cycling and using public transport more attractive and ultimately to affect a modal shift from the car to softer transport modes. Just like its forerunner project EMOTIONS, the long term goal of TRENDY TRAVEL was to help develop standardised strategies for integrating emotional approaches into suitable Europe-wide mobility management measures. With regard to cycling they included strategies for image raising measures, especially in the New Member States. In addition, different tools and products like emotional photographs and art material are provided free of charge on the website.

Why an emotional approach?

Looking at marketing strategies used to high effect by the car industry, it becomes quite clear that people are very much influenced by ideas and images portrayed in an emotional way, often unintentionally and unconsciously. It is a fact that more than 50% of human decisions are emotional. In the same way, considering a mode of transport and deciding for a particular mobility choice is not always a rational decision.

For this reason the project TRENDY TRAVEL, just as the project EMOTIONS did before, utilised various emotional approaches to make sustainable transport modes like walking, cycling and using public transport more attractive and ultimately to affect a modal shift from the car to softer transport modes.

Target groups

With an emotional approach it is possible to appeal not only to various age groups but also to users of different transport modes: pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport or car users. However, when designing a specific campaign, it is necessary to consider that local target groups in different countries have varied needs and sensibilities.

In Belzanto and Salerno (Italy), Cork (Ireland), Graz (Austria), Aarhus (Denmark), Győr (Hungary), Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Vilnius (Lithuania), Martin (Slovakia) and the Netherlands different actions were designed, organised and implemented to stimulate a behavioural change through an emotional campaign, tailor-made for different target groups.

The five different emotional approaches used were:

» Storytelling to capture the listener/viewer/reader with absorbing stories
» Rituals that provide structure and assure cyclic events throughout the year
» Raising the image of cycling especially in the New Member States (NMS)
» Pleasing the eye by providing good design and emotional visuals for soft mobility
» Parents are touched by the pester power of their children and thus motivated to use more sustainable transport modes.

This brochure describes a selection of project implementations demonstrating how emotional approaches were utilised to speak directly to the hearts of people rather than simply to their minds in order to achieve an increased use of sustainable mobility, with a special focus on raising the image of cycling in the NMS.
The power of stories

The fact that stories have an amazing power and often lead to subconscious decisions is well known by the advertising industry and often used to sell products. In TRENDY TRAVEL stories in various formats are used to link sustainable transport modes with emotional content and positive associations. Stories can be presented in many ways. They can be told face-to-face, provided as text to read, or as comics, or as Audio books or performed as theatrical plays. Nowadays they are also very often uploaded to the internet in the form of video clips that people send to friends via e-mail or social network sites.

Storytelling

Trendy Travel has used many of these channels to tell its stories.

For instance Vilnius Health Bureau – the Trendy Travel partner from Lithuania – motivated school children to perform theatrical plays about green mobility stories. Trendy Travel also collected existing YouTube stories that emotionalise the use of public transport, cycling and walking. The project also produced 4 “video spots” and a short movie that compiled video clips aired on Bulgarian TV. All produced video material deals with sustainable transport in a humorous way. This collection demonstrates that even on a tight budget, it is possible to produce highly effective short videos to promote walking, cycling and public transport, and this should motivate and encourage people to think about producing their own movies. Alternatively, Trendy Travel offers free public access to video clips about sustainable transport, made by professional companies. To use them one simply clicks on the appropriate links in the download centre of the Trendy Travel website. In addition, an Audio Book was produced that contains stories about transport research data, about “place-making” in urban transport strategies and stories from the story telling competitions (see next page).

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Do’s and Don’ts

» Do use humorous stories with surprising endings.

» Do use stories that have the classical ingredients: a hero and a villain.

» Do create stories with a core message that are memorable and worth passing on.

» Do try to find surprising correlations that produce an: ‘I would never have guessed that” effect.

» Don’t produce video clips that are too long – if possible the clip should not be much longer than 2 minutes.

» Don’t forget to offer CD files also as mp3 downloads.
Create your own story

To create and tell stories in order to disseminate a message is one thing. To motivate people to write their own stories and to make them accessible to a wider public is another thing. During the project, storytelling competitions in three partner countries produced many emotionally touching stories.

‘Telling a story’

The Dutch Railway invited their users to send in travel stories about travelling by train or other sustainable modes of transport. In total they received 158 funny, touching, exciting, romantic and cheerful stories that are published on the NS Website. The two winning stories – one chosen by a professional jury and one chosen by a public jury - were also translated into English and published on the TRENDY TRAVEL website.

The Irish storytelling competition invited members of the public to convey the Joy of Cycling in a personal or fictional composition. Entrants ranged image from 7 to 70 and there were separate prize awards for adults and children.

The Austrian Story telling competition invited professional writers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland to contribute stories that would convey positive emotions about soft mobility. From over 340 entries, 2 winners were selected by a professional jury. The two winning stories were translated into English and are available on the TRENDY TRAVEL website and on the Audio CD produced for the project. The 10 best stories are also published in a book that will be distributed among holders of season’s tickets from the Styrian Public Transport Association.

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Do’s and Don’ts

» Do dare to try out something new, even with the risk of making yourself vulnerable and you will most likely get positive reactions.

» Do restrict the stories to a certain maximum number of pages. Short and punchy stories can be retold better.

» Do use a professional jury to judge the stories from a competition. If you use only a public jury a person with many friends might get voted for many times, even though the story is not that great.

» Don’t expect that professional writers are more likely to come up with better stories than the general public.

» Don’t underestimate the effort involved in reminding potential contributors to submit stories.

Written, told and recounted stories were used to promote Trendy content
Rituals in a bicycle event year

Rituals are an important part of our lives, by structuring our lives, symbolising the passing from one phase to the other. In Trendy Travel existing events and newly designed activities that had the potential to be repeated year after year – in other words to become a ritual – were compiled in the form of a cycling calendar. These activities ranged from one-day events like bike flea markets to longer campaigns like the ‘Bike to work’ campaign, carried out every year in the same period.

Cycling calendars

Cycling calendars were put in place in Cork, Aarhus, Salerno, Vilnius and Győr with the intention to ritualise certain events over the years. These cities dedicated and coordinated certain activities to specific seasons around the year:
- Spring bicycle workshops
- A spring bike show to encourage people to take up cycling
- Bike Flea Markets to provide cyclists and children with second hand bikes
- Cycle to work or to school campaigns in early summer
- Cycling events – like cycling parades or cycling festivals
- Summer holidays on the bicycle
- Activities during European Car Free Day and European Mobility Week in September
- A fashion show featuring funky clothes for all-weather cycling was held every autumn (Ireland)
- Mushroom hunting by bike
- Hot tea, coffee or chocolate for cyclists (Denmark and Hungary)

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Do’s and Don’ts
- Do evaluate all events and adapt accordingly if necessary.
- Do set up co operations with local groups and associations.
- Do produce visually pleasing photographs of your event to be used to promote the event in the coming year(s).
- Do use already existing activities like Car free day, Mobility week to gain more publicity.
- Do make the calendar part of the job description of the bicycle officer.
- Do publish the calendar – it might also be a good idea to have it online.
- Don’t only concentrate on people who already cycle, events like the bicycle show might help to convince people to switch from the car to the bike.
- Don’t underestimate the pester power of children. Activities like “bike to school” can also lead to much talk about cycling within families and possibly convince the parents to cycle more too.
- Don’t organise events or activities that are not easy to replicate every year.
The idea for Cork Cycling Arts Festival was conceived by a group of artists and cycling activists over a few pints one night and partly funded by the project Trendy Travel. The aim was to use the Arts as a tool in subliminal marketing, to create sensual and emotionally-appealing, sociable events that overtly and inadvertently promote cycling. Another such event in Cork was the Rebel Pedal Parade.

**Let cyclists be noticed**

Soon a committee was formed, grants applied for and a packed programme of events for the festival was gradually put together. Mid-July at the height of the tourist season seemed like the best time for the festival and with the support of the Trendy Travel project and two other local sponsors. The event proceeded to much acclaim. Buoyed up by the first year’s success, the volunteers gathered and the festival has gone from strength to strength each year since.

The centre-piece of the Cycling Arts Festival each year was an Art Exhibition, which conveyed the Sense of Cycling through paintings, sculptures, ceramics, video and interactive arts. Another recurring feature was the themed Cycle Tour. Some tours have even been naked! These naked bike rides were surprisingly successful and well attended every year. The car free day was used during Trendy Travel to expand an already small existing cycle into the Rebel Pedal parade. This is an event that celebrates cycling also from a visual point of view and inspires a critical mass of cyclists that take to the streets and convey the feeling of joy, excitement and sociable interaction that cycling holds.
Do’s and Don’ts

» Do consider other public transport user needs apart from punctuality and speed, such as how the atmosphere of the station can be positively transformed e.g. colours, lighting, infotainment and music.

» Do be aware that there is a difference between the perceived and actual waiting time where train users are concerned.

» Do consider how travellers who ‘must’ travel (commuters) have different needs than travellers who “lust” to travel.

» Slow and fast areas of a train station need to be designed conjointly and travellers need to be given a choice between the two areas.

» Of course passengers want a safe journey but don’t forget that passengers want their train trip also to be meaningful or memorable. Emotional stories about positive train trips inspire and invite potential customers to try the sustainable train.

Station design

Railway companies often put a lot of emphasis on accelerating the speed and reliability of train journeys. The studies of NS demonstrated however that other important factors concerning customer satisfaction are a fast interchange and a station area that offers many different facilities and provides a pleasant environment.

To fulfill these passenger wishes, it is also important to be aware that often, the waiting time is perceived to be longer than it actually is. Pleasant station surroundings make it easier for passengers to forget the time and evaluate the wait more positively.

Another innovative measure was to develop a “Test Laboratory” for train users, in order to better understand customer preferences, what pleases them, what stories touch their hearts etc. The results of this research forms part of the Resource Pack on Station design that is also available on the Trendy Travel website.
The reasons why it is important that children learn to cycle and to enjoy it at an early age are twofold: first of all this will have an effect on their transport behaviour and modal choices in later life and secondly children who want and love to cycle are likely to communicate this to their parents in an emotional way that makes it hard for parents to resist. Consequently the parents might also cycle more.

Children love cycling

To promote cycling from an early age the Öko-institut Südtirol / Alto Adige has implemented a set of five educational modules in kindergartens, in collaboration with the municipality and the City Police of Bolzano. These made use of the children’s power and ability to touch parents’ hearts. The first module dealt with “learning to cycle with a training bike” and children especially enjoyed receiving a certificate which stated: “I can cycle!” In another module, called “kindergarten lottery”, which runs for a month, all children that arrived at the kindergarten via sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling or public transport) put a green sticker on a specially designed poster. Those arriving via a car or motorbike get a red sticker. At the end of each week there is a draw that rewards children with green stickers with a little present. Naturally children will want to convince their parents to make the trip to the kindergarten in a more sustainable way to get another sticker and thus increase the chance of getting a present. In order to endorse this even further, another module gave parents the possibility to rent a bike with a bike seat or a bike with a trailer. Often the spontaneous demonstrations of teachers, who used the trailer to drive around pupils in the kindergarten, motivated to parents to try out the trailer at the weekends.

Children guide their parents
Do’s and Don’ts

- Do use good quality photographs and illustrations to improve the visual appearance of your website or printed materials.
- Do tell friends and colleagues that the Trendy Travel website is a great source for high quality and unrestricted materials.
- Do consider children, even very young children as creators of paintings and art work that powerfully convey and evoke emotions.
- Do consider creating public art- like sculptures- that might also double as functional elements promoting soft mobility (e.g. aesthetically appealing bicycle stands).

Emotional Art

The common knowledge that good design and visual appearance can motivate people to buy or use a product was much utilized by Trendy Travel. Guided by art teachers students from different grades took part in a competition where they produced many paintings, drawings, graphics and sculptures that all portray bicycles or the emotions connected with cycling. These visuals were not only beautiful to look at but also conveyed the fact that cycling is fun and trendy. The success of the project proved that children and young people often produce paintings and drawings that are very pleasing to look at and have the power to cleverly communicate positive emotions.

The artwork produced for this project is available to download on the Trendy Travel website, along with professional photos, professional illustrations and clip art about sustainable transport. They can all be widely used without restrictions to enrich printed materials and websites and to otherwise promote sustainable transport.

The visual senses are, for most people, the primary receptors of impressions. About 80% of all information is perceived through the eyes and if the visuals are pleasing to the eye people are more open to the associated experiences. For this reason design and visual appearance are also very important drivers of travel behaviour.

Pleasing the eye

Artwork from the students of Modellschule Graz
Trendy Travel has compiled a booklet of facts and figures (based on the most appropriate, scientifically interrogated evidence and research) in support of the proposition that cycling is essential for improving the quality of city-life. In order to promote cycling on a wide level, 2 Trendy Travel partners also provided guidelines and instructions for the creation of bicycle networks and promotion of bike traffic. Another good tool for the Bike promotion toolbox is the ‘Bicycle Climate’ Test provided by the project.

20 good reasons for cycling
It was the ambition of Trendy Travel to present the cycling research data in a way that is easy to read, take up and further disseminate. The brochure: 20 good reasons for cycling clearly and succinctly explains why all age groups should cycle, whilst targeting facts at some specific groups, such as people who start to use the bike instead of the car. It is also another good tool for decision makers.

Resource packs
What made the bicycle traffic programme from Bolzano so special and successful was the fact that awareness raising activities and infrastructural measures were planned and implemented in a tightly integrated way. To emulate this success see the Bolzano resource pack on www.trendy-travel.eu. Alternatively, check out the resource pack of Martin City, which explains how Cycling Policy newcomers can successfully start up their own cycling networks.

‘Bicycle Climate Test’
Who else would know more about cycling in the city than the local cyclist? Accordingly a bicycle climate test was used, as it is the perfect tool to monitor bike-user needs and to get a feedback on the necessary improvements. Trendy Travel offers the Climate test and guidelines in 8 European languages on the aforementioned website: www.trendy-travel.eu.

Do’s and Don’ts
» Do point out the advantages of cycling by highlighting the personal health benefits of cycling etc.
» Do make sure that the relevant stakeholders and decision makers are supportive of your cycling plans and are involved in the implementation of all measures.
» Do reserve sufficient funds for a marketing strategy and possibly the creation of a corporate design when you try to improve bike mobility.
» Do survey the needs of cyclists at regular intervals with the low-cost Bicycle Climate Test.
» Don’t regard promotional measures as a superficial attachment to infrastructural implementations. Promotional activities should be regularly carried out even when there are no infrastructural changes.

There are many good reasons for cycling!
Finally, please do feel free to use Trendy Travel resources to make sustainable transport more fashionable in your city.

You can download all these products for free from the Trendy Travel website:

» Bicycle Climate test plus guidelines (8 languages)
» Audio books (English, German, Italian)
» Emotional Photographs
» Emotional Art
» Cycling Calendars
» Trendy Video Clips
» Winning stories from 3 Story telling competitions
» Comics and posters
» Brochure: 20 good reasons for cycling (9 languages)
» Resource Packs
» Trendy Clip Arts

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