



FACT SHEET S-03 – MEANS OF PUBLIC RELATION

Introduction

The main challenge of public relations is to get the right information to the right person. There are different means of public relations available, which are able to accomplish this. However, the means of providing information depends on the target group and type of information that should be spread.

Actors can choose between publishing information such as press articles, posters, flyers or the internet and more interactive formats such as events, competitions and seminars. Since bicycles are very popular as sport utilities in Central European countries, especially events involving leisure cyclists (e. g. bicycle rides and fairs) might be able to bring together a critical mass of potential daily cyclists. During these events more detailed information on daily cycling in the particular region/city might be useful. Some details about different means of public relation are introduced in this fact sheet.

Press

Involving the press (newspaper, radio and television) can create a more cycling friendly environment in the city. Many persons can be reached at the same time, but one has to take care that the targeted group is being attracted by the publication. To provide press with information, a press conference has to be implemented or a press release has to be published. However, one cannot be sure, which information will be used by

editors and what will be the message of their article. Spots on television and radio might reach even more persons than newspaper, but they are more expensive and need more preparation efforts.

Internet

Traditional campaigns increasingly include internet based services and information platforms. Especially social networks (Facebook, Twitter), blogs and video platforms provide new possibilities of spreading information and getting into discussions with users at the same time. Receiving direct feedback on campaigns is one of the advantages of

internet based services. Another advantage is fast dissemination of information through sharing among users. Since internet platforms are an easy way to access information for users, providers are required to invest a considerable amount of work to keep information up to date.

Internet platforms can also function as databases for good and best practice examples. Case studies uploaded from users can inspire planners in different cities. One of the largest best practice platform is www.eltis.org. Some examples implemented in the Central MeetBike project can also be found on www.centralmeetbike.eu.

Best Practice: Facebook profile of Radlhauptstadt Munich

Social networks are today one of the most successful developments on the internet. Facebook, as the largest of these networks, reaches a total of about one billion mainly younger users from all over the world. The city of Munich developed an umbrella campaign called “Radlhauptstadt München” (bicycle capital Munich). In the course of this campaign the city established a Facebook profile with the same name as a cheap and easy way to reach a big number of mostly young people. It already has a number of nearly 3.500 followers (May 2014). On this profile one can find:

- General information concerning cycle traffic in Munich e. g. construction sites, new infrastructure and tips for cycling in winter
- Information on events and further activities
- Information provided, investigated or discovered by other users and published on the pin board

Figure 1: Screenshot of Facebook profile



More sustainable transport in Central European cities through improved integrated bicycle promotion and international networking

Printed materials

Traditional forms of public relations include brochures, posters and leaflets. These materials can spread emotion as well as information connected to cycling. Often printed material is used as a supplement to campaigns including different means such as events or trainings. However, in recent years, experts found that there is an increasing need to also connect positive emotions stronger with cycling. In the course of the “Radlust” campaign in Germany, there have been several posters produced with the aim of promoting cycling more emotionally like cars. The city of Dresden implemented a poster campaign in spring 2014 with the message “Winter goodbye, cycling hello!”.



Figure 2: Poster of the Dresden cycling campaign in spring 2014 (City of Dresden)

Events

Campaigns should be accompanied by events such as festivals, discussions, competitions, fairs or car free days. Such events are intended to involve citizens in different ways, e.g. through discussions or competing with each other. Events create a framework for citizens to deal with the topic of sustainable transport and cycling in particular. Car free days, e.g., are implemented worldwide on the 22 September each year. Since cars usually occupy large parts of the city, these days often are a unique opportunity for citizens to see what cities would look like with fewer cars. Additionally events are a platform for politicians to present themselves, which might be useful in order to increase their support for cycling measures.

Seminars and bicycle rides

Information seminars or bicycle rides, e.g. for citizens moving into the city, are a tool used in the city of Munich. Whenever there is a major change in a person's life (e.g. new employment in new city) a person has to reorganise its mobility behaviour and will be much more likely to change it when alternatives are known.

In their traditional form seminars are also used to provide planners with latest information on design principles in bicycle planning, e. g. in the course of the German bicycle academy. However, those are usually not implemented by local authorities, but by national or regional institutions. A similar approach are field trips for cycling experts with the focus on experiencing cycling in different environments.

Best Practice: Central MeetBike Field Trips

In the course of the project Central MeetBike four field trips for decision makers, planners and journalists have been implemented. The basic aim of these study tours was to visit best practice examples in East German cities and to experience cycling in these cities. The trips were suggested to:

- show what is possible to establish in cities of former socialistic countries,
- learn about details of planning and implementation of cycling measures,
- answer questions about legal framework that is necessary to successfully implement high quality cycling measures,
- provide contacts for further cooperation between German experts and experts from Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In the end of the project about 100 experts from Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia visited the cities Dresden, Leipzig, Dessau-Roßlau and Berlin. The cities have been chosen to show different aspects of cycle planning, such as organisational framework of cycling in Leipzig, cycling in medium-sized cities in Dessau-Roßlau and cycling on cycle lanes in heavy traffic in Berlin.

Lessons learned: After identification of relevant target group and required information for public relation, one has to think about an adequate means of spreading the messages. Therefore the Central MeetBike partners found different options, which include traditional printed forms as well as interactive form such as events. General aim of public relation campaign should be to attract people's attention. It is recommended to implement different means of public relation under one umbrella campaign using one corporate design. This increases recognisability of the campaign.

For further resources, links and best practice examples visit the Sustainable Urban Transport Project website: <http://www.sutp.org/>

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