



Tools of Change Case Study Series  
Promoting Best Practices in Social Marketing  
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## TransLink's TravelSmart Program



### Tools of Change Illustrated

- ▶ Building Motivation Over Time
- ▶ Financial Incentives and Disincentives
- ▶ Mass Media
- ▶ Norm Appeals
- ▶ Obtaining a Commitment
- ▶ Overcoming Specific Barriers
- ▶ Vivid, Personalized, Credible, Empowering Communication
- ▶ Word of Mouth

### Initiated by

- ▶ TransLink

### For Widespread Use

- ▶ Within Metro Vancouver

### Partners

- ▶ Business Community
- ▶ Municipalities

- ▶ Schools
- ▶ NGOs

### Results

- ▶ Employer Pass Program (EPP) participants reduced their number of drive-alone trips by an average of 14%.
- ▶ Among participants in the TravelSmart individualized marketing pilot, walking and the use of public transportation increased by 9% and 12%, cycling increased by 33%, and trips made by driving alone dropped by 8%.

### Location

- ▶ Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

## Introduction

TransLink's TravelSmart program helps businesses and residents of Metro Vancouver make smart travel choices and reduce the number of trips made by driving alone. It includes an Employer Pass Program, ridesharing, car share (including corporate car share), active transportation, parking management, guaranteed ride home, and telework, all supported by strong promotion. This case

study also reports on TransLink's individualized marketing pilot.

## Background

*Note: To minimize site maintenance costs, all case studies on this site are written in the past tense, even if they are ongoing – as is the case with this particular program. This case study was written in June 2010*

TransLink's TravelSmart program was first developed and refined as an in-house program and rolled out to other employers in the region. TravelSmart evolved from the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Employee Trip Reduction Program (1996) described at

<http://toolsofchange.com/en/case-studies/detail/28> and replaced the OnBoard program (in 2009).

## Getting Informed

Employee surveys and other market research found that two critical factors motivated people to take a particular travel mode, or influenced them to try another: time and money – with time bring the most important. While environmental concerns were important, they were not strong enough on their own to change driving behaviours.

## Targeting the Audience

The program began with a focus on Early Adopters, then shifted to the Early Majority.

## Delivering the Program

The TravelSmart program included promotion and delivery of a variety of initiatives.

1. The **Employer Pass Program** discounted annual transit passes by approximately 15% for employees of participating companies. Payment for the pass was facilitated through payroll deduction by the employer. Employers often chose to provide an additional subsidy for employees. Heavily discounted transit passes helped participating employers attract new hires, while demonstrating commitment to corporate environmental responsibility. (*Financial Incentives and Disincentives*)

The pass was valid for travel throughout the year, and pass holders could travel on transit with an additional five family members (1 adult and 4 children) on Sundays and statutory holidays with their employer pass, at no extra charge.

It was generally the Employer Pass Program that got TransLink 'in the door' at each worksite - whether or not TransLink approached the employer or was contacted by the company or its employees. (*Building Motivation Over Time*)

To get employees to involve their workplaces, one advertising 'call to action', posted at all SkyTrain stations for a couple of years, was to "Ask Your employer how you can get a discounted transit pass" (*Building Motivation Over Time; Word of Mouth*).

Once a company signed on (*Obtaining a Commitment*), a company Coordinator attended a training session covering how to administer the program within the company, as well as all other TravelSmart options.

2. **Ride-sharing** was delivered through the website [www.ride-share.com](http://www.ride-share.com). This free online ride-matching service helped people find others with similar work schedules (*Overcoming Specific Barriers*.)

Each commuter could use his or her own vehicle, ride in someone else's, or find a seat in a vehicle supplied at ride-share.com. TransLink provided ongoing funding support for the program, and led the annual TransLink Ride-Share Week. Formal car and vanpooling was also offered through the site.

3 **Car Sharing for Business and Individuals**. Metro Vancouver had two car sharing agencies: The Co-operative Auto Network and Zip Car; TransLink's TravelSmart Program sponsored the launch of The Company Car with The Co-

operative Auto Network, and promoted both agencies through employer outreach and online ads.

Corporate Car Sharing was positioned as a great way for companies and individuals to gain access to a vehicle when needed, without the ongoing costs of owning and maintaining a car or a fleet of vehicles. It also saved money on taxis, and parking. The program allowed the use of sustainable modes of transportation (like transit, walking or cycling) for most trips. Car share vehicles were stationed in residential neighbourhoods, as well as in the downtown core. (*Overcoming Specific Barriers.*)

**4. Active Transportation** - Cycling skills workshops and region-wide events such as Bike to Work Week and Bike Month (June) were promoted as events to try cycling to work, and celebrate cycling as a travel choice. TransLink sponsored Bike to work Week, held each year in May and November, and consulted with employers to create facilities such as secure bike parking and showers to facilitate more cycling and walking. Walking was also encouraged as a smart travel choice and tips were provided on how to include walking in everyday activities. (*Building Motivation Over Time; Overcoming Specific Barriers; Vivid, Personalized, Credible, Empowering Communication*)

**5. Parking Management** strategies were promoted as another way employers and property managers could affect travel choices by staff and visitors. These strategies included converting free parking to pay parking, creating preferential parking for employees who rideshared, and providing equitable transportation allowances. (*Building Motivation Over Time; Financial Incentives and Disincentives*)

**6. The Guaranteed or Emergency Ride Home** initiative provided participating employers with a program template to assist employees who commuted using

sustainable transportation (transit, cycling, walking ridesharing), to get home in the event of an emergency, unexpected longer working hours or when their shared ride was not available. (*Overcoming Specific Barriers*)

**7. Teleworking**, or working from home (anywhere from one to five days a week) enabled employees to avoid commuting some of the time. It was positioned as benefitting employers, employees, and the environment, as increasing employee productivity and reducing absenteeism, and as being a standard element in Emergency Preparedness Plans. TransLink worked with businesses to establish a teleworking program at their worksites and conducted a Telework Pilot Project in 2008.

**8. Park and Ride** - TransLink offered 22 *Park and Ride* sites in Metro Vancouver; all connected with a major bus loop or SkyTrain station. (*Overcoming Specific Barriers*)

### Promotion

TransLink promoted and marketed the TravelSmart program through a variety of strategies: e-blasts to employers, mailing information packages to employers, making presentations, assisting with employee surveys and lunch and learn sessions. It advertised in business papers and magazines, local newspapers, Captivate television screens in building elevators, direct e-blasts to employers, on-line advertising with agencies such as CBC, Telus.com, Google.com, as well as digital screens and banners in SkyTrain stations.

TransLink also hosted and attended transportation fairs at business and office parks, and participated in trade shows (such as BC Business Top 100 Employers Lunch).

The employers reached through such initiatives then contacted the TravelSmart

program for assistance in implementing programs at their worksites. A number of e-tools were also used for promotion and outreach. (*media*) such as website, blog, Buzzer, twitter.

In addition, TransLink checked on a regular basis through business papers for new businesses moving into Vancouver or the region and sent them program information.

### Individualized Marketing Pilot

In 2005/2006, as part of Transport Canada's UTSP, TransLink piloted Socialdata's very successful individualized marketing program in six unique neighbourhoods. After segmenting households, those that wanted to increase the number of trips made by walking, cycling or transit received a combination of generic and customized information, incentives, and rewards to assist them in meeting their goal, including in-person or telephone assistance if they wished. Working one on one with households, and covering the full range of trips, the results were similar to the experience in Europe, Australia and the United States.

### Measuring Achievements

Measurement Methods included trip diaries, surveys, *TransLink Listens* (a web portal for customer comments), ride-share statistics, and updates from car sharing companies on new clients.

### Results

- ▶ Employees who joined the Employer Pass Program (22,000 in total in 2010) reduced their number of drive-alone trips by an average of 14%.
- ▶ During the TravelSmart individualized marketing pilot, the use of sustainable modes of transportation increased substantially. Among program participants, walking and the use of public

transportation increased by 9% and 12%, respectively, while bicycling showed an even bigger increase of 33%. Trips made by driving alone dropped by 8%.

- ▶ TransLink's Ride-Share Week in 2009 resulted in:
  - 1700 new ride-share.com registrants (89% increase over 2008)
  - 160 new ride-share groups (60% increase over 2008)
  - 30 new company sub-site sign-ups (50% increase over 2008)
  - 150 new TransLink Ride-Share Week Coordinators
- ▶ TransLink Trip Diary results in 2009 indicated that Metro Vancouver residents had made fewer trips in all, over the past four years, which might have been due to a combination of several factors, including a downturn in the economy, high fuel prices, and the impact of transportation demand management strategies.

### Contact

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For step-by step instructions in using each of the tools noted above, to review our FULL collection of over 90 social marketing case studies, or to suggest a new case study, go to [www.toolsofchange.com](http://www.toolsofchange.com)

### Concluding Thoughts

- Key factors related to behaviour change:
- ▶ Time and money were the main motivators
  - ▶ Getting information out using variety of media
  - ▶ Getting support of employers – tying into business objectives/company philosophy, and relationship management with employers/businesses;

- ▶ Providing a good product and continuing to improve transit service levels
- ▶ Having consistent messaging under the TravelSmart brand

TravelSmart's initiatives were driven by TransLink's Transport 2040 Goals for the entire region, including the following:

1. Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation are aggressively reduced, in support of federal, provincial and regional targets;
2. Most trips are by transit, walking and cycling;
3. The majority of jobs and housing in the region are located along the Frequent Transit network
4. Traveling in the region is safe, secure and accessible for everyone
5. Economic growth and efficient goods movement are facilitated through effective management of the transportation network;
6. Funding for TransLink is stable, sufficient, appropriate and influences transportation choices.

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