

1st Working Group Meeting
Cluster: Marketing and Customer Relations
29th – 30th March 2007
Minutes

List of participants

Cantelli, Mirco	Azienda Trasporti Area Fiorentina	Expert
Dimitrov, Petko	Institute of Transport and Communications Ltd.	Expert
Herrero, Jesús	Empresa Municipal de Transportes de Valencia (EMT Valencia)	Expert
Jurisits, János	MÁV Passenger Transportation Division	Expert
Monkiewicz, Slavomir	Biuro Planowania Rozwoju Warszawy	Expert
Mrso, Sanja	Gradski Prijevoz Putnika	Expert
Rybarczyk, Włodzimierz	City of Warsaw	Expert
Sarman, Viorica Aurelia	Uniunea Romana de Transport Public	Expert
Carles-Tolrà, Jorge	Transports Metropolitans Barcelona (TMB)	Cluster partner
Trumpes, Brigitte	Wiener Linien	Cluster partner
Barta, Franz	Socialdata	Cluster leader
Erl, Erhard	Socialdata	Cluster leader

The first WG meeting of the “Marketing & Customer Relations” cluster took place on the 29th – 30th of March 2007 in Barcelona. The main objective of the meeting was to set the framework and provide the basis for any further work of the cluster. The entire meeting was hosted by UITP, while the marketing and customer relations meeting was moderated and recorded by Socialdata.

The working group meeting started on the 29th of March with a short introduction of the participants and the presentation of the objectives of the meeting. The overall aims were to discuss the current situation of public transport in general and of marketing and customer relations in particular, in order to find out where the experts see the main challenges for the future development of public transport and to get a better insight into their understanding of marketing and customer orientation. The outputs of the working group meeting will lead to a catalogue of key challenges to be discussed in future meetings and the development of a road map for further working group meetings.

In an open discussion round, which included a post-it exercise, the current situation was discussed and major chances and threats were identified (see attached document “current situation.tif”). Also discussed were the experts’ expectations regarding future development (see attached document “Future developments – necessary actions.tif”) and their proposed first marketing actions (see attached document “1st marketing action.tif”).

The open discussion round was followed by the presentation of the outputs of the expert survey conducted prior to the working group meeting. A questionnaire was sent to all invited experts in advance of the meeting. All seven experts from transition countries sent in filled-in questionnaires. The background of the respondents is quite diverse with three respondents from public transport operators, two from consultants, one from a public transport association and one from a city department. The countries represented in the survey are Hungary, Croatia, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and the Czech Republic.

The responses confirmed that quite a number of different marketing and customer relation tools are currently used in transition countries and that marketing is not limited to simple advertising. However the differences between different countries, cities and operators are quite significant. While there are public transport operators in major capital cities with huge and independent marketing departments using the whole range of available marketing and customer relations tools, there are also examples of other less advanced operators. Especially public transport operators in medium and small sized cities often have no independent marketing departments or at least someone solely in charge of marketing. In these cases marketing is mostly limited to advertising.

The second day of the working group meeting started with a presentation by Jorge Carles-Tolrà entitled "Basic elements of marketing: The Case of TMB". The presentation gave an overview of the marketing tools used by TMB and initiated some discussions with the experts regarding their understanding of marketing.

Afterwards the experts split into two groups to discuss the current situation in their cities (countries), future developments and to identify chances and threats for public transport in general and for the marketing and customer relations sector in particular.

Situation of public transport in different cities (countries):

Prague:

- Share of public transport has been stabilised at a high level of 55%
- Quality of public transport services is acceptable
- Available public transport network is fine
- Authorities support the further development of public transport in Prague

Osijek (Croatia):

- Share of public transport is still going down and has already reached 30%
- Quality of public transport services is acceptable
- Available public transport network is fine
- Authorities are in favour of further development of public transport – however better support would be advisable.

Bucharest (Romania):

- The decrease of public transport shares has not yet been stopped
- Quality of public transport services is acceptable
- Available public transport network is fine – however there are capacity problems during peak hours
- Authorities are really supportive of public transport only in Bucharest not in the rest of the cities

Warsaw:

- Surveys are used to monitor the system
- Share of public transport went down from 70 to 60%
- However a high level of public transport usage still exists
- Quality of public transport services is insufficient – however significant improvements are under way
- Available public transport network is fine – however there are capacity problems during peak hours
- Authorities are not fully supporting the further development of public transport in Warsaw
- It is necessary to improve the image of PT in a simple way

Sofia (publicly owned PT operator):

- Surveys exist to monitor the system but they are not used by marketing departments to plan and implement new measures
- Public transport has lost customers
- Need to solve problems with frequency, travel speed and tariff systems

Situation of public transport in other Bulgarian cities is better as private PT operators are more flexible to respond to new demands and developments.

Budapest:

- Satisfying situation regarding the use of surveys
- Reduction of public transport share has been stopped

Situation of public transport in other Hungarian cities is less positive as there are no surveys and the public transport share still decreases.

Overall problems identified by the experts:

- Lack of consistent planning
- Differences in transport policy between cities and the countryside
- Lobbying for public transport an imminent necessity
- Financial situation in general problematic

First actions:

- Change people's thinking about public transport
- Improve understanding of customers
- Lobbying for public transport
- Improve image of public transport
- Increase quality of service
- Better handling of customer complaints

The overall situation (quality of services, network and capacity) of public transport in Florence is quite good even though the share of public transport is lower and there are some problems with political support and financing.

After the separate sessions the experts presented their discussion outputs to the whole group. This was followed by a presentation of Viorica on the case study of Oradea, where a customer survey was used to increase customer loyalty and to identify measures to increase the use of public transport.

The working ended with a review and final discussion of the outcomes of the meeting. The main outcomes of the meeting were presented in the following plenary session.