

Individualised Marketing

REDUCING CAR KILOMETRES – A GLOBAL APPROACH

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Credible forecasters state a peaking of global oil supply in the near future. Our reliance on private car use makes us extremely vulnerable to changes in oil supply and there is currently no readily available, viable alternative to fossil fuel in the transportation sector. To prepare for the future, the dependence on private motor vehicles needs to be reduced now. *Individualised Marketing* (IndiMark®) can help to close the gap between supply and demand, by informing and encouraging communities to use alternative ways of travelling. Reducing the demand for fuel contributes to the sustainability and stability of our environment; achieves a more efficient use of scarce transport resources; and results in global benefits extending beyond the present critical need to decrease our fossil fuel reliance.

The traditional approach to changing travel behaviour has been through various measures, such as restrictions on private car use or the provision of additional transport services and infrastructure. But capital investments in transportation infrastructure will not be fully utilised if people are unaware of the improvements.

IndiMark® recognises that there is often a gap between individual perception of alternative modes of transport and the reality. Due to a lack of personal experience, or lack of information about the readily available options, travelling on foot, by bicycle or by public transport can seem less attractive than it actually is. As a result most people make trips by car, many of which could be made just as easily by other modes.

IndiMark® creates a dialogue with people and offers local, up-to-date information on transport alternatives, with additional support for trying them out. It encourages people to make greater use of alternatives by offering them personalised travel information, often not readily available to them. IndiMark® improves people's perceptions of the services and facilities available. By making more informed travel choices, people significantly reduce their car kilometres and costs by switching to other transport modes.

IndiMark® empowers individuals to make their own travel choices, it is voluntary and focuses on enabling people to switch just a few car trips a week to an environmentally friendly way of travelling. These small changes contribute to large changes overall.

IndiMark® is a successful approach and an effective tool for reducing reliance on private car use in more than 50 projects with over 300,000 participants, in the European Union, the United States of America and Australia.

The achievements of IndiMark® reflect a sustained reduction in car trips associated with a relative reduction in car kilometres travelled. Evaluations of large-scale projects have shown an average relative reduction in car kilometres travelled by up to 19% in Germany, up to 17% in Australia and 13% in Sweden. In addition IndiMark® offers economic benefits that far exceed its costs and so provides “free” reductions in fossil fuel consumption and related emission.

The results of IndiMark® have shown, that the number of activities and trips per person per day is almost unchanged. This indicates that we do not change people's need for transport, but we do contribute to behavioral change in transport. The (proportionate) reduction in car km is due to a combination of mode shift and destination shift of car driver trips, a higher proportion of trips taking place to local destinations.