

# Effective communication strategies

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## Presentation Structure

- **The consumer and citizen perspective analysis**
  - Understand better initial support/opposition
  - Design effective communication strategies and increase public support
  - Explain huge differences in gaining support for the same policy in different cities
- **Successfully communicating air pollution strategies**



# The consumer and citizen perspective analysis

Individuals, or “the public”, analyse changes that come from a policy both from a consumer and a citizen point of view, i.e. communication strategies should take into account both views.

- **Consumer perspective:** self-interest (direct impacts on time, money, convenience, etc. for an individual).
  - **Citizen perspective:** individuals’ view of social issues such as equity, procedural fairness and environmental concerns that are linked (or seen as linked) to a given policy.
- Some lessons from analysis on how these dimensions affected public support of congestion charging (Transport Demand and Traffic Management) in 4 cities: **Stockholm and Gothenburg**, Sweden; **Lyon**, France; **Helsinki**, Finland (analysis based on surveys).
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## The Consumer perspective

- An analysis based on the consumer perspective is central to correctly identifying what groups are likely to support/be against a policy.

### Key findings:

- The price that the consumer will pay is of course very important, but its effect on reducing support is not linear: the greatest drop occurs between those not paying and those paying something.
- The perceived benefit and loss of an individual is affected by changes beyond prices (in the case of congestion charging, time savings )

**Communication of a policy must stress benefits that are valued by individuals**



# The Citizen Perspective

Support/opposition of individuals is also significantly linked to their attitudes towards:

## **1) The perceived objective of the policy :**

Environmental protection, air quality improvement vs. tax for raising revenues?

## **2) The rules set by the policy:**

e.g. Are pricing mechanisms considered fair? (creating awareness of what the alternatives would be is key)

## **3) Trust in government:**

-Are the environmental/ air quality objective(s) really perceived as the main reason for the policy?

-Will the government use well any revenues raised?

(e.g. London-investment in public transport)




# The London and Stockholm Congestion Charge: Success stories

## London:

- Congestion charge was implemented in 2003, all chargeable vehicles must pay an 8 pound fee, flat rate, when traveling within the London zone, enforced through closed circuit TV and automatic license plate recognition. Led to a 20% decrease of traffic in central London.

## Stockholm:

- In 2007 congestion charges were implemented in the Stockholm metropolitan core.
  - Was established for a seven month trial period starting January 2006. The charge per passage was between 1.30 and 2.60 euros, fees were higher during rush hour.
  - Following the implementation of the policy, traffic to and from the city was reduced by 20-25%.
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# Lessons Learnt from London and Stockholm

- **Clearly addressed and defined the problem** that the scheme is dealing with.
- Both **invested heavily in information campaigns to prepare citizens** for the congestion charge.
  - In Stockholm, the trial included 26 million in funding for public information and evaluation.
- The policy was **effectively communicated as part of a wider long-term plan** to improve transport.
- Showed to the public that the new charge would lead to **tangible transportation-related benefits**.
  - London: bus capacity was increased by 24% on affected routes
  - In Stockholm, 170 million euros were spent on new public transit, taking the form of new buses.
  - These **investments in transit were made before the congestion charge** was imposed allowing commuters to see the upside of the congestion charging before being exposed to the down side.
- Stockholm's seven month, 435 million euro **trial period also helped dispel the public skepticism**, leading to positive support in a referendum for making the charge permanent.
- A clear pattern seen is the opposition to congestion charging diminishes over time (trial periods before referendums).



# Manchester: reasons for failure

In 2008 nearly 80% of voters in Greater Manchester rejected a referendum to implement congestion charges.

## Reasons:

- Lack of commitment from Manchester's leadership, **focus wasn't on congestion or pollution reduction but rather leveraging funds** from a central source to pay for other transportation projects.
- The message was complicated message and the **long-term public transportation strategy was hard** to explain.
- The message that there would be **investment in public transport was not effectively delivered.**
- Although the public transport investment would have to be completed before the charge would begin, this message was not clear either.
- People assumed the congestion fees would be increased in the future.





## Successfully communicating on air pollution strategies

- Air pollution touches on two policy aspects:  
Prevention of **health risks** and **transport policy** at urban level
- To be successful, communications strategies should **integrate both** aspects in a coordinated and clear way
- Inform about **health risks** of air pollution generated by cars **PRIOR** to imposing traffic restrictions
- Disseminate clear information regarding the various levels of air pollution: standardised at national levels if possible.
- Set up clear relationship between levels of air pollution and catalogue of traffic restrictions measures



## Sited References

-Jonas Eliasson (2015). Is Congestion Pricing Fair? Consumer and Citizen Perspectives on Equity Effects. Discussion Paper 2016 -13, International Transport Forum, available at: <http://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/congestion-pricing-equity-effects.pdf>

-John Swanson (2009). *Gaining Public Support for Congestion Charging: Lessons from Europe for US Metropolitan Areas*. Unites States : The German Marshall Fund of the United States.



# Thank you!

