



Marketing support guide: how to get your community shared transport scheme on the map

In 2018 CoMoUK worked to explore how best to engage the public with car clubs, from this the toolkit was developed. The toolkit includes a guide for; developing an engagement plan, creating content and making the most of press releases and social media.

Introduction

When thinking about how best to engage and market your scheme to audiences there are two areas to consider. First develop your engagement or marketing plan and from this you can launch an engagement or marketing campaign.

Setting your goal

Before you start developing an engagement plan consider what you want to achieve. It may be that the larger goal is to increase the revenue from the scheme which could be achieved by increasing membership or utilisation. Within your plan you could then have smaller goals such as:

- engaging with so many people over a time period
- increasing utilisation of your scheme with existing members
- attending a number of events
- increase social media engagement
- create and have a number of people take a survey

By breaking your larger goal down, it allows you to set smaller and realistic timescales. It will also allow you to gather more information throughout your campaign and make changes where needed to improve your probability of reaching your goal.

It is ideal to set yourself a 12-month period to reach your overarching goal at the end of which you can review and look to grow on your achievements in the next 12 months.

Choosing your audience

In any engagement plan the first consideration needs to be the audience. Who is it you are trying to reach? A helpful way of thinking about your audience is to create personas, breakdown the different types of people, their interests and motivations. In doing this you will be able to see where they overlap or if they are separate.

Once you have created some personas you can then begin to think what would motivate them to sign up to a shared transport scheme. Is it the environmental benefit or costs benefit that would motivate them more?

The final question when it comes to your audience is how do you engage with them? What is the best tool for communication? Written leaflets, social media, articles in relevant publications. It is key to think how you can combine these tools into a cohesive campaign. For example, how you could combine social media posts and an email campaign?

Developing your message and content

After thinking about your audience and their motivation you can now move onto what action you want your audiences to take. Is it to take part in a trial? Sign-up for a scheme? Take part in a survey? It is also important to think that you may have one overarching aim of getting more people to sign-up for your scheme but in order to achieve this you need your audiences to take part in a couple of different actions. Changing transport methods is not a quick decision so consider how you can take them on a journey with you. The way you communicate with them is key to this both in terms of imagery and written content.

When thinking about what content to use for your campaign or plan it is never usually a case of having to start from scratch with content. You will have images related to your services that can be used. It is often useful when thinking of creating a marketing or engagement plan or campaign to consider conducting a review of the content that you do have. This will allow you to see not only what you currently have that could be used but also may remind you of previous campaigns that have, or even have not, worked.

When it comes to the development or reusing previous content focus on imagery that your audience will be able to identify with. If they do not see themselves reflected in the imagery, then generally they will assume that your scheme is not for them. It is also good to consider whether you have scope to create video; more often videos catch people's attention on all forms of social media. These do not have to be expensively produced videos, in fact genuine and honest videos of people using your services or talking positively about them will more often get the best reaction.

When writing content for your campaign consider the fact that for many audiences they may not have heard of shared transport, car clubs, ride share or bike share. How would you explain it to them in one or two lines? Once you have that explanation you can then start writing content that links back to your individual personas' motivations. Consider convenience, cost, health and the environment as possible motivators that could be combined into your images and written content. Case studies – people relate to people.

You will probably use a variety of different channels such as social media or print to promote and a variety of tools such as Facebook, X (Twitter), or leaflets for your campaign. These will all have different amount of content space available to you; however, it is important that two things are clear and prominent on all of these. Firstly, ensure that your brand is consistent across the tools and channels so whomever sees them will know that they are from you.

Secondly, try to consider having one overarching message that encompasses your call to action. This doesn't mean that if you have a car club and a bike share scheme that you wouldn't have separate messaging around these but rather you could have one tagline that covers your audience engaging with all types of shared transport.

In our downloadable toolkit we have created some designs that can be used to show shared transport in action and have the same image content across the social media template, leaflet and

survey. Everything apart from the image in these templates can be edited. If you download them, you will find suggest content for car club, bike share and ride share. You can use this to help you consider what information your audiences need but also CoMoUK have found including at least some of this content is key to encouraging changes in transport choices.

8 steps for content development

1. **Goal** – What is your aim and how will your content help achieve this.
2. **Re-frame** – Re-frame your aim to relate to your audience. Ask "why would someone do this?"
3. **Communicate** – Don't try and to talk to a broad group instead imagine you are talking to one person. Make it personal.
4. **First draft** – Create your first draft but accept that it won't be the last draft.
5. **Walk away** – After your first draft, take a moment and come back with a fresh view.
6. **Re-draft** – Now is the time to re-draft and re-work the content until you are happy.
7. **Have someone check it** – Getting another pair of eyes to check over everything is a key step.
8. **One final check** – Now is the time for one final sense check before signing everything off.

Choosing your tools and channels

There are many different tools and channels that can be used for engagement. Here you can see some key things to consider in each of these areas.

Social media

Social media channels can be useful to create a group of like-minded audiences as well as reaching new audiences. The nature of the individual social media channels differ slightly, and because of this, will need different content management.

Facebook is a great tool for sharing more detail information including images/videos and written content. The ability to create Facebook groups also opens the door to encourage word of mouth positive promotion and allow audiences to buy in to your scheme.

X (Twitter) requires a greater volume of content to maintain relevance but is useful to create an active conversation with audiences and other relevant organisations.

Due to the fact Instagram is heavily image focused, it will depend on the type of content that you wish to promote. Images of the use of car clubs and bikes could also be utilised on Facebook and X, and these also offer the opportunity to explain further about your scheme and benefits.

With all these social media options, consider how you can target your audience. Facebook will allow you to choose specific interests to make the most from a post and in X consider using specific organisations usernames (@xxxx) to reach your audience.

You can find a template social media post in the toolkit with editable content.

Website

Before launching your campaign consider where on your website you will be directing people to. Does this page answer the questions your personas will likely have? Does it clearly sign-post how to get involved with your scheme and does it have similar messaging and branding? The reason for ensuring this is you don't want anyone landing on your website to be confused or find it difficult to reach the information that they are looking for. This will add additional barriers to them engaging with both you and the scheme.

Print

There may be opportunities to promote your scheme to the press. Opportunities to promote your scheme can be found in all newspapers or publications, from larger outlets to small local publications. The easiest way to do this is to create press releases where relevant, for local publications picking up the phone and speaking about the opportunity for an article is often your best option. If you do decide a press release is more relevant, ensure that the key information is easy to identify, your contact information is included, information about your brand and that it is no longer than a page. It may be helpful to identify possible local press contacts and initially send out

press releases to all of them. If you begin to get traction with one contact, ensure you cultivate a positive relationship with them.

You can find a template press release in the tool kit.

Word of mouth

One type of engagement to not doubt the strength of, is word or mouth. Consider if you have any users of your scheme who may be willing to be ambassadors, sharing their positive experiences either through case studies in your leaflets or perhaps short videos tailored for social media.

Leaflets

Leaflets can be a very useful tool to provide more detailed information that is often needed when it comes to making a choice to change the method of transport. When developing content for your leaflets consider where you will be using them: events, postal campaign, local businesses? This can impact the type of content needed but also consider the size of leaflet required. In any type of leaflet ensure that the call to action is clear and that you have not overloaded the leaflet with too much information.

You can find a template leaflet in the toolkit with editable content and a template survey that you could utilise along with any other printed materials.

Paid marketing

Depending on your budget you may be able to consider using paid marketing as well. There are options for paid marketing in terms of magazines, web banners or newspapers however it is likely that social media and Google Ad Words would give the best response for a reasonable cost.

Both Facebook and X offer paid advertising. This allows you to target your audience based on location and interests ensuring you are reaching the personas you have identified. They allow you to set a small budget ensuring a specific reach, but this will not guarantee interaction with your posts or click through to your website.

Google Ad Words link your scheme to specific Google searches, for example: car hire, car club or bike share. This would then mean that your scheme would come up in the top search results. Google Ad Words works on a monthly cap that you set, so you ensure that you never pay more than that, based on your budget Google will suggest what the results for this would be.

6 best practices for social media

1. **Show your brand** – Your brand should be at the heart of everything you do. Audiences will then recognise and trust you. What is your aim and how will your content help achieve this.
2. **Audience research** – Complete a list of your audience: possible interest and target locations. Link your posts to these with hashtags and targeting.
3. **Curate your feed** – Each of your posts should fit together with a similar message and feel.
4. **Stay consistent** – Ensuring you post consistently will ensure you stay relevant. Create a schedule that works for you.
5. **Post with purpose** – If you haven't posted in a while don't feel pressured to just put something up. Think carefully to ensure your posts still match your audience. Try to build a library of posts that you can use.
6. **Engage with your audience** – Social media is designed to be social, so ensure you like, share and comment.

Considering monitoring and evaluation

Throughout any campaign, monitoring and evaluation is crucial, it allows you to see the positive impact your campaign is having and to make changes to areas that may not be working so well. To make the best use of your monitoring consider what tools you can use; Google analytics, Facebook analytics, X analytics, all of these will show you:

- Likes
- Shares
- Click-through rates if you have included a link
- Reach of post

If you use Mailchimp as an email client this also have incredibly useful analytic information such as:

- Open rate
- Who has opened the email and how many times
- Click through if you have included a link
- Unsubscribes
- If anyone liked or shared information to social media

Consider which areas of the information provided is of most interest to you for example click-through to your website may be more important than a like on a Facebook post depending on your goals.

It is often useful to collate the information in one place, such as a spreadsheet, allowing you to track the relevant information over your chosen period and across channels. In addition, you may want to set aside specific time on a weekly or fortnightly basis to complete your monitoring allowing you to make necessary changes.

Try to ensure that you build in some time to complete a final review, it allows you to identify your successes and analyse areas that did not have the impact you wanted. This final review also allows you to see where you sit against your overarching goal and the smaller goals you had set yourself. Once you have completed this review you can then look to take your learnings forward into the next year.

How can CoMoUK help?

CoMoUK has created an engagement and marketing toolkit that can be downloaded with suggested content that can be adapted and used by anyone. We can also answer any questions on marketing and engagement, email us at scotland@como.org.uk.