



## Europe's first rural active mobility consultancy campaign

### Novel approach

Waldviertel-Linie is a high-quality public transport service providing mobility access for Austria's Waldviertel region. Following its launch in 2009, it initially attracted relatively modest numbers of additional passengers. The public transport provider therefore implemented an active mobility consultancy (AMC) campaign in order to strengthen contacts with existing passengers, attract new users, and obtain feedback about its services. The campaign proved a valuable addition to the existing mobility centre, as it targeted potentially interested people who had not previously used public transport services.

### Making contact

The campaign ran between March and July 2011, and a total of 1,500 randomly selected households located along two rural bus routes were contacted. Householders were given tailored information about the available bus services and were asked to make suggestions about how to improve services in rural areas. A brochure and guidelines, both downloadable from the SmartMove project website, provide further details about the methodology used during the AMC campaign.

### Signs of success

- As a result of the AMC campaign, passenger numbers have grown by an additional **14 percent** on the two test bus lines on top of the general trend of an increase in bus users.
- Responses were received from **868 households** (57 percent of the 1,500 contacted). Of those who responded, 84 percent requested further information about the public transport system (67 percent were not users of public transport and 33 percent were regular passengers).

- Requests were received from **725 households**: 568 returned the questionnaire; 433 requested a free regional map; 374 requested a bus network map; 317 requested a timetable; 309 requested ticket information and price comparisons; 229 requested a free weekday ticket; and 227 requested various information products.
- **94 percent** of those contacted stated that they had obtained new information; 91 percent welcomed the campaign; 83 percent said they would take part in further campaigns; 58 percent stated that they were more motivated to use the bus services; and 56 percent had talked about the campaign with other people.
- Among the available information, householders selected those materials that were the most important in terms of using the bus services. Their feedback indicates that they were very satisfied with the campaign and with the quality of the information materials provided.
- Response rates among the households contacted in this first rural AMC campaign were similar to the response rates from households during earlier campaigns in the cities of Vienna, Linz and Salzburg.
- The pilot phase covered households located along two bus routes, and the campaign is now ready to be adapted to the entire territory of Waldviertel.
- A lot of useful feedback and many concrete suggestions were received in relation to printed and online timetables; departure times and travel times; the preferred location of bus stops; connections with other means of transport; and the long-term availability of the bus services.
- Based on the collected feedback, the project team identified the following priorities: to take greater account of the needs of commuters; to designate more on-demand bus stops; to change departure intervals and weekend schedules; and to improve connections. The feedback also helped the bus operator to identify cost-saving measures and further improve marketing and communication.

Photos: **Roman Klementschtz**

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