

TROLLEY *Marketing Symposium*



Innovative marketing strategies for trolleybuses

Why?

There can be a number of reasons why a marketing strategy for trolleybuses might be necessary. They assume the trolleybus is the answer, but what is the question?

- traffic congestion
- street level air pollution
- public service
- quality of life



Qualities

That the trolleybus can solve or provide these attributes assumes a number of qualities -

- inherent attractiveness
- zero emissions at street level
- high acceleration and load capacity
- inherent quietness and smoothness
- lack of vibration
- long life
- proven technology



Why not?

There are reasons why the trolleybus has not achieved more widespread use –

- perception by planners and less so, the public, of visual intrusion of overhead wiring
- idea that trolleybus technology is somehow ‘out-of-date’
- higher up-front capital costs
- short term accountancy methods
- perception of inflexibility
- assumption of higher maintenance costs



Alternatives

Against this background is the climate crisis and peak oil, both of which are global and intangible events that have no precedent in planning. As future predictions, their effects can be contested but they are inevitable over time. Proposals for technologies to deal with these threats have been short term or impractical.

- battery buses incapable of providing high service levels
- hybrids that still require fossil fuels
- CNG buses that still emit greenhouse gases
- onboard fuel cells that can never be energy efficient



Wider Benefits

So there is a certain inevitability that trolleybus technology will have to be re-introduced on a large scale and may even include new uses such as trolley lorries and long distance trolley coaches.

Decisions about the quality of the trolleybus system need to consider wider benefits than are usually taken into account.

- regeneration
- wider community economics
- public health
- global crises



Marketing

In marketing 'new' trolleybuses, it might be useful to conceive the system differently than is usually the case.

- as the future solution
- as a 'new' technology concept
- as a total, integrated system
- at the top of the hierarchy of road users
- as high quality
- with overhead giving a sense of permanence and confidence



Implementation

While none of these is strictly true or unique to trolleybuses, seeing the concept in this way can form a positive basis for interpretation into a visual identity and system design. The cost implications scale from little extra outlay to judgements of the extent of implementation.

- branding
- additional passenger services
- service frequency
- maintenance and renewal
- traffic segregation



Branding

Branding has ranged from perfunctory identification through self advertising to a friendly brand that can involve a name such as 'Stan', 'Tram' or 'Cristalis'. Public consultation is essential to achieve acceptance and 'ownership'.

- simple
- sophisticated
- elegant
- functional
- key messages, green and quality



Planning



Impression

- fresh, clean, efficient
- target – car users
- promote quality
- promote environmentalism
- single word theme, eg. 'cloud'
- new vernacular, 'gliding on a cloud' etc.
- no written graphics on vehicles
- graphic emblems for trolley ways
- visual coherence



Vision



Thanks to Marcus Fey, TCL and Vison