



ICEHOCKEY BY BUS

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Karlstad is the capital of the county Värmland. The county has about 240 000 inhabitants and 80 000 lives in the municipality.

The city is home for an elite ice-hockey team, which draw spectators from the whole county and also outside the boarder.

In the middle of September 2001 the rebuild Arena was inaugurated. The Löfbergs Purple Arena has increased and nearly doubled its capacity from 4 200 spectators to 7 500.

The Arena is located in just five minutes bus- or car journey from the city centre. The capacity of those few roads leading to the Arena is limited. Traffic congestion is ordinary status when the team is playing or other big event is carried out.

In January 2000 several presumptive partners were invited to a first meeting. The objective was to create a new bus organisation to reach a change in transport modes when visiting the rebuild Arena. The new organisation should start the same day as the inauguration.

Invited, to the meeting, were staff from the Arena, Public transport (both local and regional), Swedish National Road Administration, the regional sports authority and officers from the City of Karlstad.

During the process representatives from a parking company joined the group.

A survey of the modal split was carried out in March 2001. The survey also gave information about what the conclusive arguments were for choosing the bus alternative.

The result showed that 81 % of the spectators travelled by car and only 13 % travelled by bus. Walk 5 % and bike 2 %.

70 % were positive to the bus alternative if

1. there was non-stop route from their quarter of the city
2. the bus should stop and start near the entrance

New non-stop bus routes were organized and marketed. The new bus routes were launched on the 22 of September 2001 during the "In town without my car".

By the end of November the service was evaluated. With two months of new transportation alternatives to the Arena our monitored result showed that the ice- hockey bus routes had been successful. The number of bus travellers has increased from 13 % to 20 % and car users have decreased from 81% to 70 %.

Activities have also established a new consciousness among partners about the need of a new mobility culture.

In Mars 2002 survey no 2 will be held to get comparable result from the season 2001/2002.

During spring 2000 the Arena company applied for an EU contribution to environmental certification of the Arena. It was granted and in good time for the inauguration the Arena got the certificate. The new transport organization was one important criteria when the certicator decided to give the Arena its certificate.

Conclusions

MM is necessary to get different actors/partners to the table at the same time. Knowledge about monitoring and evaluation is essential when site development activities will be started.

It's rather easy to convince a big sports club/ice-hockey team to see and take their responsibility for causing traffic problems. Goodwill is one benefit for the sport club partner.

Information and marketing is easily done when several partners are involved.

Most people are prepared to do a modal shift if a good alternative based on conclusive argument is available.

1. City of Karlstad

Karlstad was founded in 1584. Today, it has about 80.000 inhabitants on 1200 square kilometres. The main square is in the middle of the city, 48 meters above sea level. Karlstad is situated 310 km from Stockholm, 240 km from Gothenburg and 210 km from Oslo on the northern shore of Lake Vänern in the county of Värmland.

Karlstad is known for sunshine and the sun has become the symbol of the town. "Sola", a dialect word for the sun was also the name of a beautiful blond lady who lived in Karlstad during the 18th century. As a waitress and as the owner of an inn she spread joy and warmth throughout the town.

Karlstad municipality's responsibilities include caring for the young and the old, organising schools, town planning and emergency services and providing basic supplies such as water and electricity. The environment, culture and leisure activities are other areas where the municipality serves the inhabitants of Karlstad.

The municipality is financed by municipal taxes, fees and State subsidies. The important decisions affecting the municipality are taken by the City council. 61 representatives are elected on a proportional representatives basis. Decisions made by the council are enforced by the Executive committee which has 11 members.

Social Democrats, the Left party and the Green party were until Dec 01 in the majority in the council. A new majority consisting of the conservative and liberal parties runs the city until the election which will be held in September 2002.

The green city

The natural environment in and around Karlstad is flourishing and has a wealth of variety. To the north there are extensive coniferous forests. To the south, farming land stretches out to lake Vänern and its 20,000 islands.

The river Klarälven flows through the centre of Karlstad. It rises high in the Norwegian hills and forms an exciting delta as it empties into Lake Vänern.

In order to protect the natural environment, the municipality operates environment stations and recycling centres where all recyclable and hazardous materials are taken care of.

The municipality of Karlstad has worked with a great activity on measures to improve the quality of the air in the city centre. Meteorological and topographical reasons causes high levels of air pollution in the city centre. In 1993 Karlstad gained a reputation for having the most polluted air all over Sweden. Soon the work with an environmentally adapted traffic plan for the city centre started. The objective with the plan was to reduce the use of private cars, by means of raised public awareness and popular participation without imposing legislative measures. In April 1995 the plan was approved by the local government. During 1995 the city centre was partly reconstructed. Some streets were closed for private cars, and the market square was made free from parking lots. The aim was to reduce traffic by 30 percent between 1994 and 1999.

In 1998 the centre of Karlstad was proclaimed as an environment friendly area which means that motorists are requested to give way to cyclists, pedestrians and public transport. In the end of 2000 the number of cars in the city centre has decreased with 29 %. The quality of air has become much better compared with the situation in the beginning of the 90 teeth.

Karlstad is one of around 75 European cities co-operating in the network access, formerly called Car-free-cities. Karlstad is also one of 1 000 European cities who participated in the European Car Free Day "In town without my car" at 22 rd of September 2000 and 2001.

You can read more about Karlstad and the environment and traffic work done at the website www.karlstad.se

Activities

Major events held in Karlstad include world championships in handball, curling, football, racing-boats, rally, ice-racing and this year world championship in ice hockey.

The leisure park Mariebergsskogen with fun-fair and a minizoo is situated just a couple of kilometres from the town centre. Drama and concerts are often performed here during the summer. In April 2002 the inauguration of a new permanent building for exhibitions will take place. In Swedish the building is called "nature room" and inside there will be an exhibition showing examples of nature and animals from the delta landscape around Karlstad.

There are many sports facilities. Some of Sweden's top sport clubs are based here. One of them is Färjestad's ice hockey team, FBK, which this season, 2001/2002, has been outstanding in the Swedish national ice hockey league.

Background

The arena of FBK is situated 3 km north of the city centre. The suburb is a narrow piece of land located just beside the river. The suburb consists of a mix of dwellings, both villas and block of flats. Just beside the big ice hockey arena there is a trotting course.

There are only two roads leading to the arena and the capacity of those roads is limited. Both of them pass the densely populated area.

From skating ground to Arena

1957 ice hockey was played on an artificially frozen skating ground outdoors. In 1968 a roof was built over the rink and in 1974 the ice hall got seats for 6.000 spectators. During the 90's the number of seats were reduced to 4 500.

The municipality ran the ice hockey arena until 1999. During 1999 it was decided that the ice hockey team was allowed to buy the building. As service in return the club should invest 10 million euro to modernize the hall.

At this time there was a discussion about the localization. Due to the surroundings with lots of apartments and dwellings and only two narrow roads leading to the arena some politicians questioned the project. The traffic situation was bad already. With house full the number of spectators were 4 500. Lots of people were aware of the coming pressure caused by the double amount of visitors. Voices were raised against the rebuilding on the old place with its lack of convenient accessibility. This was for example the statement from the technical department. Representatives from the green party, which belonged to the ruling majority, demanded that the traffic situation had to be solved before permission was given. This legitimate claim had no effect while the matter was handled rapidly and the club got the permission to start the rebuilding.

A technical investigation concerning the traffic situation was made in Spring 2000. It showed that through rebuilding the main road with a roundabout and better traffic light equipment the situation probably should improve. The cost for these activities were estimated to 700 000 Euro.

At this time no one considered any other activities to reduce the coming pressure from a much larger audience.

Objective and Process

In January 2000 The municipality Transport advisory service, TAS, contacted the board of the ice hockey team. A first meeting was held and TAS explained the benefits of MM. Our aims were in the first place to convince the ice hockey team that they through their activities generate problems as congestion, noise and air pollution. Especially for people living in this part of Karlstad. TAS gave the club motives to join co-operation with the objective to create a better situation. A second motive was that the club should get goodwill both from people living in the suburb and from all kinds of visitors. People should notice that the club actually took responsibility not only for the indoor environment in the Arena but also for the external environment.

The Arena management was from the beginning very positive to join the cooperation. As a result of this we decided to invite both the regional and local PT companies. We also invited representatives from the national road authority. The objective was to create a new bus organisation to reach a change in transport modes when visiting the rebuild Arena.

During 2000 several meetings were held with people from the ice hockey club management and marketing section, TAS, PT companies and the Swedish road authority. In the beginning of the process our local PT company showed very little interest to take part in the cooperation. Which was a little embarrassing because TAS belongs to the same organisation, the municipality. Representatives from the regional PT company didn't miss the opportunity to underline this fact.

The ice hockey season 2000/2001 started without any new bus routes. We didn't manage to convince nor the regional or local company to start traffic. But just after Christmas, in January 2001 the regional buss company started three new routes as an experiment. Three small municipalities with a distance of about 20-30 km from the Arena got non-stop routes. These three new routes were marketed very modest and the number of travellers were low in the beginning. But they were the first special hockey busses so far.

During spring 2000 the Arena company applied for an EU contribution to environmental certification of the Arena. It was granted and in good time before the inauguration the Arena got the certificate. The plan of a new transport organization was one important criteria when the certicator decided to give the Arena its certificate.

The survey

Partly because of our participation in the MOST projects we understood that we had to get a better knowledge about the modal split of the arena visitors. We decided to carry out a questionnaire with professional help. The survey was financed one third each by the municipality, the ice hockey team and the national road authority. The cost was about 3 500 Euro. The selection was 2000 persons. 1000 persons on a Tuesday match and 1000 persons at a Saturday match. We got help with the questionnaire formula by the team hosts who spread and collected them among the spectators. In total we got 950 answers. Most can be seen at the web site www.mo.st.

The result

It is obvious that ice hockey is a game for men. 79 % of the audience was men. 92 % with an age over 18 years.

48 % of the visitors live more than 20 km from the Arena. 30 % live between 6 and 20 km, 16 % have to travel 3-5 km and 6 % have less than 3 km.

What transport mode was most common? Of course the car was outstanding. 81 % travelled by car, 13 % travelled by bus, 2 % use their bikes and 5 % took a walk.

We also asked questions about carpooling and found out that in average there are 3 people in each car. This is important when talking about the capacity of the parking surface.

Then we did some investigations about the opinion to bus travel.

In total we got 70 % who said that they were positive to use bus. The most frequent reason if to choose the bus was that busses should drive non-stop (54 %) to the Arena. High priority (bus should stop and start near the entrance) (14 %) for busses and time (10 %) were criteria that also were high rated.

Thanks to the survey but also because of a rather good result from our first experiment routes we got a better position in the discussion with our local PT company. We did show the local PT politicians our results and got them on the train. During Spring 2001 they decide to spend about 20 000 Euro on four local bus routes. This is to be compared with the physical changes that was estimated to 700 000 Euro. At the end that latter cost ended up in 1 000 000 Euro.

A new survey is planned to be held in March 2002 to evaluate this first year of MM activities.

New partner

During our meetings in Spring 2001 it was obvious that the club put most concern on how to rebuild and furnish the Arena. We tried to force the arena management to put some more

interest also on the external environment. One thing that was in their interest was the supply and outfit of the parking areas. The club had ordered their consultants to provide them with drawings how to arrange and equip these areas to satisfy the demand. The parking area was doubled. From about 800 to 1700 parking places.

At first the management had no will to let people pay for the use. That was an issue that we had focused on early in the process but with no acceptance from the club management. But lots of remarks from people in the survey talked about better conditions on the parking surface. When a new partner entered the stage the task got hot. A private parking company, Europark, started discussion with the arena management. They signed an agreement which stated that the parking company paid all investments and in exchange got all rights to handle the taxation

The parking fee was fixed to be 2 Euros. This was a very important step in the process. Especially in relation to the bus taxes. The PT companies had decided that only cash payment should be allowed. A single journey should cost 1, 5 Euro. No smart card or cheap-rate tickets for the travellers should be allowed. Without the parking fee there had been less incitement to go by bus.

This was a new situation in the project. A new partner entered the group. A partner who in deed had a contradictory interest. Their interest was to earn as much money as possible on spectators that depended on car travelling.

The parking company did have a very positive attitude to bus travelling. They had experience from other arenas on how to arrange good accessibility for bus traffic. During the Summer 2001 Europark invested about 1 000 000 Euros in infrastructure around the Arena.

Inauguration

During the summer all partners planned how buses should be used the coming season. They were to be used at ice hockey matches as well as at big events and concerts. During this time we also planned marketing activities.

The first thing to discuss was the name of the bus service. TAS tried to get all partners to accept Arena bus as the official name. We thought that it was a proper name when the bus service should be given at several events in the Arena. But this was not in line with the ice hockey team and not with the regional PT company. The regional company decided that they should only provide bus service to ice hockey matches. The local company wanted to give the service every time that there was a big event or match. The service was named "Ice hockey bus". When this was decided the IT officer of the club created a special logotype.

Introduction of the service was set to the inauguration of the arena and also combined to the Car free day event 22nd of September.

One first step in the marketing of the service was to invite media. A press conference was held in the end of August. The result of the survey was presented and the media contact resulted in articles in local papers.

The inauguration took place the second weekend of September. The official ceremony was on Saturday the 15th. On the day after, Sunday 16th there was a revival. It was a special performance arranged by the municipality management. All personnel working in the municipality got tickets. This was a unique marketing occasion. 5 000 people from our own organization should visit the Arena. We decided to design a special flyer that was given to every person who got a ticket. On the flyer there was a request addressed to all visitors to use the bus, bike or walk when visiting the performance. The same message was to be red on our web site.

This Sunday the 16th of September buses were crowded with people.

22 September

The very same day, 22nd of September, it was the premiere match for FBK in the Swedish national hockey league and also the annual Car free day. Early in spring TAS had suggested marketing the new service as one long term activity in the EU Charta.

The ice hockey buses were marketed together with the marketing of in town without my car. Advertisements about the day also contained information about the new bus service. The service was mentioned in radio spots and in those special editions of papers that were published due to the inauguration of the Arena. Buses were also marketed by the PT companies through their timetables and web sites. In all buses there were posters telling about the ice hockey bus. Websites of the club bus companies and the different municipalities informed about the service.

The ice hockey club used a lot of different media to inform about the travel mode. It was done via the monitors in the arena, by letters to their members, in match programs, in advertisement before match, calendars and pocket calendars and also by the speaker during the match.

During the inauguration and a couple of matches there were officers from the PT companies in the Arena who spread information directly to the spectators.

PT buses are not the only buses to the Arena. There are also the restaurant buses. The club cooperates with several restaurants in the city of Karlstad. People visit the restaurant before match. If they eat and drink they will get a ticket to the bus.

An important amount of visitors travel by coaches. There are several private entrepreneurs who drive from different municipalities in the county and outside the county. People who ride with these buses purchase a combined ticket for both match and journey.

Benchmarking

The 10:th of January TAS and FBK club invited some companies, which are sponsors to the club, to a seminar about travel and transportation linked to the arena.

By letting the companies get to gather and discuss, how to develop their own travel and transportation good knowledge about the benefits of secure and sustainable transport will be spread.

As speaker in the seminar Kevin Scobel and Ab Schelling contributed. Their presentations gave a good view from mobility management in Europe.

Result and effects

Through out the year 2001 ice hockey buses became established in minds of the ice hockey audience. It was obvious that people liked the service and the possibility to travel comfortably and quickly from their home to the Arena. Unfortunately it has not been possible to provide buses with a special bus lane. The effect of this fact is that buses coming from the southern direction often get stuck in the congestion. There have been discussions in the project group weather it could be possible to give buses signal priority. The municipality technical department didn't want to put money on such an organization.

By the end of October TAS and the Arena management evaluated the service. We monitored the number of buses and bikes and found that bus travelling had increased from 13 % to about 20-25 %.

During the time around the inauguration a new partner entered the project. It was the municipality parking control unit. The initiative came from TAS. We wanted to involve a part which was responsible for the order around all streets around the Arena. Europark's experience was that many people should try to avoid the parking fee by parking elsewhere. It was decided that information about the new organization should be given during the first tree matches. From the fourth match the parking unit would use fines on those who put their car on wrong places.

Conclusions

- **MM is necessary to get different actors/partners to the table at the same time**

In the early planning process of the rebuilding of the Arena mobility issues were discussed only from a technical point of view. A supply perspective dominated the process. Responsible units of the municipality put their trust to technical solutions. Neither politicians, planners nor technicians were aware of possible solutions coming from for example coordination and organization by mobility management.

- **Knowledge about monitoring and evaluation is essential when site development activities will be started**

One important condition to reach positive results is to investigate travel mode in the site. This is also essential to get a clear view of the effect from different activities. In our case we did not have any knowledge about travel mode among the spectators. Via the survey we got necessary facts about the modal split, people's attitude to bus travel, attitude to taxes and time etc.

- **Convince partners to take their responsibility**

In the initial phase it is important to discuss who is responsible for the situation. Traditionally there is low conscious among companies and other actors who in fact are responsible for polluting effects on the surroundings. It is a good thing to argue and give motive for different actions which will give the company good-will among citizens and costumers.

- **Information and marketing is easily done when several partners are involved**

PT transport companies often have a very slim budget. Together with other actors there will raise synergy effects due to advertising and other marketing activities. There will be a lot of different marketing channels because of already existing media by the actors. You will have good strength for your marketing without breaking your budget.

- **Most people are prepared to do modal shift if a good alternative based on conclusive argument is available**

People are prepared to a modal shift if the alternative seems to be at least as good as their present alternative. Demand travel mode has a better chance to catch new passengers because it pays consideration to their special need and wishes.

- **Goodwill is one benefit for the sport club partner**

The management of the Arena claim that there has been a lot of interest from several other teams in the Swedish national hockey league. Almost every team in the league have visited the Arena and they have especially paid attention to the ice hockey bus organization. Through MM activities the sport club has reached a lot of goodwill. Ice hockey is in many ways an important activity. If you can combine this sport activity or any other sport activity with environmental, health- and economical concerns by using MM you will get added values to everyday life.