

Case Study: The Boots Commuter Survey

Introduction

As part of its on-going commitment towards improving transport and the environment for its employees, Boots commissioned MVI to undertake a major travel to work survey.

Objectives

The principal aims behind the survey were to:

- **Analyse the changes in the mode of travel to work that had taken place since the previous survey**
- **Identify people's views on current and future transport to work issues.**
- **Help develop a clearer transport strategy for the future.**
- **Monitor the progress of Boots in meeting its commuter plan targets.**



Approach

Initial focus group discussions with representative samples of employees to consider the salient issues in depth and gain a full appreciation of commuting practice. The main survey comprised a 12-page questionnaire mailed to all employees. The questionnaire included a large number of scaled attitudinal questions plus a number of open-ended questions to capture a wide range of opinion. After a follow-up reminder was sent out, the final response rate achieved was a highly creditable 48%. The completed questionnaires were processed by an optical mark recognition package with the results analysed by SPSS providing both tabular and diagrammatic presentation.

Summary of Main Findings

The survey revealed that 71% of Boots employees use the car as their normal means of transport to work, 9.6% use the bus, 5.7% are car passengers, 3.1% use the Boots subsidised bus and 4.7% use a bicycle. Only 1.2% currently use the train, 1.3% a motorcycle/scooter whilst 2.2% travel to work on foot.

Those that use the car consider the following to be the most important benefits: convenience, flexibility, shorter journey times and ease of going out after work.

- **The means of transport most likely to be used if a change were made are: Boots subsidised Bus, Public Bus, Park & Ride and car sharing.**

- Whilst both cycling and motorcycling attract a number of followers as an alternative to the car, there are a significantly high proportion of employees who feel it is unlikely or most unlikely that they would use this form of transport (72%)
- In the short term, car sharing is the one option that would require least investment and could be upgraded and more vigorously promoted almost immediately.
- Travelling as a car passenger is the most popular occasional form of transport (27.6%).
- General awareness of the Boots car-sharing scheme is high at 93.5% although only 9.5% of employees claim to car share formally.

Positive comments about car sharing are that it is cheaper, reduces congestion and is good for the environment. On the down side, the perceived inflexibility of such a scheme is a major concern, also the reliance on a car share partner.

Added Value

The survey generated a wealth of data and clear insights into how far Boots had succeeded in achieving its goals. The Site Manager summed up the value of the survey as follows:

"The depth of information generated and the level of response obtained by the survey undertaken by MVI has provided a significant input into our planning process in this key area of employee and environmental concern."