

PATHWAYS: More sustainable holiday and leisure travel

Oslo workshop
18 September 2023



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Values-based messaging

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Study purpose

- To conduct an analysis of the potential for behavioural change towards more sustainable travel alternatives, based on insights from values-based messaging.
- We have data that addresses responses to hypothetical scenarios for improved supply of sustainable travel alternatives
 - Willingness to pay (WTP) for higher air travel carbon taxes
 - Extent of relative lower prices for train over plane
 - Extent of relative lower prices for public transport (train and bus) over car
 - Willingness to consider shifting between transport modes (modal shifts)

Literature/theory

- Very rarely do people change their behaviours based on facts
 - Years of research into the risks of smoking has proved this
 - Smoking cessation is not advanced by telling people that smoking causes lung cancer
- Why are many people/consumers generally immune to the facts?
 - People ignore facts that do not square with their preferences
 - If someone is addicted to nicotine is it easier to understand why.
 - People are also more receptive to information to confirms their position on an issue
 - Much more receptive to counterfactuals
 - Particularly true of behaviours that bring pleasure – such as flying away on holiday

Reconfiguring Aviation for a Climate-Safe Future: Are Airlines Sending the Wrong Message?

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Abstract

Aviation remains a problematic sector of the global economy in times of climate emergency. Grounded in the ideology of reconfiguration, we adopt a system transitions perspective to address high emissions leisure travel. Our focus falls on the marketing communications of airlines as a critical component in the prevailing sociotechnical regime. Thematic analysis of the e-mail marketing communications of selected airlines revealed three prominent tropes: *adventure and discovery*; *privilege*; and *urgency*. These communications bring air travel into the everyday lives of consumers and accelerate the turnover time of tourist consumption. Time is mobilized to create a sense of resource scarcity and urgency to consume, paradoxically in a situation characterized by oversupply. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique opportunity for structural reform of the airline industry. Component substitution to address airline marketing is required as an important step toward overcoming consumer moral disengagement and reconfiguring the airline industry.

Keywords

sustainable consumption and production, aviation emissions, marketing communications, component substitution, moral disengagement, structural reform

Introduction

The environmentally destructive relationship between transport and tourism has been described as a roadblock to global climate change mitigation (Creutzig et al. 2015). Air travel produces a large and growing portion of the world's transport-related carbon emissions (Bows-Larkin et al. 2016; Lenzen et al. 2018). The total number of passengers carried on scheduled airline services in 2018 increased 6.4% on the previous year to 4.3 billion (ICAO 2019a). Through many years of growth in passenger numbers exceeding 5% per annum, aviation efficiency gains have failed to meet the 1.5% per annum target set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in 2009 for each year of the decade 2010-2019 (EFTE 2016). This has long been recognized as a problem that needs to be resolved (e.g., Randles and Mander 2009; Lenzen et al. 2018).

The consumption of air travel is inequitable, both globally and within aeromobile societies (Ivanova and Wood 2020). Yet the climate risks and injustices of aviation exceptionalism under the Paris Agreement continue owing to the opaque structure of the ICAO and the cognitive biases of its members. Aviation and maritime transport were the two notable omissions from the 2015 Paris Agreement (Bows-Larkin 2015). While efforts to address maritime transport emissions

are now being advanced (International Maritime Organization 2020), aviation continues to function as the equivalent to a rogue state. Indeed, the ICAO's weak post-Paris carbon offsetting scheme for international aviation (CORSIA (Higham, Ellis, and Maclaurin 2019) has been effectively withdrawn altogether in response to the impact COVID-19 has had on global aviation. Despite this, the COVID-19

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- This is why airline promotions are so effective in selling airline tickets
- Even if it requires 'moral disengagement'
- Airlines are very effective in helping people to temporarily forget about their climate concerns



The Islands *48hr Sale*

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Changing transport decisions

- Climate related transport behaviour changes are challenging
 - Inertia: Long established transport behaviours are difficult to divert
 - Rational decision- making: cheap and convenient options
 - Cost: Externalities are not accounted for in cost of transport
 - Reward: Rewards (or negative consequences) are removed (spatially or temporally distant).
-
- Framing messages, therefore, is important in terms of communication effectiveness.

Literature/theory

- Bottom-up approaches in public health
 - Attempts to encourage voluntary behaviour change for public health outcomes
 - Social marketing
 - Nudging
 - Values-based messaging
- Values-based messaging has emerged recently in Public Health in Australia
 - Uses values rather than hard facts as the basis for behaviour change
- From public health to healthy transport?
 - Public health offers insights of importance
 - Can be usefully applied to transport behaviour change

Victoria Health

- State Government Health Provider in Victoria, Australia
- Conducted a number of studies on values-based messaging
- Those studies provide insights from public health that may be usefully applied to transportation

Attitudinal Segmentation

Our research identified 3 attitudinal groups on the topic of walking and bike riding measures:



Supporters



Persuadables



Opponents

- **Supporters:** people who strongly and consistently **agree** with messages suggesting that *more walking and bike riding measures are necessary and beneficial*
- **Persuadables:** people who hold ambivalent or conflicting attitudes towards measures and move between supportive and oppositional perspectives
- **Opponents:** people who strongly and consistently **disagree** with messages suggesting that *more walking and bike riding measures are necessary and beneficial.*

In the area of walking and bike riding, our survey showed the following:



SUPPORTERS

25%



PERSUADABLES

60%



OPPONENTS

15%

Messages that appealed strongly to supporters and also shifted persuadables into a supporter mindset were identified as most useful for future messaging. Conversely, messages that appealed strongly to both opponents and persuadables were identified as harmful messages because they move the latter into an oppositional frame of mind.

Two examples...

Values and emotions trump facts. Engage your audience's values of freedom, equality and friendship. Avoid economic arguments that risk activating values of wealth and competition

MESSAGE SHIFT 

FROM

For every \$30 the government spends on roads for cars, it spends only \$1 on walking and bike riding. It's much cheaper to build more footpaths and bike lanes than to upgrade or build more roads.

TO

No matter where we live, it's important for everyone in our community to access and enjoy our streets. That means joining up the missing links in our walking and cycling networks with more footpaths and bike lanes.

Avoid mythbusting

Finally, advocates reinforce opponent frames by **negating** those frames (“it’s *not* X”) or **mythbusting**: using our arguments to show how wrong opponent arguments are. It’s tempting to weigh into debates against a vocal minority of opponents who are proclaiming falsehoods or unhelpful ideas. Unfortunately, research shows that every time people are exposed to a particular concept – even when framed as untrue – it is reinforced in our minds and more likely to be activated next time we think about that issue. Mythbusting, therefore, has the counterproductive effect of reinforcing the very ideas we seek to dispel.

In short, stop telling your audience what *not* to think and tell them *our* story instead.

Instead of telling your audience what not to think, tell them *our* story.

MESSAGE SHIFT

FROM

We’re not anti-car.

TO

We want streets that work for everyone.

FROM

Bikes don’t block car traffic, we have every right to be on the road.

TO

Our streets are for everyone to move around – bikes belong here.

Insights into values-based messaging

- Framing persuasive values-based messages is important
- Now considered necessary to achieve behaviour change in public health
- Effectiveness of messaging appears to be influenced by:
 - Whether it is framed positively or negatively
 - Source, audience and content
- Source: Health-based organization – messages focus on what people should be doing (to maximise positive outcomes) – as opposed to government messages
- Audience: Older audiences more motivated by physical gain (positive outcome) messages.
- Audience: Younger audiences more influenced by social rather than physical outcomes.

Target audiences

- Need to understand who are the 'persuadables'
- Then create appropriate values-based messages for those audiences

- Audience: Young people (engaged with climate change)
 - Emphasize values and worldviews
 - Efficacy of science-based information
 - Trusted messengers (e.g., other young people).

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Social marketing

- Based in social marketing theory
- Providing attractive, motivational exchanges
- Strategic, persuasive and audience targeted
- Targeted social marketing activities
 - Seeks behavioural change
 - Based on careful understanding of segmented target audiences
 - Uses all four Ps
 - Products – options provide appealing benefits
 - Price – costs are minimized
 - Place – convenient and easy
 - Promotion – messages and media relevant to target audiences.

Nudging

- Influencing choice architecture
- Cheaper and more subtle than social marketing
- “Libertarian paternalism”
- Improve consequences of choices without restricting freedom of choice
- Can break deadlocks in ineffective information-based public health campaigns
- Easier to optimize choices without noticing changes
- Considered ‘expert paternalism’
- Considered less effective in addressing the big problems in society

Behaviour economics

- Arises from the limited effectiveness of persuasion messages in public health
- Behavioural economics extend beyond 'rational individuals who seeks to maximise behaviours'
- Considers the effectiveness of emotional, cultural and social factors on the decisions being made by individuals and institutions
- Inertia – people tend to do the same thing repeatedly rather than do something different that requires a choice.
- Reward – people prefer immediate rewards rather than distant rewards