

Asia Pacific Cycling Congress 2013

How we collectively created a cycling strategy
and three social media campaigns
in less than 40 minutes...



March 2013

*“It doesn't have to be perfect
it just needs to be a start”*

“Why don’t people in Australia ride bicycles?”

At the APCC Social Media and Cycling Think Tank I asked “Why don’t people in Australia ride bicycles?”

In a ‘shout-out’ session people said:

- Not convenient
- Not cool
- Car is too comfortable
- It’s not convenient
- The image of cycling and cyclists
- Expensive
- Too hard and too easy not too
- Helmets
- Weather and humidity
- It’s dangerous
- Perception of danger

“Telling people to cycle more because it's good for you, is a bit like telling kids that they should eat brussel sprouts!”

Alton Twine

Via @GregVann

A Beach BBQ – that's a perfect Australian Sunday!

I asked my APCC Social Media and Cycling Think Tank group to – individually without discussion – write down what they would do on a perfect Sunday afternoon in Australia because I wanted to find out what people, and a sample of Australian's, really value. I also wanted to find out what really motivates the people charged with changing travel behaviour in Australia.

This is what they said, in no particular order.

- Fishing
- Surfing
- Water-skiing
- Drink cold beer
- Day at the beach
- Beach BBQ with family and friends
- Sex
- Reading a book
- Hanging out with friends
- Walking with family
- Nature outing
- Beach sport
- Bike ride
- Laying on the couch
- Watching a movie
- Climb a mountain
- Spend time with the kids
- Do nothing
- Play soccer
- Go to the beach
- Bike ride with family
- Go to a market
- Picnic
- Relax
- Meet friends
- Go to church
- Gardening
- Go to the Movies
- Afternoon sleep
- Go out on my boat
- Go to a coffee shop
- Hang around the pool at home
- Big Boozy family BBQ
- Go to the pub
- Play sport
- Spend time in the sun
- Swim at the beach
- Read the paper
- Sip a glass of wine
- Bike ride around the block with family and a BBQ
- Kick a football
- Drive to the mountains
- Mountain biking
- Afternoon tea/ice cream
- Read book at beach
- Sunday drinks

We then all rated the options and the winner was: Beach BBQ with family and friends

“Cycling is a cult, not a social norm. Why would people want to belong? We need a new framework, recast the discussion”

Philip Darnton

Via @GregVann

“What will cycling success look like 10 years from now?”

To think about our target audiences and what we really want to achieve I asked my #APCC Think Tank what they think cycling success will look like 10 years from now.

This is what they said.

- People of all shapes and sizes riding bicycles
- Infrastructure accommodation is much improved for cyclists
- Less cars
- Women cycling
- Less lycra
- People less concerned about safety
- Safety improvements
- Safe and efficient bike routes (central and decentralized)
- Can't find a place to park my bike
- People just using bikes and not making a big point of it
- Always seeing people riding bicycles
- Increased participation levels
- Strong commercialisation
- Cycling in the school curriculum
- If the mode share targets are met
- Prevalence of cycling infrastructure
- Change in general of traffic attitudes to cycling
- Cycling is mainstream and something that ordinary people do
- Lots of bicycles on the roads
- Everyone cycling to work
- All kids cycling to school
- More room on the roads for bikes
- More cyclists (percentage)
- Better facilities
- New lycra
- More women
- More infrastructure
- Everyone owns a bicycle
- Completed network
- No cars
- Double the current mode share
- Roads dominated by cyclists
- More electric bikes
- More kids riding bikes to get around
- Young people cycling to school and university
- People choosing to ride a bike rather than driving a car
- 10% mode share
- 10% mode funding
- 100% of schools with bike sheds and bike parking

- 90% of kids riding
- Cycling standard in schools
- Lots of people using bikes for as a everyday mode of transport
- Pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the transport hierarchy
- Harmony
- Many commuter cyclists
- Respect from majority of other road users
- P platers not aiming at cyclists
- Roads clogged with bikes
- We wouldn't be talking about cycling
- Cycling is mainstream... everyone just does it
- 100% of people ride in a year

We rated the comments – using the sticky red dot system! – the highest ranking success factors were:

1. More women cycling
2. Less Lycra
3. Cycling is mainstream... everyone just does it
4. We wouldn't be talking about cycling
5. Roads dominated by cyclists

Now we've got the basis of a social media campaign and a cycling strategy

What do you think success will look like?

“Cities throughout the world are transforming themselves by paint. Green lanes, bus lanes, blue paint not grey bitumen!”

@StevenYarwood

Via @GregVann

“What would Shell, BP & Caltex do/think about more people cycling?”

We started our ‘Generating Ideas’ section of the Think Tank with a crazy, manic and hilarious 30 seconds of drawing our neighbours!

“What’s that got to do with cycling?” I hear you ask

It’s an exercise that social researchers in the USA liked to do with their students in the 1960’s. They found in the USA in the 1960’s, like we did on the Gold Coast yesterday, that drawing your neighbour in less than 30 seconds creates lots of laughter, quite a bit of embarrassment and shame and lots of people saying sorry and apologizing. All of this is evidence that as adults:

- We fear judgment of our peers
- We are worried that we might do something wrong
- We are scared of criticism
- We are worried about what people will say about us if we don’t ‘conform to the norm’
- We are scared to do things slightly differently
- We are embarrassed about sharing our ideas

It’s this ‘Peer Fear’ that causes us to be conservative about our thinking and our actions.

By contrast, when you do the same exercise with kids there is no fear. Children will show their 30 second masterpiece to anyone and everyone who wants to take a look. As we come older we are much more sensitive to what people think about us and how people might react to our ideas and so we lose the freedom to create new exciting and imaginative ideas.

Based on this I asked my #APCC Think Tank this question “**If you worked at Shell, BP or Caltex what would you do or think about more people cycling?**”

In a Brain Steering (brainstorming alone) session people said the following:

- Worry
- Get nervous about lower profit margins
- Sponsor bicycle events
- Increase retail
- Be concerned about the reduced demand for petrol
- Worry about the lower profit for the business
- Make petrol fuelled bicycles
- Less waste of petrol
- Additional road space
- Create more efficient use of petrol
- Try and make money out of cycling
- Make car tyres out of petrol
- Identify how to make cycling look dangerous so that people drive cars
- Make adverts about how green we are
- Find things to sell to cyclists
- Worry about less people driving and less petrol sold
- Create alternative fuels
- Worry about threat to profit margins
- Create negative press
- Try to stop people cycling
- Calculate business risks
- Try and get on board cycling
- Try to diversify business
- Do a scare campaign about cycling
- Talk up the dangers of riding a bike
- Make bicycle a car accessory

This was VERY different to the session I held with my @AECOM colleague Warwick Absolon because **Warwick and I saw endless opportunities** including:

- Install a bike repair workshop at every fuel station
- Provide bicycle tyre air pumps next to the car air pumps
- Rebrand the coffee bars and café's to include valet cycle parking
- Make existing petrol station toilets into mid trip facilities
- Install cycle parking
- Make existing service stations 'bicycle pit stops'

If you knew you would not fail, what would you do?

*“Changing people's
behaviour is difficult &
slow. People love their cars.
You can't sell people what
they don't want to buy!”*

Philip Darnton

Via @GregVann

“What would Richard Branson do to get more people cycling?”

If you knew you would not get criticised for your extraordinary ideas, amazing innovations and creative thinking what would you do? That’s why I asked my APCC Think Tank what they thought Richard Branson would do if he was charged with getting more people in Australia cycling. This is what they said

- Buy a road network for bicycles
- Make cycling seem sexy
- Make cycling enormous by marketing it on a grand scale
- Create an innovative advertising campaign
- Engage world leaders
- “Sex it up”
- He’d give everyone a free bike then get them hooked on cycling then work out a way to make money from cycling and the addicted (to cycling) people
- He would ride a bicycle to work
- He would create sexy bikes, budget bikes and expensive bikes and also give away free bikes
- He’d create some kind of system with bikes and a bikeway network and sell it to Governments
- The Virgin Bank would make low interest loans for people to buy bikes
- Make it cool
- Social events
- Throw money at behaviour change
- He would promote Cycling with pretty girls in very short skirts
- Cycle parking at airports
- Photos of him riding a bike
- Look for complimentary business opportunities
- Put a bike underneath an hot air balloon
- Brand cycling
- Something zany
- Pay women to ride bikes
- Do a PR stunt with blondes in bikinis
- Give you champagne when you reach your destination by bicycle
- Discounted airfares for cycling
- Send a bicycle into space
- Richard would be an advocate or role model
- Create a marketing campaign for an advantageous profit
- Virgin branded bikes
- Free bikes
- Free flights
- Social marketing campaign

- Make cycling relevant and cool
- Engage the younger generation using social media
- PR stunt using ladies
- Something exciting and eccentric
- Ride through the slums of Rio to the Jesus statue
- Convince the Prime Minister to make it tax deductible
- Give bonuses to employees who cycle to work
- Free flights with every Virgin bicycle sold

We did a poll and the top rating answer was

He'd give everyone a free bike then get them hooked on cycling then work out a way to make money from cycling and the addicted (to cycling) people

If you knew you would not get criticised for your amazing innovative ideas and creative thinking what would you do?

*“#APCC Minister Emerson
says there is a cultural
change about cycling
under way in Australia
and he is supportive of it”*

The popularity contest and 'Our better ideas'

In a 3 minute Popularity Contest process we took all of the answers from all the questions...

1. What would you do on a perfect Sunday afternoon in Australia?
2. What will cycling success look like 10 years from now?
3. What would Shell, BP & Caltex do/think about more people cycling?
4. What would Richard Branson do to get more people cycling?

... and rated all the answers (three red sticky dots and three minutes per person). People placed their coloured dots next to the dots that they thought had the most potential. This narrowed down the number of ideas to create a list of 'Better ideas':

'Our better ideas' were:

- Incorporating cycling with family, friends, going to the beach and BBQ's
- Women cycling
- Less lycra
- Making money from cycling
- Free bikes
- Free flights
- Roads dominated by pedestrians and cyclists

“It's not so much “build it & they will come” as “build it or they won't stay”! It is also about political leadership as champions of the transformational projects”

Warren S

Via @GregVann

Gut instincts & immediate intuition. Rating the success of good ideas.

On most projects we spend hours, days and even weeks – and sometimes months – assessing options and solutions using complex multi-criteria assessment and appraisal tools.

If you follow my blog you may remember that at the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin we asked the question “should city planners trust their gut feelings?” <http://www.cyclingrachelsmith.com/media-articles/should-city-planners-trust-their-gut-feelings/>. At the Lab we concluded that:

- We slow down innovation by mistrusting our gut feelings
- We need to let our intuition guide us rather than using defensive decision-making processes.
- We don't always need complex solutions for complex problems
- We all need to do in to be 'less afraid' and use our 'gut feelings'.
- The best decision under risk is not the best decision under uncertainty
- Less is more – good decisions often require ignoring part of the information

For this reason, and in very small groups, we evaluated 'Our better ideas':

- Incorporating cycling with family, friends, going to the beach and BBQ's
- Women
- Less lycra
- Making money from cycling
- Free bikes
- Free flights
- Roads dominated by pedestrians and cyclists

in less than 5 minutes and using a Probability of Success and Impact template we concluded by using our gut feelings and immediate intuition that the ideas with the greatest impact of success and the highest probability of success were:

- Incorporating cycling with family, friends, going to the beach and BBQ's
- Women
- Free bikes
- Making money

*“So if oil gets scarce, is the
priority still to use it to
drive down the road for a
pack of smokes!?”*

Warren S

Via @GregVann

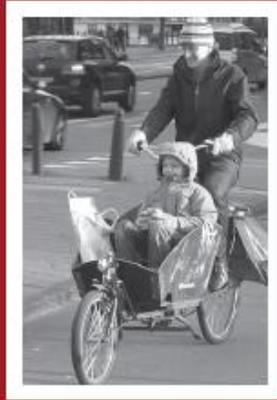
APCC Think Tank creates 3 Cycling Social Media Campaigns for 2013

We worked individually, and once in pairs, to allow everyone to be critical of other people's ideas without causing confrontation. It also allowed people to think for themselves rather than following the herd! Using our gut feelings and immediate intuition we concluded that the ideas with the greatest impact and the highest probability of success were: incorporating cycling with family, friends, going to the beach and BBQ's; women; free bikes and making money

And from this we created three 2013 Australian Cycling Social Media Campaign

1. E-petition to Richard Branson to invite him and his companies to support cycling. Once engaged work with Richard Branson and the Virgin group to develop a women and children's cycling project enabled by social media and utilising existing public/community bike hire/share schemes. Pilot the projects in Noosa, Queensland – because Richard has a house there!
2. Develop a series of self-organised groups and events using Facebook and Twitter and targeted at women of all ages incorporating games and gamification technology. Work in partnership with a well know women's clothing brand e.g. Lorna Jane to provide a loyalty scheme which rewards the women who create, set-up or host and attend the cycling events
3. Identify opportunities to work with technologists and innovators e.g. Google to create new app's, smart phone technology and social media programs to make cycling more mainstream

Now it's time for everyone who participated in the Think Tank or attended APCC (in person or via Twitter!) and as many enthusiastic people as possible to make these three projects happen... Interested?



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