

DOWNSTREAM: Customer transport to / from the store

Description

Customers transport to and from stores refer to retailers implementing actions to reduce the environmental impacts of consumer transportation to stores.

Potential for positive environmental impact

The manner in which customers travel to and from the store can have a large environmental impact. Estimates suggest that car journeys to and from shop generate 20%-50% of CO₂ emissions from food transportation within the UK (Yates, 2008). EU (2009) states that consumers' transportation to stores can have an important impact in terms of climate change if it is calculated as part of retailers direct impacts. However, the effect will be highly dependent on if the store is a city store or an out-of-city store.

Prevalence and future potential

An example of a current retailer initiative in this field is where Carrefour is (a) informing customers about their transport behaviour by marketing less polluting fuels, and (b) participating in extension of the network of bus routes to ensure the stores are well connected through the public transport system. Another example relates to a car-sharing organisation StattAuto in Berlin, members of which are offered a food delivery service – StattKauf - thereby reducing members' personal travel for food shopping (Petersen, 1998). Quite a number of companies provide on-line shopping services claiming that these reduce environmental impacts by optimising food delivery routes and using green vehicles. However, scientific evidence on this is still inconclusive (CSCP, 2007).

In the Nordic survey only few initiatives for reducing consumer transportation to and from shop were identified. COOP Denmark encouraged customers to bike to the supermarket (Coop 2010) and in Finland Suomen lähikauppa Oy is joining the MyPack package delivery system and online shopping items can be picked up at retail outlets. One ABC outlet of the S-group has infrastructure for charging electric cars.

References

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