Environmentally friendly paper supply to municipality buildings: the case of Amsterdam

Total cut of emissions for last mile delivery, frequent goods delivery (such as paper), centralized consolidation centre, software connecting buildings and stakeholders, combination of several innovations in one project

Today, in most of the cities, frequently delivered goods, such as paper, are shipped with regular diesel trucks to the municipality buildings. In order to improve the air quality, to gain experience with sustainable public procurement and to lead with example for future projects (with other products), the municipality of Amsterdam decided to make the delivery of papers to its official buildings more environmentally-friendly.

Before the start of the project, A4-paper was directly shipped to the Amsterdam municipality buildings by the supplier (Canon) with a regular diesel truck. The final last mile deliveries are completed by a sub-contractor using diesel trucks. In order to improve the air quality, to gain experience with sustainable public procurement and to lead with example for future projects (with other products), the municipality of Amsterdam decided to make the delivery of papers to its official buildings more environmentally-friendly. The implementation of this original solution started in March 2014 and will continue until the end of 2015.

With the aim of decreasing the total distance of delivery trips and of decreasing CO2 emissions, the local authorities looked for a solution for delivering A4 paper (for use by the city of Amsterdam) at the 40 municipal and borough buildings in a smarter and more environmentally-friendly way. A transport company would then deliver the paper to the municipality with electric vehicles. This reduces the number of rides through the city and cut the CO2 emissions.

For public actors: improvement of the air quality. All emissions have been lowered (CO2 emissions, NO2 emissions, PM10 emissions) as well as noise emissions.

For private actor (Canon): using a centralized consolidation centre for the storage of paper is almost cost neutral, the small difference in costs is publicly funded. The company saves some money on transportation, because of the reduction in paper deliveries.

The combination of several innovations in one project. A software that is connected to all buildings, as well as to the distribution company and the warehouse, leading to optimized deliveries timing. These aspects were enabled by a good cooperation between public and private stakeholders. An innovative tender also added a further source of success and an interesting process for the municipality.

For public actors: gaining experience with sustainable public procurement and to lead with example for future projects, decreasing the distance of delivery trips and of decreasing CO2 emissions, improve the air quality

For private actors: saving money on transportation. Difference in costs is publicly funded.
The city of Amsterdam cooperated with the paper supplier Canon, which was immediately enthusiastic to be involved. In 2012 this led to a pilot with only one office building. The experience was regarded really positively by both the local authorities and the paper supplier. As a consequence, the city of Amsterdam decided to scale-up and to tender the paper distribution to all municipality buildings. This second experimentation was positive too and new stakeholders (other municipality departments) appreciated this new delivery system.

The experience gained from the case can be used for new tenders, since the A4 paper delivery system implemented by the city of Amsterdam is highly transferable as the solution is only slightly more expensive than regular deliveries and contribute to some of the most common sustainable objectives of cities: the improvement of air quality and a decrease in the number of trips in urban areas. Furthermore, the solution can apply to other frequently-delivered goods such as coffee and can be adapted to other public institutions and private companies as it does not require any pre-existing legal framework nor infrastructure.

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