

CONFERENCE RELATED SEMINARS

- I. Seminars on UBC Communication & Marketing Strategy
- II. Youth Seminar “Your lifestyle: your choice for happy life in our world”
- III. “Success stories of local climate change work in the BSR”

Seminars on UBC Communication & Marketing Strategy

Main results of workshops on UBC's future communication and marketing strategy

About the workshops

At the UBC General Conference in Liepāja, two process workshops on UBC's communication and marketing were held. The seminars were led by strategy process consultants from the communications and branding agency Tendensor AB.

The purpose of the workshops was to form the main input to the operationalisation of the marketing and communication strategy in terms of the wanted, future position, brand image and “unique selling points” of UBC, and to create a common understanding of the strategic direction of the UBC network in terms of marketing/communication. The results of the workshops will together with the analysis results from the project (survey, interviews, desk research) constitute the main input to the final strategy and action plan.

One seminar was held on 4 October, which had around 15 participants, and one was held on 6 October, which had around 25 participants.

Please note that the material below is an aggregate of the discussions, but that is to a large extent still is “raw material” that will be refined, streamlined and assessed against the analysis result in the final part of the strategy process. The new strategy will be presented beginning of 2012.

The participants in the workshops were asked to discuss the following questions in groups of 4-5 persons:

1. What is the future role of UBC?
2. How do you want UBC to be perceived in the future?
3. What should be the main target groups of UBC in the future?
4. How can the communication and marketing of UBC be improved – internally and externally?

Main results

1. What is the future role of UBC?

- Networking
- Bridge of knowledge and experience, network of resources (tools, methods, data, skilled staff members)
- Facilitation of exchange of good practices and mutual learning
- Strong network/platform where members share common vision and common ideas (“inspiration”)
- Benchmarking
- Lobbying / common and respected voice in Brussels, “UBC operates as an ambassador of the member cities at the EU and European levels”
- Connecting people and furthering ideas and projects, free consulting and expertise
- Cooperation with other BSR organisations to create a “BSR Brand” – UBC as leader

2. How do you want UBC to be perceived in the future?

- Effective and efficient, result-oriented
- Strong, respected, to be seen as an important player in the BSR, as a leader for cities in BSR; UBC as a strong brand
- Friendship organisation (“Strong and friendly”)
- “As a little Hansa - XXI Hansa”
- Modern
- Proactive
- Open-minded
- Transparent
- Professional and trustworthy representative of members
- Active

3. What should be the main target groups of UBC in the future?

- Member cities (decision-makers/politicians, civil servants, specialist, local organisations/NGOs in member cities, esp. schools and youth organisations)
- Authorities / decision makers (national/EU)
- EU commission (esp. DG Regio and Interreg)
- Sister organisations / networks in Europe
- Citizens
- Other BSR organisations / networks
- Job creators / investors
- Youth/exchange

4. How can the communication and marketing of UBC be improved – internally and externally?

- Proper selection of contact persons (includes language skills).
- More efficient use of UBC home page (reports from commissions etc.); link to the UBC website on the city’s main webpage (NB! not allowed by all cities according to some people at seminars)
- Databases: Shared contact database for interested staff persons where member cities can update data themselves; best-practice database
- Commitment from politicians and the contact persons
- Easy overview of commissions work, clear content
- More modern communication, use social media in addition to traditional, e.g. Facebook etc.
- Regular exchange between commissions
- Use ambassadors for external communication, member cities as ambassadors for UBC in their city/administration
- Better use of media for external communication

- Speed dating
- Expert exchange
- Creating a pan-Baltic media space

Marcus Andersson at Tendensor
marcus.andersson@tendensor.se

Youth Seminar “Your lifestyle: your choice for happy life in our world”

For the fifth time in parallel with UBC General Conference the youth event was organized by the UBC Commission on Youth Issues. On 4-7 October 2011 60 active participants from 18 cities were discussing lifestyle and other youth issues in Liepāja. The main topic of the Seminar - ”Your Lifestyle: Your Choice for Happy Life in Our World...” - was first of all meant to open minds for many differences and changes faced in everyday life.

Different workshops in format of games, brain storming and discussions touched upon topics of values, lifestyles and subcultures. New knowledge was gained and hopefully also tolerant attitudes. In the last part of the seminar the posters with different messages on the main topics were made by using Loesje method. The posters can be further used: printed out by participants and exhibited.

Is ecological lifestyle connected to the values you cherish? What to do when people around you or your family, do not share the same values? Is social media as form of communication a threat or rather the possibility these days? How to organize an interesting and educational multicultural event? These and many other questions were discussed. The feedback was positive, new knowledge and new contacts and ideas were appreciated by all the participants.

More traditional solutions, like exhibiting posters at schools, youth centres, city halls, bus stops, parks, web-pages were presented. At the same time there were many very innovative ideas, e.g. using messages from posters on big ear rings, condom packages, T-shirts, underwear, on the walls of restaurant toilets or ferries.

Now all those interesting and thoughtful messages from the youth, such as “Motivation under construction” or “Run – for your life” or “Throw smile on me and I will throw one right back to you!” can be expected at least in 18 UBC cities.

The next meeting of the UBC Commission on Youth Issues will be held in Kemi, Finland, in February 2012.

Success stories of local climate change work in the Baltic Sea Region CHAMP Baltic Sea Regional Final conference

The workshop “Success stories of local climate change work in the Baltic Sea Region” on 4 October, that was organized in connection with the XI UBC General Conference, marked the end of the “CHAMP-Local response to climate change” project (2009-2011) in the Baltic Sea Region, led by the UBC Commission on Environment.

During the project life time, the project consortium developed further the tool of integrated management and applied it on climate change. This resulted in training workshops and materials for local authorities to successfully integrate climate change into their strategic work. UBC EnvCom has trained 15 Finnish cities and regions during 2 years and has disseminated the results in the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC General conference was a very good opportunity to present the results and experiences to and discuss with the other UBC member cities.

The workshop started with welcoming words from the project team and Dace Liepnice, representative for the host city Liepāja. Ms Liepnice introduced the audience to climate related work and projects that are going on in the City of Liepāja.

After the introduction the cities were in focus:

After a short background presentation about Cities and climate change, and the importance that cities have in climate policy the floor was given to the cities of Kotka and Lahti. Both took part in the CHAMP trainings and have in general cooperated with UBC EnvCom for many years in different projects.

Timo Permanto from the city of Lahti presented the Environmental and Sustainable Management in the Lahti Region, starting from strategic issues and the Climate Programme 2009-2015 and continuing with concrete measures that are taken in the region to mitigate climate change.

As lessons learnt from the CHAMP project, Mr Permanto mentioned that:

- integration is a precondition for successful climate work
- single different programs do not have weight in decision-making, integrated documents could change that
- key targets and implementing actions relating to climate change need to be integrated to the comprehensive management system of the city
- the importance of targeted communication
- smart public financing for climate actions

Pia Outinen, Project Manager in the City of Kotka, presented the so-called EkoKotka process that is going on since a few years to which CHAMP has contributed with its trainings. Ms Outinen mentioned the benefits they could take from the workshops and the exchange with other colleagues and the need to locally adjust the system to make it happen. She also stressed the importance of communication, as in Kotka the department for communication was and is involved strongly in the whole process.

The second part of the workshop focused on cooperation for climate change work in local authorities.

First in line was an introduction to the work of the Swedish Climate Municipalities' network, which consists of 22 municipalities. The network closely works with its members and supports them concretely in developing and implementing Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

Lotta Mattsson, adviser at the Association of Finnish Local and regional Authorities commented on the above mentioned with the experiences they have made with the Climate Campaign for Finnish Cities and how the cooperation within the campaign is supporting the cities climate work.

As a new form of cooperation Anna Stenberg from the UBC EnvCom presented the plans to establish a Baltic Sea Region Covenant Club, targeted at present and future signatories of the Covenant of Mayors among the UBC member cities. More information will be sent out to all UBC cities during this autumn.

One of the results of the CHAMP project is the establishment of a European Partnership on integrated sustainability management, which was presented by Pekka Salminen, Project Manager for CHAMP. The partnership is formed by so-called national training hubs all over Europe carrying our trainings for local municipalities, based on the outcomes of the CHAMP projects. Through these activities also other cities will have the chance to take part in the workshops.

Conclusions of the workshop:

As the workshop was about success stories, several success factors for climate work could be identified:

- **Build processes instead of projects.** It was noticed that the talk on climate change is moving from projects to processes, time will show if it actually shows in actions as well.
- **Involve politicians in many ways and in all possible phases of the management cycle.** Importance of political commitment was underlined several times.
- **Proper resource planning.** Several cities seem to have a direct link between action plan and city budget nowadays.
- **A broad working team** where the participants and the coordinator have enough time allocated
- **Coordinator:** Committed, Structured, Uses competence in working team, Established in municipality organisation
- **Leadership for Climate Change work must be in the city central administration.** Several reasons: showing the importance, being example, integrating all actions, close to politicians, ..
- **Peer support, networking and initiatives are important for fastening the policy level process in cities.**