

Corporate Sponsorship of Road Safety

Introduction

There are many examples, in developing and transition countries and industrialized ones, of the private sector directly sponsoring road safety initiatives. Four main areas of sponsorship have been identified: (i) road safety education and knowledge transfer; (ii) publicity and awareness campaigns; (iii) enforcement; and (iv) driver training. Whilst these four groups are the main areas of business involvement in sponsorship, it should be noted that this is not an exclusive list. There are examples of companies sponsoring road signs, or reflective markings to enhance the visibility of vulnerable road users and heavy goods vehicles in Central and Eastern Europe. The initiatives invested in to date, however, do not generally include hard engineering measures. Corporate sponsorship of the four main areas of involvement is discussed below.

Road Safety Education/Knowledge Transfer

Petroleum companies have been identified as being a major contributor to child road safety education through a number of initiatives. These include resource material that teaches children about road safety, yet also ties in with the school curriculum and through direct investment in road safety education. For instance, BP developed a teaching resource pack in the UK, 'Living with Traffic', which was produced to help with primary school road safety education. Indeed, BP's own road safety team has been touring schools in the UK for some 30 years teaching road safety to primary school children.

Shell, for their part, have funded road safety education for primary school children in Germany and established the Deutsche Shell Youth Centre in 1950. Initially, participation involved development of fixed site traffic schools. Shell constructed the traffic schools and provided equipment including, eventually, miniature cars. In addition, mobile traffic schools were often provided in the form of equipment that could be taken to, and used in, individual schools. Deutsche Shell Youth Centre provides the equipment, and the State Government or town/rural districts fund the set up and operation costs.

In India, Bahrain Petroleum and Either Motors, a local vehicle manufacturer, sponsored a workshop on Safety in Transporting School Children. This was organised by the Institute of Road Traffic Engineering (IRTE) in co-ordination with the Delhi Police and the Transport Department. Either Motors also sponsored a workshop on safety in transporting school children in rickshaws, again organised through IRTE and the Delhi Traffic Police. This led to the production of policy document to help guide schools and Transport Departments elsewhere in the country. It should be noted that these initiatives have involved a partnership between the private sector, an NGO interested in road safety and a government organisation such as the police or local Transport Department.

Also in many cities in India, there are examples of road signs being funded by the private sector through advertising revenues linked to displays on the signs.

Example of Bangalore

3M, Volvo, Getit Yellow Pages, Coca Cola, Infosys, Koshy Holdings PVY Ltd, Tata, Synergy are all working together with government and NGOs as part of the Road Safety Drive 2000 project led by the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF). Bangalore has involved business partners in road safety for some time, particularly with the cost of introducing road signs. The involvement of business partners has become so acceptable that the BMP has recently issued a new sign manual that includes specification of sponsorship plates on road signs. Prior to the establishment of BATF, sponsorship of road safety schemes included road signs, publicity campaigns and road improvement schemes. BATF has brought in a potentially much larger group of business partners, particularly from the motor and insurance industries, together with a number of NGOs.

In Bahrain, the private sector has been extremely supportive for more than 25 years, with for example, insurance companies paying for the Bahrain Traffic Safety Improvement Study. This included the development of a comprehensive data collection and analysis system.

Road Safety Publicity

Road safety publicity and awareness campaigns can be carried out for specific target groups using various forms of media. Examples address drink/driving, child safety, traffic speeds and seat belt wearing. Opportunities exist for the private sector to assist these publicity campaigns in a number of ways, either by helping fund the main publicity through television, radio, newspapers and magazines, and posters, or by providing the target group with opportunities and assistance to avoid the action being opposed.

In the UK, major publicity campaigns are often initiated by the government, such as the 'don't drink and drive' campaigns during the holiday periods. These campaigns have been backed up by a number of breweries and alcohol distributors. Whilst central government has been the main lead, in some areas, the provision of taxi services and late night buses have been co-financed by the major breweries. A different example was the provision of free non-alcoholic drinks to a designated driver in some bars in the north-east of England during the Christmas period 2000, sponsored by a local brewery.

The Portman Group was established in 1989 by leading drinks manufacturers in the UK. The main aim of the organisation is to tackle social problems associated with alcohol misuse, including drink driving. The Portman Group has produced educational and publicity materials and have a code of practice on the naming, packaging and merchandising of alcoholic drinks. A recent initiative is the designated driver campaign, which is also supported by the major football and supporters organisations in England and Scotland. Elsewhere, alcohol manufacturers such as Diageo, have long established track records of supporting driver education initiatives and road safety improvements seeking to reduce the number of alcohol related driving accidents. Campaigns include the raising of awareness of drink related accidents, for instance through videos on the issue, and advertising. Whilst some of these campaigns are not directly transferable to other

countries, the principle of obtaining campaign funds to highlight areas of concern from manufacturers that either directly or indirectly relate to their products, is clear.

It is important that publicity campaigns target according to areas of specific concern. For example, Shell Canada has provided training to their drivers addressing collisions with wildlife. This area of road safety was highlighted through monitoring accidents and identifying that a number of animal strikes were being recorded. To highlight the problem, Shell has worked with other petroleum companies and has helped develop workshops within the petroleum industry to identify ways and means to reduce animal strikes. One third of Canadian traffic accidents are attributed to animal strikes, and it is hoped that a reduction will lead to lower costs, improved profitability and reliability of equipment.

Enforcement

Direct sponsorship of the police is a relatively uncommon occurrence, due to concern that investment by private companies may be seen as bribery. Examples of businesses and the police working together are known in New Zealand, UK and Ethiopia whilst the potential for sponsorship in Bangladesh has been investigated.

Examples of UK Police Partnerships

Target 2000 Strategy-Leicestershire

After Leicestershire Constabulary developed a Target 200 casualty reduction strategy, Barclays Bank provided a bank manager for 13 months to coordinate the strategy. With the different management skills and a new perspective on the work, his responsibilities were to build partnerships with outside agencies as well as collate accident data, develop action plans, establish working parties and produce management information.

Royal Sun Alliance and Police

Royal and Sun Alliance has worked with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in publicising the National Road Policing Strategy. This partnership began in 1997 with a national campaign to raise awareness of correctly positioning vehicle head restraints. The Central Motorway Police Group research had showed that 95% of car occupants had incorrectly positioned head restraints, setting them for “head rests” rather than safety supports. This has contributed to whiplash, which affects 7 out of 10 people injured on motorways. The campaign’s message was “to get it set right” is believed to have reached 24 million people (ACPO, 1998)

Safer Motorway Driving-Greater Manchester

The Greater Manchester motorway unit and the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund collaborated on a booklet “Helpful Hints for Safer Motorway Driving”.

Lancashire Constabulary

Lancashire Constabulary received sponsorship for in car video cameras from a film production company wanting to produce a “fly on wall” type of programme. They have also received sponsorship from banks and the Automobile Association for equipment for their schools programme. This includes a display unit, a section on motorway dangers, a question section where children identify dangers from the scenarios shown, including a child playing “chicken” on the motorway.

Bikesafe2000-North Yorkshire

A motorcycle safety campaign was undertaken by police working together with the local road safety officer as well as motorcycle interest groups, motorcycle dealers and training providers. The display caravan was sponsored by Honda Motorcycles. Police officers provide assessed rides and give certificates which are sponsored by Lloyds Bowmaker. The motorcycle association has also sponsored the booklet “Planet Bike” which dealers give with purchases of motorcycles.

Norfolk Police

When speeding threatened a small village, the Norfolk Police joined forces with the large company in reducing the speed of its employees. The company provided a Pro-Laser for the police to use at high risk locations and the police visited the company and gave talks on safe driving. In the same region, Lotus Cars are working with the police to reduce employee collisions. Weekend training includes classroom instruction as well as assessed drives.

Source ACPO (2000), Effective Road Policing Volume II

The NZ Police received four compulsory breath testing buses, known as “ACC Stop Buses” under contract from ACC in 1999. Following a favourable operational review of the programme, the ACC has agreed to extend the programme into Waikato and Central Police Districts and to intensify rural operations in the Northland Police District.

In Delhi, Indian vehicle manufacturers Maruti Udyog Ltd have sponsored Interceptor patrol vehicles. These patrol vehicles have played a prominent role in traffic law enforcement and resulted in a considerable increase in revenue from fines - however, it is not possible for the Police to re-invest the revenue for road safety activities. This sponsorship came about following the brokering of a partnership between IRTE, an NGO, the Traffic Police, Delhi State Government and Maruti Udyog. Elsewhere in India, Infosys has donated police vehicles and breathalysers to police in Bangalore. The Police in Bangalore are also involved in a partnership with BATF (private business) and the Federation of Karnataka Lorry Owners Association, a non-government organisation.

Driver Training and Awareness

Driver training is typically a private sector activity, with driving schools or individual instructors operating as businesses. Additional private sector involvement with driver training is possible in a number of other ways, for instance through sponsoring driving competitions, with an emphasis on road safety. There are also examples of driver education schools set up by car manufacturers.

Since 1992 in India, IRTE has been holding road safety competitions for Delhi bus drivers (as well as school children and traffic police constables). Competitions are organised by IRTE, the Delhi Traffic Police and have also been sponsored by a local car manufacturer. Honda established the Driving Safety Promotion Headquarters in 1970 in Japan, with the main aim of "creating a better driving environment"; these driver education centres were also developed in a further six districts. The last to be established was a new Active Safety Training Park at Mote, which opened in 1997. The Training Park offers courses in techniques such as skid control, balance (for motorcyclists) and braking (Hisada, 1998).

Safer driving for truck drivers can be assisted through driver training, the use of information systems and tachographs. In Central and Eastern Europe, these have been developed and sponsored by a number of partners such as private companies (vehicle manufacturers, insurance and petroleum companies), non-governmental organisations (road hauliers' associations, Insurance Unions), the Police and research institutes. Safety programmes have included defensive driver training and highlighting awareness of driver fatigue in accidents. In addition the use and promotion of tachographs in Romania and Hungary is being put forward through a number of demonstration projects.

As well as car and truck driver training, cycle and motorcycle rider training is currently being sponsored in various locations. Shell Malaysia has been involved with the Emergency Motorcycle Unit (EMU) of the Malaysia Red Crescent Society. Volunteers in the EMU attend crashes and are able to get through traffic jams on a motorcycle where it would be impossible for a car or ambulance. In 1997, Shell assisted in training EMU volunteers in defensive riding, through its Road Safety Academy. The Road Safety Academy itself was built in 1991 to conduct safe and defensive driving courses for the company's own staff and contractors. 3M have been involved in Romania in highlighting

the presence of vulnerable road users, such as cyclists, through the provision of retro-reflective safety devices and markings.

References

Hisada, A. (1998), Transportation and Safety in Japan: Active Safety Training Park Motegi, IATSS Research Vol. 22, No. 1.