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STATTAUTO München

Seminar paper

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1 Introduction

Sustainability is getting more and more important in every aspect of our lives. Demand for sustainability is everywhere - ranging from a sustainable nutrition of sustainably harvested food, over a sustainable production of each product or service that we use to a sustainable mobility. This leads to a greater awareness as well as openness to this topic and is more and more addressed in politics, entrepreneurial strategies as well as it is taught in universities, for example. However, mobility takes up a bigger value in the people's minds which seems contradicting to the current sustainable movement due to the negative environmental effects. CarSharing tries to combine the demand for a greater mobility as well as for environmental sustainability at the same time.

On the example of STATTAUTO München (in the following STATTAUTO), an established CarSharing organization in Munich that has long recognized the need for an alternative to the privately owned car, this paper is going to analyze several important aspects of the sustainable marketing mix. This marketing mix reflects the sustainable message that a company is conveying to its customers and on the basis of Belz & Peattie (2009), this theory will first be explained and afterwards applied to the example of STATTAUTO.

Originally starting from the 4 Ps of the classical marketing perspective, Peattie & Belz switched to the philosophy of the 4 Cs. This takes into account that a sustainability marketing mix shall not only focus on selling a product, but also on delivering sustainable solutions. Among others this is achieved by reverse communication from the consumer back to the company, which is nowadays as important as the other way around. Due to the high saturation of the consumer demand as well as the decreasing product life cycle, companies have to find a way to quickly recognize customers' needs and wants. And what better way is there than to simply ask the customer these questions that can be crucial for the company's future success? Out of this development and because customers declared the need for an alternative to the own car, the idea of CarSharing was started and since then managed to form a movement all over the world.

This paper describes the development of CarSharing followed by a more detailed view on STATTAUTO. This company is then analyzed according to the 4 Cs followed by a discussion about their sustainable marketing. This analysis is based on several interviews with employees from the administration sector and potential as well as current customers. Additionally, the homepage and several publications concerning this thematic were examined and this finally lead to an overall picture on the concept of STATTAUTO.

2 CarSharing and STATTAUTO München

Starting with a description of CarSharing in general, the company STATTAUTO is portrayed. In the following, its sustainability marking mix is examined according the four main principles: Customer Solutions, Convenience, Communication and Customer Costs – in short: the four Cs.

2.1 Definition CarSharing

The project that started as a need-based initiative in Zürich, Switzerland, in 1948 has become a successful and world-famous concept for enjoying the benefits of a private car without the costs and responsibilities of owning one (Shaheen, Cohen, & Chung, 2009). Back then, some people from one neighborhood who could not afford to purchase a vehicle founded an organization called “Selbstfahrgemeinschaft” that provided the possibility of sharing a car and, thus, increasing the desired mobility (Wikipedia).

Recent research discovered that most automobiles carry only one person and are, on average, used for less than one hour per day (Shaheen, Sperling, & Wagner, 1998). Accordingly, a car owner pays high fixed costs for the possession itself and the maintenance, while the variable expenses remain relatively low. This leads to the economically irrational decision to use the car more than necessary. In contrast CarSharing organizations compensate for payments and efforts that its participants can avoid. (Stiftung Warentest, 2004)

Besides the financial aspects, we can also identify several ecological effects related to CarSharing which have a positive impact on the climate. With CarSharing fewer vehicles are being produced since one car satisfies mobility needs of several users. The CarSharing’s tariff arrangement enforces the situation-dependent car usage and leads to a reduced use of private cars (Bundesverband CarSharing e.V., 2008).

Although CarSharing has registered an enormous growth of public awareness in the last decades, several companies still failed at entering this market, for example

“Procotip” in France in 1971 or “Witkar” in the Netherlands in 1973 (Shaheen et al., 1998). In 2009, more than one thousand cities all over the world offered CarSharing to private households as well as business partners. The trend continues upward (The Commons: Open Society Sustainability Initiative). With the aim to win new clients, increase customer satisfaction, gain governmental funding as well as profit, CarSharing providers reinforced their collaboration with the government and associate partners and implemented a variety of consumer oriented services. Examples for this development are co-operations between CarSharing companies, taxi companies and public transportation, the possibility to lease a car at attractive conditions or a food and beverage delivery (Shaheen et al., 1998).

CarSharing enjoys the highest popularity in North America and Europe (Shaheen et al., 1998). Especially Germany took the lead with 190.000 CarSharing users in 2010, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. In almost 300 cities and communes 5.000 “public cars” were provided to CarSharing clients. This is an augmentation of 8.7 percent in comparison to the previous year. This leads to the conclusion that the importance of CarSharing is constantly rising.



Figure 1: Development of CarSharing users in Germany (Bundesverband CarSharing e.V., 2011)

2.2 Description STATTAUTO München

The CarSharing organization we are focusing on is STATTAUTO München. It was founded in April 1992 by Jürgen Tesch (Fokerman, Frech, & Bauer, 2012) as one of

the first CarSharing organizations in Germany. Since that time, the development of the supply as well as the demand has considerably risen and the number of members has grown from almost 3.000 in 2000 to nowadays more than 10.000 participants (Frech, Fokerman, & Bauer, 2012) and more than 400 cars (Fokerman et al., 2012) ready to use. The main customers of STATTAUTO are segmented between 30 and 50 years, therefore presenting the pre-digital age.

STATTAUTO is focusing mainly on the inner city of Munich, where about 95 percent of the users live (Fokerman et al., 2012). According to the philosophy of their slogan „Kombinierte Mobilität – eine preisgünstige Alternative zum eigenen Auto”¹ they have a broad car network on 95 stations in and around Munich which can be rented to a well-priced fare (STATTAUTO München). The procedure to actually rent a car is quite simple: The first thing to do is to participate in the obligatory introduction meeting where all the necessary information concerning the procedures and rules is presented, then to sign the participation contract and pay 50 euros admission fee as well as the usual 500 euros of security deposit. Due to this procedure, there is no single contract necessary for each individual use. (Fokerman et al., 2012)

After that, a first trial run is possible. The typical procedure to successfully rent a car is to visit the homepage of STATTAUTO and to login with the personal account. Then it is possible to select a time period as well as to optionally choose a specific station or a specific type of car. The nearest station to a given starting point is being suggested. The user can also choose between nine vehicle categories – ranging from the mini-class to large transporters. Typically, the cars are new with an average age of around 18 months. The cars are generally sold after three years or after a driving distance of 100.000 km. (Frech et al., 2012) This system ensures that the customer can choose a vehicle according to the purpose of the usage. It is necessary to reserve a car before the actual usage – this can be done as described above or by phone. After a successful reservation of an available car for a fixed time period, it is possible to go to the specified station. These are available all day. At the station, it is possible to access the key safe with the personal member card and PIN and to take the key for the reserved car. After that, the planned drive can begin. (Fokerman et al., 2012)

¹ Combined mobility – a low-priced alternative to the privately owned car

The price for the car differs dependent on the different sizes of vehicles. There is a specific price per hour as well as per kilometer, which adds up to the total amount. Additionally, there is also a monthly fee of seven euros. (STATTAUTO München) This combination sets STATTAUTO apart from other CarSharing organizations which often only charge a time fee and ignore the driven kilometers. With the approach of STATTAUTO the focus is to drive less and only for “useful” purposes – this is consistent with the main, ecological principle of CarSharing organizations: Reducing the number of cars on the roads for a sustainable future.

The prices per hour as well as kilometer range from 1,90 euros/h and 0,19 euros/km to 3,70 euros/h and 0,37 euros/km. This might seem a lot, but as STATTAUTO calculates on its website, the costs for a privately owned car are higher – depending on the total usage. In addition to this flexible pricing system, STATTAUTO is carrying among other things the expenses for fuel as well as for insurance. (STATTAUTO München)

However, STATTAUTO participants cannot just use the CarSharing service in Munich but also use and rent vehicles from different CarSharing organizations through their account at STATTAUTO. This so called “cross-usage” is quite useful and possible due to the many co-operations of STATTAUTO. To name just a few of them, the company is connected with Deutsche Bahn, Flinkster as well as the MVV. (Fokerman et al., 2012)

In 2012, as one of the first CarSharing organizations, STATTAUTO was also awarded with the certificate of “Der Blaue Engel”². This initiative is an environmental organization, founded by the German Federal Environment Agency in 1978 (Der blaue Engel) to honor sustainable services and products. Low CO₂-emissions, a non-competitive relationship with public transportation as well as other criteria are most important for the certificate. Due to that, STATTAUTO works closely with the Munich transportation system (MVV) and even offers better pricing conditions to official members of the latter. (STATTAUTO München)

User satisfaction seems to be high as the number of members and users is increasing in average ten percent per year (Figure 2). This is a clear demonstration that not only environmentally fanatic persons are interested in such a service, but also many other

² The Blue Angel

inhabitants of Munich see a need for a decent CarSharing service. STATTAUTO is continuously enlarging the stations network and the development of the system to keep and further improve the service quality.

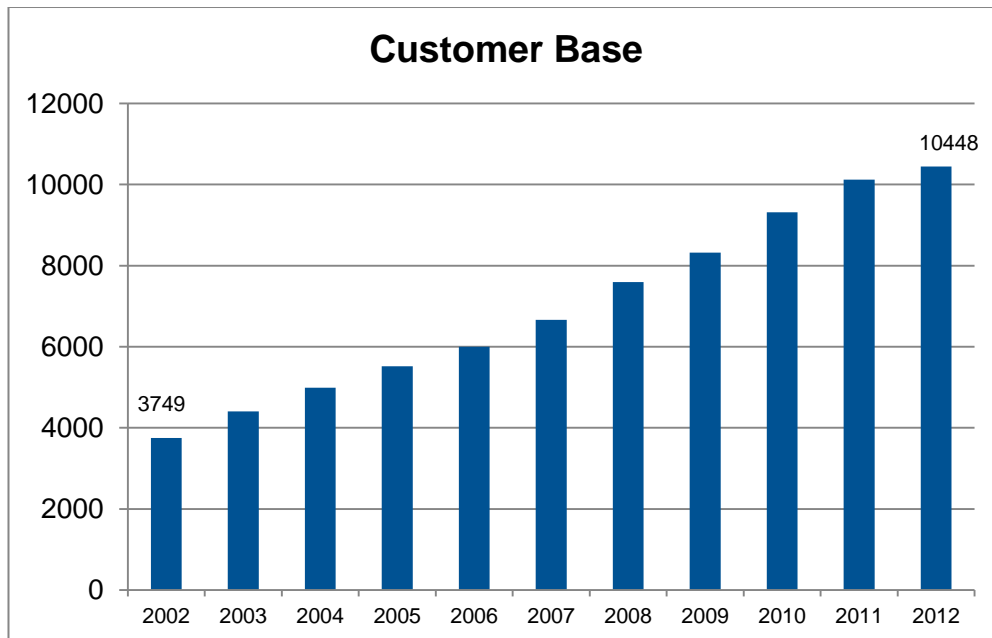


Figure 2: Customer Development (own illustration modified from Frech et al., 2012)

3 Sustainability Marketing Mix

In the past the classical marketing mix approach, first described by (McCarthy, 1960) consisting of the four Ps - product, price, promotion and place. This seemed to be the best way for an entrepreneur to maximize profit. Nowadays this strategy has to face many problems due to the fact that it focuses only on the company's point of view regarding technology, products and purchases but ignores the consumer perspective that involves all aspects that occur during the entire consumption process. Therefore, with the new approach of Belz & Peattie (2009), product is replaced by customer solutions, place by convenience, promotion by communication and finally price by customer costs. In the following, the theoretical approach and the practical application on STATTAUTO are analyzed.

3.1 Customer Solutions

3.1.1 Theory of Customer Solutions

Regarding the sustainability marketing mix, companies have to design customer solutions that include developing sustainable products and services. According to Belz & Peattie (2009) these modern types of offerings pursue the goal to satisfy the consumer. This is achieved through solving problems of everyday living while improving social and environmental performance at the same time and along the whole life-cycle of the product. To enter the market, the good has to exhibit radical as well as incremental improvements regarding customers or social and ecological problems in order to survive against competing offers.

The modern consumer becomes more and more interested in the world behind the product, especially in socially and environmentally responsible manufacturing. Thus entrepreneurs have to consider several elements of cleaner production: establishing cycles to reuse water, recover heat, reuse waste, minimize emissions or use renewable energies (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

The most important aspect for the use of a product is its safety. However there are numerous facts like international supply chains with a minimum of control, price competition or the necessity for cutting costs, that may lead to safety problems. Hence we can conclude some sustainable criteria: dematerialization, efficient as well as clean energy and cultural diversity. Especially for durable products the use stage is the most critical one, particularly if these goods rely on energy or water. Whenever energy prices are relatively low, energy efficiency becomes a low priority. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

To increase more sustainable consumer use solutions, companies should not only provide long-lasting products but also product-related services, e.g. training, consulting, maintenance, disposal, or use-related services such as sharing a product (e.g. CarSharing.) where a person does not have to buy a product but can use it whenever he wants. Another option are result-oriented services when a consumer neither buys nor uses a product, but just enjoys the “fruits” (e.g. washing center) (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

With the growing importance of the internet and online marketplaces like Ebay, people have the possibility to sell their used product without paying disproportional transaction costs. Thus the original purchaser can recoup some expenses while a product’s life-time is prolonged at the same time. The current trend is toward a cradle-to-cradle policy that supports the manufacturing of products that are easy to disassemble at the end of the life cycle or to use materials that are in harmony with natural cycles and systems, e.g. bioplastic packaging (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

3.1.2 Practical approach of Customer Solutions

As already mentioned, a sustainable innovative product pursues the goal to satisfy the customer by solving problems of everyday living while taking environmental and social aspects into consideration at the same time. In chapter 2.2 (Description STATTAUTO München) we described how STATTAUTO enables its clients to use public cars at any time for an individually chosen purpose and time period.

We will now focus on the safety aspects that appear to be most important during the use phase of a customer solution, namely STATTAUTO. Each of the 400 cars is

maintained every two weeks by a trained worker. The respective person has to survey accurately a checklist that specifies all details that have to be inspected, including the tread depth and air pressure of tires, brake fluid and motor oil (Obermeier, 2007). This surveillance is also prescribed by the manufacturer. Furthermore, in order to provide the best available technology and to minimize accident risk, STATTAUTO replaces its cars after three years or 100.000 driven kilometers. Thus, both customer safety and the ecological impact can be retained on a beneficial level.

As described above, STATTAUTO is certified with “Der Blaue Engel”. The holder of this certificate has to meet both customer-oriented and ecological criteria. As far as the consumer comfort is concerned, the CarSharing organization is obliged to place car stations local and decentralized and easily accessible at any time. Next, the CarSharing company should implement a tariff system that inspires to drive less. According to “Der Blaue Engel”, this is achieved by introducing a payment structure containing a fee for both duration and the number of actually driven kilometers (Glotz-Richter, Loose, & Nobis, 2007), as it is done by STATTAUTO. With respect to the environmental point of view, all vehicles have to be marked with a “grüne Plakette”³ and CO₂-emissions must not exceed a value of 230 g/km by every single car. Moreover, the average critical value for the whole car fleet may add up to a maximum of 130 g/km (Vergabegrundlage für Umweltzeichen, 2010). Above all, the service has to facilitate people not to have to own a car (Der blaue Engel).

These days, consumers not only sympathize with ecological ideas but are also interested in the social background of an enterprise. Regarding this, STATTAUTO can exhibit a great past as well as present. The organization itself was founded out of a project for social welfare (Fokerman et al., 2012) and has continued to support professional as well as social integration projects ever since. Already in the 1990s, STATTAUTO started to insert time-limited job creation measures for permanently unemployed people in need in the sectors car pool management, vehicle care and administration (STATTAUTO München). Since then, STATTAUTO has established its business to help socially excluded people, e.g. migrants, drug addicts and former prisoners to reintegrate into society (Obermeier, 2007). This commitment to the

³ “green sticker”

described social compatibility as well as to ecological and economic sustainability characterizes STATTAUTO as a social integration enterprise.

As already explained, a sustainable product as such does not suffice to create and maintain a durable customer relationship anymore. Hence, the entrepreneur has to provide additional offers like product-related services. Opting for a membership of STATTAUTO, potential customers have to participate at an introduction meeting where they receive first information, like a user manual, pricing lists, general terms and conditions, a catalogue of parking stations and car models etc. STATTAUTO also equips its customers with various accessories for the vehicles, including roof luggage racks, bicycle carriers, snow chains or child safety seats. Clients may decide between fetching those accessories themselves or ordering the complete mounting for an additional fee. Besides, STATTAUTO takes charge among others of the cleaning, taxes. Moreover, the company supplies the costs for the Technical Inspection Agency (TÜV) and repairing charges. Trips to foreign countries present no obstacle, as long as the driver carries all necessary documents with him. Another interesting aspect is that fuel costs are already included in the usage fee. Thus users can settle the account for petrol, motor oil or car-wash without any problems at any UTA gas station with a special UTA full service card, which is arranged in the glove box.

Another particularity about STATTAUTO is the possibility to join the organization not as a single person but also in groups, e.g. families, or as companies that need cars for their employees. In these cases STATTAUTO offers favorable conditions like a cheaper admission fee, deposit and monthly charge. Thus, this solution enables everyone to choose between different contracts and to benefit from the individual terms.

Due to the fact that STATTAUTO is a local organization, it maintains a close collaboration with other CarSharing providers in around 200 cities in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. STATTAUTO differentiates between an automated and non-automated cross-usage. In the first case, the external CarSharing service operates on the same IT platform, namely a Deutsche Bahn server. This permits clients to make reservations on the internet on their own. If the cross-usage is not automated, participants have to make an enquiry via STATTAUTO, which handles the further steps. However, when taking advantage of this service, customers have to

note that STATTAUTO prices do not apply anymore. Instead, they have to anticipate the tariff of the partner CarSharing organization.

3.2 Convenience

3.2.1 Theory of Convenience

Convenience as part of the sustainability marketing mix goes far beyond place, which only refers to the point of exchange, i.e. where the supplier gives the good away to customers. As a consequence, in traditional marketing, marketers focused on places to sell their products rather than delivering convenience in every phase of the consumption process. Belz & Peattie (2009) distinguish between convenience in purchase, in use and in post-use. Among many branches suppliers hardly cared about convenience in use and post-use of their products. Today the issue is to deliver convenience coinciding with sustainability.

Moreover, the descending of place as the ultimate factor in marketing goes hand in hand with the rise of electronic commerce. Nowadays, most products can be purchased full-time in online stores and are directly delivered to costumers' homes. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

A convenient product or service is “appropriate in time and place [...] removes discomfort or trouble and promotes ease [and] it is well suited to one's wants” (Belz & Peattie, 2009, p. 228). Furthermore, “convenience is a relative concept, and is achieved by offering products and services that are quicker and easier to find out about, access, purchase, consume and dispose” (Belz & Peattie, 2009, p. 228).

Convenience in purchase means that a product has to be accessible. Nobody buys a more sustainable product if it is not reachable in an adequate distance. Here the factor place still has some relevance to the issue of convenience. But in sustainability marketing there are also other ways of purchasing goods and services than only stores. Mainly this depends on the nature of the product or service.

Some further aspects of convenience described by Belz & Peattie (2009) are augmented benefits. These are achieved by information, credit or choice editing. That is to say, the act of purchasing a product gets more convenient when customers are provided with better information about usage, benefits and sustainability issues

etc. in comparison to competitors. Some credit programs can help to achieve convenience, too.

The tool of choice editing offers a win-win-situation for customers and companies to achieve a combination of convenience and sustainability: If suppliers provide only sustainable products, it helps customers conveniently not to have to bother about information research concerning products and especially about their sustainability issues. Companies also have the opportunity to reduce complexity of their own processes by choice editing.

Convenience in use highly depends on the examined product or service. Often, convenience and sustainability bring up a kind of trade-off - for example concerning individuals' satisfaction of transportation needs. To go everywhere by bike and train would be possible for most Germans, at least for city dwellers. But the truth is, that there are still 510 cars per 1000 persons in Germany (The World Bank). It seems simply more convenient to drive a privately owned car everywhere and every time.

Convenience in post-use bears some advantages for companies and costumers. The waste of packaging as well as used up products of many kinds can contain the commodities for future products. Especially in times of rising costs for commodities, it is a good idea to reuse these for both producers and society. Deriving from resource conservation aspects, even consumers not concerned about environmental issues show interest in recycling (Belz & Peattie, 2009). To make post-use more sustainable, a high recycling rate of used products must be achieved. From the point of view of convenience, recycling processes, involving customers' efforts, must be as low as possible, to reach the utmost part of people. In several countries many of these problems are being solved (or tried to solve) by public regulation. (Belz & Peattie 2009)

3.2.2 Practical approach of Convenience

Convenience deriving from CarSharing is always a question of alternatives. Comparing CarSharing to a privately owned car, different outcomes are reached than comparing it to public transport or going by bicycle. For example a person could regard parking at a reserved CarSharing-station more convenient than searching for a parking spot with an owned car. However, the same person could consider it as an inconvenience of CarSharing to have to walk ten minutes to the next car station.

The same bias is true for a comparison of CarSharing to going by bike or public transport. Having to pass the inner city to go to work definitely will not promote any sort of car. But to visit one's grandmother in the suburbs, driving a car will be preferred to traveling with suburban trains.

These biases cannot be solved at all. Thinking about convenience in any mobility solution soon leads to thinking about a mix of several solutions which are convenient to an individual only in combination. Here CarSharing can play a greater role (Petersen, 2003).

It is not the purpose of this paper to answer these kinds of quasi-philosophical questions in detail, but to bring light to the sustainability marketing mix of STATTAUTO. Therefore, in the following the focus lies on the conveniences and inconveniences discovered while investigating this firm.

As mentioned before, convenience can be divided in convenience in purchase, use and post use. In the case of STATTAUTO, however, as with every CarSharing service, convenience in purchase and convenience in use rather go hand in hand. Of course, the initial inscription for a membership at STATTAUTO takes time to visit the introduction meeting. But in this meeting everything is described face-to-face. That might help especially older people to get used to CarSharing. Besides, it is necessary to decide in favor of the best fitting CarSharing service to one's mobility needs. Compared to the great deal of work coinciding with purchasing a new car, this is a rather small effort.

The use and maintenance of CarSharing are even more convenient than those of a privately owned car. Everything, from changing tires over maintaining the car electronic devices to bringing it to the garage for TÜV etc. is administrated by STATTAUTO.

In contrary to some newer CarSharing companies, STATTAUTO cars are usually parked in their fixed places. That bares the advantage of not having to search for the booked car as well as not having any problem in finding parking space when bringing back the vehicle. With some other CarSharing companies, where there are (partly) defined districts in town, where it is possible to pick up and leave the car (e.g Flinkster in Munich), this might be a problem. Especially in the city districts of

Munich, where parking is always rare, the concept of reserved parking spots for STATTAUTO is superior. (Fokerman et al., 2012)

To have the opportunity to use exactly the car for a specific need, no matter if running smaller errands or an extended holiday trip is planned, is a strong advantage of CarSharing at least at STATTAUTO. From a sustainability marketing point of view this is important as well, as people tend to purchase a privately owned car mainly depending on their anticipated maximum need (Der blaue Engel). By using CarSharing, customers are enabled to choose the best fitting category for a particular need.

STATTAUTO users have to book cars in advance. That is to say, it is not possible to just pick up a car in the streets, but reservation is necessary. This is often perceived as a shortcoming, when one just wants to drive completely spontaneously. But only at times of heavy usage (e.g. a transporter on Saturday) the odds to get the requested car just five minutes before start are relatively small. STATTAUTO participants, however, are used to plan their journeys days in advance and therefore this is not a shortcoming to them at all. Besides, at some other CarSharing services the possibility to book cars in advance does not go without saying. Thus, compared to those, the booking system is even an advantage.

As “Der Blaue Engel” prescribes it is also possible to book a car around the clock and pick it up at any desired time. Furthermore, this can be done even many years in advance and for any wished timeframe.

Unfortunately, STATTAUTO’s booking website is not as fancy as these of some competitors in Munich and has not been optimized for smartphones yet. Furthermore there are no Apps for mobile devices. That also may detain spontaneous users, for it is recommended to book a requested service at home via a desktop computer. However, at STATTAUTO it is possible to book a car via telephone or even at the office, as well. That is something quite unusual for many CarSharing services. Especially for older people and those who do not like to use computers. This is a significant advantage. It is also possible to cancel a booking. If the service is cancelled in sufficient advance, cancellation comes for free. If not or if the car is brought back to the station earlier than the originally booked timeframe, only one third of the price is to pay back. This is quite important since users have to anticipate

delays when booking a car, because there are no buffers between the single idle periods and a fee is claimed for any delayed delivery.

Notwithstanding which channel is used to book a desired car, the booking system helps to choose the best solution. If a car of the preferred category is not available at the chosen station and time, the system suggests another time period. For example it could be convenient to delay a trip about by one hour, to get the favored car for the whole weekend. Of course, the booking system names cars of other stations as well. But in case of booking at those, users usually have to take public transport to get to the desired car. That can be perceived as inconvenient, depending on the purpose of one's need for a car.

The picking up of the booked car is usually easy, for there are only fixed stations where the car is to find, as described above. As soon as one reaches the station either a safe or, at smaller stations, the car is opened using the membership card. The ignition key is to find inside.

After the ride, the car is brought back to its station. There is no possibility to leave a STATTAUTO car elsewhere. A short report is to fill in documenting the used time and the amount of driven kilometers. Without the report no calculation of costs would be possible. Here users are responsible for the functioning of the system, which would not work otherwise. At the end, it is most important to put back the car key in its save properly.

STATTAUTO achieves convenience by choice editing for their customers by using mainly two institutions: the ecolabel "Der Blaue Engel" and the membership in the bcs (Bundesverband CarSharing e.V.). As described in 3.1, "Der Blaue Engel" delivers strict rules to reduce CO₂-emissions compared to the life cycle of a privately owned car. To achieve those CO₂-emission criteria, the bcs provides a helping hand by conveying efficient cars at special conditions to members. In the end of the day, STATTAUTO users can be sure to use eco-efficient cars, without having to be experts in cars' life cycle assessments.

Convenience in post-use is depending on the service's conditions to quit. In the case of STATTAUTO the period of notice refers to 6 weeks and not relates to any further monetary costs.

3.3 Communication

3.3.1 Theory of Communication

Conventional marketing consists of print advertising, sales promotion or other channels. However, suppliers need effective marketing to present sustainable issues to consumers to integrate these ideas into their lifestyles and needs. Nowadays, customers are more reluctant to change their way of life or invest more into something other than the typical product. The problem of one-way-communication is that it is very inflexible without any direct means of reply for consumers themselves. In this regard, the two-way communication from the seller to the consumer and back again is better. For this it is important to actively listen to and learn from the other party. Through this the conventional communication to the consumer is changed into a communication with the consumer. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

There are different communication strategies which set different objectives, for example generating awareness or the persuasion of the consumers. By communicating with the consumers they are motivated to respond to the company's appeals. There are three different types of appeals: rational appeals, for example addressing the economic interest in doing something; emotional appeals that try to establish an emotional connection between consumer and product; as well as moral appeals that connect the sense of what is a correct marketing message. The right kind of appeal has to be selected according to the proposed marketing strategy and target group. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

However, fear appeals or similar demotivating messages mostly have a negative effect on communication with the customer and should be avoided. That is one of the main problems of sustainable products: the criticism of e.g. consumers' customs that comes along with naming environmental issues. However, in a sustainability marketing strategy, consumers should not be judged or made responsible for their impact on these issues. Instead, the positive aspects and challenges have to be addressed - especially at the topic of sustainability, it is necessary to make something personally relevant or to present economic benefits as well as the positive effect on one's self-image. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

Communication is important in every step of the way which can be divided into the four phases: pre-purchase, purchase, use and post-use. Every stage covers different goals. During the pre-purchase stage the most important target is to attract attention and create awareness. For the purchase stage, it is important to persuade consumers to influence them into buying the product or the service. Conventional marketing would not do too much during the use stage except to build brand loyalty. However, sustainability marketing wants consumers to change their behavior and has therefore a more important role. The post-use stage plays a very important role for sustainability marketing as it concerns the recycling and disposal of a product. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

With increasing importance of sustainability, many companies are using environmental awareness to get consumers to pay for something that is apparently better for the environment. As these environmental or sustainable claims are often exaggerated, the trust and willingness of consumers to pay more for such promises is decreasing. Companies are not trusted to make correct statements anymore but are rather suspected to engage in “Greenwashing”. At least seven so called “Sins of Greenwashing” exist and are more often than not used in marketing campaigns. The most common ones are the hidden trade-off, vagueness or no proof. Due to these either completely false or at least misleading statements, objective third parties like certifiers are being used to fill the position to objectively evaluate the sustainability performance or other marketing messages. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

During the marketing campaign products are advertised as good as possible. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to communicate the sustainability of a product or service when the rest of the company is presenting itself in the reverse direction. This can be due to the production process, the packaging or even the selling channels. The corporate values have to be consistent in order to be convincing. The sustainability philosophy needs to be adapted and reflected in the corporate social responsibility. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

3.3.2 Practical approach of Communication

According to interviews with STATTAUTO employees, it seems that one specialty of STATTAUTO is its lack of conventional promotion. They do not run any

advertisements, do not print any posters and are hardly actively trying to attract new customers. Even the signs on the cars themselves – by some CarSharing organizations used as additional advertisement – are relatively small and hardly an eye-catcher. However, STATTAUTO has a steadily increasing number of their members (see figure 2). But how do they accomplish that without any promotion?

Even though STATTAUTO is not doing any promotion, it is not true that it is not communicating with its customers. The main example for that is the obligatory introduction meeting prior to the signing of the contract. (STATTAUTO München) Employees of STATTAUTO explain the basic principles within one hour – amongst other things the different car-categories that can be booked (STATTAUTO München), the broad station system placed all over Munich or the pay and cancelling rules. One main focus is on the actual renting process, as that is not completely self-explanatory – especially for users that are not that internet affine. During all that time in the introduction meeting, the prospective customers have the possibility to ask questions regarding all services that STATTAUTO is providing. With that approach, most potential errors and problems can be avoided. (Fokerman et al., 2012)

However, the main communication approach of STATTAUTO with its customers is through the possibility to reach a competent employee over the phone during the working hours or to just visit the office located in central Munich. This accessibility of personal contacts, no matter if during the introduction meeting, per telephone or face-to-face in the office is one major competitive advantage that STATTAUTO is focusing on. (Fokerman et al., 2012)

Additionally, STATTAUTO has a very good online representation. It uses link placements on the homepages of several cooperating companies, for example “Der blaue Engel” (Der blaue Engel) or the MVV (Münchner Verkehrs- und Tarifverbund (MVV)). Consequently, the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of STATTAUTO is quite high and very valuable due to the top placement in the list of the search results. For example the search entry “CarSharing München” leads to STATTAUTO München as its first result⁴ in google’s unpaid section.

⁴ Between the duration of this paper (June/July 2012)

STATTAUTO uses different kinds of marketing messages. It refers to all three types of appeals. In its flyer STATTAUTO especially promotes the environmental advantages of CarSharing. According to the “Klimaschutzbroschüre” (Bundesverband CarSharing e.V., 2008) and the flyer of STATTAUTO, for every newly joining member the number of privately owned cars gets in average reduced by five and five further cars are not bought. This, the overall goal of reducing the number of cars and the potential benefit of reducing the emissions as well as the call for a more efficient use of cars, are clearly moral appeals to the customer.

STATTAUTO is making use of rational appeals as well, in particular using financial appeals. This can easily be seen in the flyer, where the driving costs at STATTAUTO are compared with the total costs of a privately owned car. They demonstrate the higher costs of the latter, due to the high amount of fixed costs. Customers get presented the main advantages of CarSharing: not having to acquire the car as well as not having to pay for insurance, repairs or fuel. With this information, STATTAUTO links the potential cost savings by using CarSharing with the benefit for the environment due to a more efficient use of cars and therefore a reduction of emissions.

Finally, there are emotional appeals applied. These are of high value to STATTAUTO as this company has always had its focus on the social aspect (Fokerman et al., 2012). However, the way it promotes its social orientation is more subtle than it might be expected. The websites' subcategory “Sozialer Betrieb”⁵ (STATTAUTO München) as well as the introduction meeting are the company's only direct references to its focus on social responsibility and sustainability. By being part of this organization, the consumers support this extension of sustainability from the environmental to the social welfare context and are therefore emotionally involved with the company.

Users pass through the different phases of the consumption process and in each of these stages various communication channels are used. In the pre-purchase phase, consumers have the possibility to find information about STATTAUTO and its conditions and prizes in the Internet, especially on the official website. Another possibility would be to visit the weekly introduction meeting and get in personal

⁵ Social company

contact with the company. This can also be done during the week by visiting the office or by contacting the employees over the phone. There are several articles about STATTAUTO in particular and CarSharing services in general to be found online, as well as for example the rating of Stiftung Warentest that took place in 2004 and awarded STATTAUTO the second place. (Stiftung Warentest, 2004)

During the purchase phase, there is no real advertisement or any possibility for a trial run. Mostly, customers are acquired through word-of-mouth or by comparing several CarSharing providers and are therefore self-motivated. Again, the introduction meeting that must be attended as well as the personal contact offer information and the possibility to encourage purchase or in this case entering membership.

STATTAUTO communicates with its customers during the use phase mainly through the accessibility over the phone or face-to-face in the office. Additionally, the welcome homepage of STATTAUTO shows recent facts, changes or news that might be important to the clients. For example, these are being informed about the latest change in law regarding reflective vests or snow chains. There are also some brochures about efficient and sustainable driving that can be picked up in the office.

At the moment, the post-use communication with customers is concentrating on the personal contact between employees and customers. This relationship lasts through the whole customer lifetime and is being fostered rather intuitively and informal by the employees. (Fokerman et al., 2012) In the moment when customers quit STATTAUTO, they have the possibility to explain the reason for their decision.

To conclude, STATTAUTO communicates with its customers in an extraordinary way without using any direct, conventional promotion. Instead of focusing its energy on acquiring new customers, STATTAUTO rather communicates with the already existing ones. The corporate communication stands in line with the communication concerning the product CarSharing. This makes sense as the main goal of STATTAUTO is to reduce the number of cars on the streets. This mentality is present in the whole corporate strategy as the company not only focuses its action on CarSharing but also implements its work for the socially deprived in the social integration enterprise.

3.4 Customer Costs

3.4.1 Theory of Customer Costs

By conventional marketing the costs of a product or service are only seen in its price. In sustainability marketing theory customer costs consist of price, purchase costs, use costs, and post-use costs (Belz & Peattie, 2009). Price in sustainability marketing is just the amount of money customers have to pay to the supplier to acquire a good, as it was presented in former marketing theories.

To make a difference, sustainability marketing adds the purchase costs consisting of search costs, information costs and transportation costs to compute the total costs of acquisition. Belz & Peattie (2009) state that especially search and information costs are higher for new than for subsequently bought products. This is especially derived from the fact that consumers have to face several risks when using new products or services⁶. The total of price and purchase costs equals the acquisition costs.

The holistic approach of customer costs not only takes into account the costs of acquiring goods but also the costs of using a product or service. Particularly, this is important for new sustainability innovations. In the case of most products energy or maintenance costs are the most important use costs. Moreover, a great deal of switching costs derives from using new sustainable goods. The latter are high for new innovations because customers have to learn to use them correctly or even to adjust their behavior. (Belz & Peattie, 2009)

Post-use costs cover all efforts to take and money to spend to get rid of a product, when consumers do not need or use it anymore. With some products a reselling price can reduce or even up post-use costs. Important non-monetary post-use costs are time and learning costs, especially in case of recycling household waste.

3.4.2 Practical approach of Customer Costs

One part of the acquisition costs is the price. Usually CarSharing charges no high price for acquiring membership. This is also true for STATTAUTO considering that

⁶ Financial risk, performance risk, physical risk, time risk, social risk, psychological risk Belz and Peattie (2009)

the admission fee is 50 euros plus 500 euros security deposit, which is paid back at the end of the membership. Moreover, several discounts are possible for participant communities or companies.

The second part of acquisition costs are the purchase costs. These can be higher for new unfamiliar products or services due to unknown risks. But especially for individual mobility the opposite is true. Comparing a privately owned car to a CarSharing-“mobilution”⁷ in order to have access to individual mobility, the transaction costs and the financial risk coinciding with buying a privately owned car are much higher. Even if an individual is familiar with using a private car for several decades, the transaction costs like search and information costs for a new car are normally high. Against this, search and information efforts for CarSharing are only high as long as most people are not accustomed to use it. Although, financial risks are higher with a private car, it is not decided for every individual whether performance, physical, social and psychological risks of CarSharing are acceptable. These highly depend on specific individual mobility needs, social background or one’s relationship to owning a car. The list of feared risks by potential users of CarSharing is endless: e.g. individuals seeing their car as a status symbol will not be able to cope with not owning a car. Others could fear that their friends will not accept the decision to abolish the private car.

Belz & Peattie (2009) state that use costs are usually underestimated, even when purchasing durable products. That is particularly true for using cars. On the one hand the private car has to be refueled, needs insurance, maintenance and one has to provide for parking oneself. On the other hand, CarSharing services often charge a monthly fee which is usually quite small in comparison to usual maintenance costs of an owned car. STATTAUTO charges 7 euros per month. These are the total fixed costs coming up with this service. Further payments and efforts only incur when actually using a car. At STATTAUTO there is a fee on distance, i.e. on driven kilometers, as well as on time, i.e. hours or days the car was used.

⁷ according to Petersen (2003): “Mobilution” was a protected trademark by choice mobilitätsproviding GmbH until 2008/12/31 (<http://www.tmb.de/de/marke/Mobilution,DE39874326.html>), and combines the terms “mobility” and “solution” in one word. It means that CarSharing is used in combination with other mobility solutions, to satisfy individual mobility needs.

The problem about costs – for customers as well as sustainability entrepreneurs in the field of CarSharing – is to calculate the best of all solutions. Using an owned car means having to afford a specific amount of money to purchase the car, to maintain it and to administrate everything else that comes up with owning a car. But for most people this is a quite convenient solution. They just have a car, pay for it and use it without regarding alternatives. In contrary, using CarSharing instead of owning a car saves a lot of money and effort on first sight. But a closer look shows that a lot of the savings come from driving less. The average user of STATTAUTO drives 2.500 km per year with CarSharing instead of 11.300 km per year with a private car (Münchner Verkehrs- und Tarifverbund GmbH (MVV), 2003). In order to clarify the potential savings STATTAUTO provides some calculation examples as well as a price calculator on the internet.

Post-use costs of CarSharing can be described more easily. An owned car is usually sold. That can include certain further transaction costs, but usually the selling price is a good financial assistance for buying a new car. With the possibility of quitting by only one call or letter to the provider, the transaction costs of ending CarSharing are quite low. But clients do not receive any cash except for the return of the security deposit.

Taking all described costs and benefits into account, potential customers have to decide for themselves, whether STATTAUTO fits to their own needs and satisfies the desire for mobility.

4 Discussion

The original concept of CarSharing means - or meant - to literally share cars. That is to say, there are cars in a garage or parked close to users' homes or offices. Every registered participant can book and use these with the restriction to bring them back to their station after usage. That idea is also pursued by STATTAUTO. However, there are newer concepts in the market that allow to pick up a car anywhere (e.g. only limited by town districts or city limits) and leave it again when the need for it has passed (e.g. in Munich DriveNow by BMW DriveNow).

Another aspect that might be seen as a disadvantage of STATTAUTO in comparison to its recent competitors, e.g. Flinkster (Flinkster), is the missing possibility to test the CarSharing principle before becoming a member. Indeed, the basic aim of CarSharing, namely driving a car, does not involve a radical innovation what reduces the necessity for a test drive. But nevertheless an offering for testing the service for a particular period of time might create more convenience for potential clients.

Another issue that might be perceived as inconvenient is that STATTAUTO does not provide a smartphone app for making a spontaneous reservation, yet. Especially today, in the 21st century, the era of increasing mobilutions, this approach should maybe be reconsidered due to the growing impact of the internet and just-in-time services. Besides, both an app integration and a stronger emphasis on online marketing could reach particularly the customers STATTAUTO is still missing – the young generation. As this is mostly more internet affine than older people, the SEO and link placement addresses directly this clientele.

However, this backwardness in technology is only one side of the coin. On the other, we should have a closer look on the environmental aspects. If the user cannot jump spontaneously in the car, he is inspired to plan his trip in advance and to take the vehicle only when it is really inevitable. Additionally, due to this necessity to plan and organize the use of a car, the possibility to use a different mobility service takes up a higher priority than it would when owning a car. For example this can mean that

a person will rather take the bicycle or public transport for a short distance than a car that he has to book and pick up first.

This environmentally funded approach of reducing the time spent on the street coincides with the economic goal of any CarSharing company for a reduction of fuel expenses and thus a cost efficient way of driving. For this reason and also with the intent not to promote a wrong incentive to its clients, STATTAUTO combines the price per hour with a fee for the driven distance (STATTAUTO München). Through that measure, it tries to avoid the customer's focus on being as fast as possible but instead aims for a thought-through and efficient driving pattern

STATTAUTO claims that users of CarSharing save a lot of money. On the one hand these savings derive as just described from driving less, on the other hand from lower fixed costs. To maintain individual mobility, however, further payments and efforts are necessary: CarSharing participants pay more in the end for public transport, railway-tickets and taxi services. Moreover, non-monetary efforts may occur like getting wet when having to cycle on rainy days. Some learning costs arise to get accustomed to make use of all mobility offers and possibilities in the most efficient and convenient combination. In the end, individuals have to calculate the overall costs to satisfy their mobility needs on their own and continuously. Sustainability entrepreneurs and marketers can help to do so (e.g. STATTAUTO provides some calculation examples as well as a price calculator on the internet), but they cannot take the individual effort of maximizing one's own utility. Sustainability marketing – especially of CarSharing companies – has to help potential customers to realize this irrationality not only for the costumers' but also for their own sake.

Additionally, as described before, possessors of a MVV subscription receive better price conditions at STATTAUTO. Besides, MVV relegates its clients to STATTAUTO, who seek to satisfy their car demand (Münchner Verkehrsvereinigung (MVV)). As a consequence, city dwellers are encouraged to use public transport (MVV) for satisfying their daily mobility needs and if necessary to use CarSharing instead of an owned car. These kinds of customers save money in several ways: they spend less by using public transport or even cycling and walking. They save money due to better price conditions at STATTAUTO and they save an owned car's fixed costs. In this case, using CarSharing cars is a kind of mobility insurance that bails out costumers, if particular transportation needs cannot be

fulfilled by other means than car traffic (UITP). Thus, CarSharing does not substitute private cars. It rather helps people to drive less by supporting a new individual mobility mix. Financial incentives arise, more or less, due to changing this mix – depending on individual mobility claims. Accordingly, CarSharing not only saves money for people driving less than 10.000 km per year (Stiftung Warentest, 2004) now, but even for people having the intention and possibility to change their mobility habits.

5 Conclusion

During the time we spent on research or in direct contact with STATTAUTO, we were surprised of the dimension and variety of the CarSharing movement. From the beginning of CarSharing with the „Selbstfahrgemeinschaft“ in Switzerland, an astonishing development has taken place. Especially in the last few years, the upward trend to use CarSharing has rapidly increased. Finally, CarSharing is integrated in modern life and available in almost 300 German cities.

The importance of ecological and social awareness also plays a big role in consumers' minds today. Regarding this, the aim of our seminar paper was to examine the theory of the sustainability marketing mix as well as its practical application respecting the process structure and strategy of STATTAUTO. Our findings suggest that the approach of the sustainability marketing mix by Belz & Pettie (2009) is not applicable at STATTAUTO. Nevertheless, some specific points of the 4 Cs are applied intuitively.

Concerning customer solution STATTAUTO provides clients to take advantage of driving a car without owning it. This refers to use-related services according to Belz & Peattie (2009). Furthermore, the offer of renting car accessory can be characterized as product-related services. Consequently, convenience is delivered to busy city dwellers who want to avoid all the efforts related to possessing a car. Moreover, as payments are only related to the actual use customer costs of CarSharing are also appealing compared to a private vehicle even for these who cannot afford one. All these benefits are not communicated quite actively in the market to acquire new costumers. But existing customers profit from the very personal and direct face-to-face service.

The main principles STATTAUTO is based on are reliability and responsibility. A lot depends on the ability to plan one's journeys and to stick to a given plan. In order to increase the ecological impact as well as the economic aspects STATTAUTO pursues the objective to convince its clients of an efficient driving pattern. For a long-term success of a company, the financial success cannot be ignored. And herein

lays the biggest problem in our opinion: How is it possible to achieve both environmental and economic goals at the same time? In some extent, STATTAUTO already succeeded in bringing these two aspects together. It will be interesting how this concept will develop due to recent years' ascending competition.

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München, den 12. Juli 2012

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