

ShowCase

Road Crew

Topic:

Drink driving

Organisation:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Location:

Wisconsin (USA)

Dates:

2000 to ongoing

Budget:

US\$870,000 (2000 to 2007)

Website:

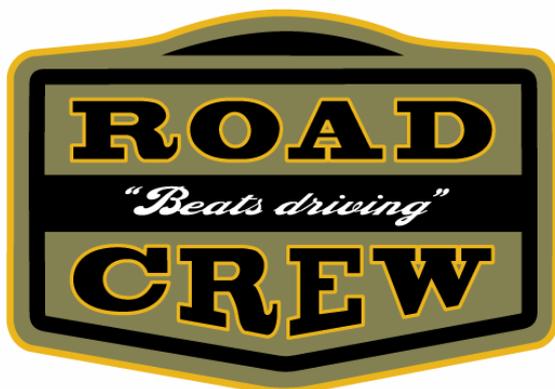
www.roadcrewonline.org

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Overview

Based in Wisconsin, USA, Road Crew was one of five projects funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seeking a five per cent reduction in alcohol-related crashes in the pilot communities. Pioneered in several rural Wisconsin counties, it represents an innovative approach to drink driving.

Before drinkers go out for the evening, they arrange a ride with Road Crew. Vehicles pick up customers at their home, drive them around from bar to bar, and then deliver them home safely at the end of the night. Rather than asking people not to drink or not to drive, Road Crew provides a service solution, which keeps communities safe from drink drivers whilst adding to the fun of a night out by providing a way for people to socialise.

Results:

As of 2008, Road Crew had:

- Given over 97,000 rides
- Prevented an estimated 140 alcohol-related crashes
- Saved an estimated six lives from alcohol-related crashes

Comparing the estimated cost of avoiding a crash by implementing Road Crew at US\$6,400, and the cost to a community to recover from a crash at US\$231,000, Road Crew has shown savings estimated at over US\$31million.



In the US, as in other countries, alcohol-related crashes are a major cause of injuries and fatalities, as well as an economic drain. Traffic statistics show that there were 16,653 alcohol-related fatalities in the US in 2000, an average of 1 fatality every 32 minutes. In the state of Wisconsin, 6.5 per cent of all motor vehicle crashes in 2000 were alcohol related. There were 6,836 injuries and 301 fatalities resulting from these alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes in the state.

In 2000, Professor Michael Rothschild, whose work had been focused on social marketing since 1995, was approached by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Safety (WisDOT). The Department wanted to discuss social marketing and its possible applications to the problem of drink driving in Wisconsin. Following this meeting, the WisDOT provided funding to a team from the University of Wisconsin, School of Business, headed by Professor Rothschild, to conduct research to support the development of a social marketing campaign aimed at reducing alcohol-related crashes in the state.

In 2001, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration called for innovative proposals to reduce drink driving. Up to US\$300,000 was available for 5 traffic safety pilot schemes throughout the US, seeking a 5 per cent reduction in alcohol-related crashes over the course of 1 year in the pilot communities. An application made by the WisDOT, supported by the research conducted by Professor Rothschild's team, was one of those selected.

The Wisconsin project, called 'Road Crew', sought to aid communities to apply social marketing concepts to reduce alcohol-related

crashes primarily involving young male drivers. After the first year of operation, each community needed to be self-sustaining, without receiving additional government funds.



The primary target audience for Road Crew was 21- to 34-year-old single, male, blue-collar workers in rural areas. These are often agricultural workers living in small towns. Secondary data indicated that this group accounted for a disproportionate number of alcohol-related crashes. In the mid 1990s, the US National Commission Against Drunk Driving held six public hearings and three national conferences. They found that 21- to 34-year-old drinking drivers:

- Comprise about half of all drink drivers involved in alcohol-related fatal crashes
- Are responsible for more alcohol-related crashes than any other group
- Are four times more likely to have had their licences suspended or revoked
- Are most resistant to changing their drinking and driving behaviour

State statistics also revealed that more crashes occur in rural areas as a result of drinking and driving.

An important first step in understanding this target audience was understanding the situational context. In this case, the tavern (or pub) is an integral part of rural Wisconsin culture. Over the past century, immigrant brew masters built an economic and cultural force, establishing hundreds of breweries and taverns across the state. While only a few breweries remain, the Wisconsin tavern culture is alive and well, with taverns lining main streets of hundreds of small towns and rural intersections. This is where adults meet and

mingle. For the small community, taverns are often the centre of social life. In the summer, taverns sponsor soft ball leagues; in the winter, darts leagues.

Before developing Road Crew, a year was spent doing research, beginning in 2000. Three studies were conducted – the purpose was to generate understanding of the problem, the 21- to 34-year-old target market and the environment in which Road Crew would be operating.

The three studies conducted were:

- A literature review – to learn the current prevalence of driving under the influence, what was known about those who drove after drinking and what had been done in the past to curb the behaviour. In order to do this, a review of 178 studies published during 1996 to 1999 was conducted in spring 2000.
- Focus groups with expert observers of the target audience – seven focus groups (six to eight participants per group) were conducted with bar owners, waiting staff, law enforcement personnel, ambulance drivers, judges, lawyers, as well as friends and relatives of the target audience. The purpose was to learn what the people in close contact with the target knew and felt about them, their values, their lifestyles and the processes they went through on a typical day. Incorporating the understanding of these key stakeholders helped determine the research questions to be used in the focus groups with the target audience and provided additional ideas about how to develop solutions to changing current behaviour.
- Focus groups with target audience – 11 focus groups (7 to 12 participants per group) were then held with 21- to 34-year-old men who admitted to driving after excessive drinking. These were conducted in the back rooms of bars and taverns in a non-threatening environment in the rural

communities. The groups were led primarily by moderators who were close to the target's demographic group.



Defining the target audience

Secondary data analysis indicated that the most likely person to drive after excessive drinking is a 21- to 34-year-old single male, working in a blue collar job, with high school education or less, who most often drinks beer. The focus groups revealed that he also:

- Drinks heavily with friends in bars
- Feels safe drinking 8 to 12 drinks then driving
- Often 'assigns' the least drunk driver to be the designated driver
- Socialises with friends and needs to fit in
- Values masculinity
- Feels immortal

Barriers and benefits

He drinks to:

- Socialise
- Overcome inhibitions
- Increase his confidence
- Have a good time
- Get away from the hassles of daily life
- Overcome inhibitions and develop a different and more exciting personality

His car is important because it:

- Gives him a feeling of control
- Keeps the options open for taking a woman home
- Enhances his identity

These single young men like good times, women, sports, their vehicles and activities where alcohol is one part of the action. He drives after drinking excessively:

- To get home
- Because he feels fearless and invincible
- Because he is unaware that his driving skills are impaired
- Because there is social pressure to be like everybody else and fit in
- To relax and have a good time by cranking up the music and driving fast
- Because he perceives that there is no other way to get home without a lot of hassle
- Because he is afraid that some other drunk will crash into his car if it is left behind
- Because the perceived risks of actually getting caught or crashing are low

In the mind of the target audience, the disadvantages of driving after excessive drinking are many. His fears include:

- Hurting himself or someone else
- Losing his licence
- Losing his job
- Embarrassment and loss of respect

There were several potential costs to the target audience in giving up their current behaviour:

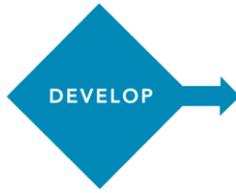
- The tangible cost of the ride (this depended on the county but was in the region of US\$10 to US\$20 for the evening)
- Loss of status and identity. For most young men, their vehicle is sacrosanct. It is their single largest investment and source of pride
- The loss of freedom in not having a vehicle immediately available

- The inconvenience of waiting for a ride or walking a distance to get to the vehicle
- Being seen as a 'wimp' for not being able to drive while drunk
- Embarrassment at being associated with an 'uncool' ride format
- Not wanting the fun of the evening to end

Actionable insights

Specifically these insights suggested that any programme needed to recognise that:

- It was important to separate the issue of drinking with the issue of 'driving under the influence'. Although it may not be possible to influence drinking behaviour with this target audience, it might be possible to influence them to change their current driving behaviour
- The target audience occasionally did worry about drinking and driving, which spoilt their evening
- The target audience made poor decisions at the end of an evening of drinking, so it was important to separate them from their vehicles early in the evening (they would not be prepared to leave their car behind after an evening of drinking)
- The target audience often drank and smoked while driving, so alternative ride programmes needed to allow the same
- The target audience needed to pay for the round trip at the beginning of the evening when they still had money available
- The alternative vehicles offered needed to be as appealing as those of the target audience
- There was never enough local policing resources to make current legal deterrents sufficient or effective
- The target audience knew they should not drink and drive and would prefer not to, but lacked alternatives. Therefore key issues were not increasing awareness or changing attitudes, but changing and maintaining behaviour



Engaging stakeholders

A partnership of key stakeholders was formed at the state level to steer the development of the project. This included representatives from:

- WisDOT
- University of Wisconsin School of Business
- MasComm Associates (national consulting firm specialising in media and community collaborations)
- Miller Brewing Company
- The Tavern League of Wisconsin

The overall goal of Road Crew was to reduce alcohol-related crashes by 5 per cent in the geographic area during the first year pilot and therefore improve community safety. Changing drinking behaviour, while important, was not a goal. The research showed that the target might accept changes in driving behaviour, but would not change their drinking behaviours. In addition, to achieve success the project would need to engage key stakeholders, and this included the tavern community, who had no motivation to reduce drinking.

Based on the research the project team wished to engage communities to develop their own strategies for providing and promoting an alternative transportation system to reduce drink driving. The only key requirement was for drinkers to leave their car at home before going out drinking.

“When we started we thought that the best ride programme was going to be a really clever way of getting guys home at the end of the night. We would let them drive to the bar, and we’d think about how to get them home and maybe think about how to get them back to their cars in the morning. But through doing the research and actually talking to guys, we learnt that

wasn’t going to work. We got the idea that we had to give them a ride to the bar. So we thought we’d use school buses, and they said ‘no, you need some really nice vehicle, because that’s what we care about.’”
(Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)

To begin this process the project team invited community representatives from across the state to attend a daylong training conference entitled ‘Social Marketing: A New Approach to Addressing Alcohol-Related Crashes in Wisconsin’. Participants were given an overview of the principles of social marketing, a copy of the focus group research, and a toolbox of resources to support their efforts in developing a local coalition to help run the work, with steps laid out for communities to launch their own ride programme. Fifteen communities attended the session and seven submitted proposals for funding. Four proposals were selected to run a pilot project (three communities ended up running a one-year pilot project).

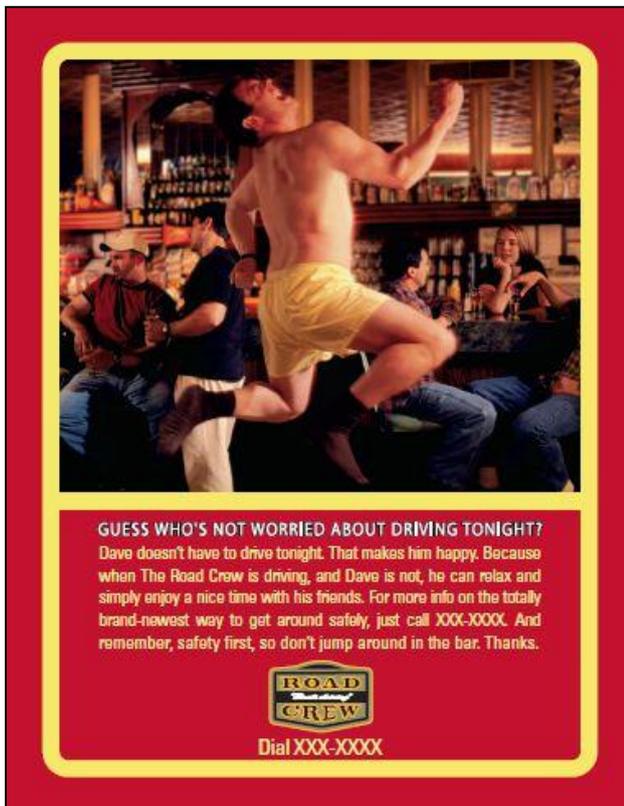
Each community was asked to develop an advisory board made up of 21- to 34-year-old men to be involved in all stages of development. This allowed local leaders to stay in touch with the people they need to serve, and to ensure the service continued to respond to users’ needs.



Marketing mix

One of the reasons for the success of Road Crew is that the offering was customised in each county based on consumer insight, available resources and the local environment. However, the common elements developed by all Road Crew pilot communities were as follows:

- **Product** – providing a ride to the bar, between bars and back home again
- **Price** – around US\$15 to US\$20 for the evening; US\$5 to US\$10 for a single ride
- **Place** – home to bars and back again, so the customer’s own vehicle would be left at home
- **Promotion** – advertisements in newspapers, television, movie theatres, over urinals and in bars. Promotional items such as beer mats, beer can coolers and T-shirts were produced and distributed



Data collection

While the local communities were hiring a dedicated part-time coordinator who would ensure the local projects continued

successfully, research was conducted to pretest brand concepts and names with the target audience. Thirty interviews were conducted in bars with members of the target audience to pretest various names and branding efforts. Input was also received from Miller Brewing Company executives, WisDOT managers and community leaders in the demonstration communities to derive output compatible with all views. The ‘Road Crew’ name was the most favoured by the target audience, and feedback about imagery was used to adapt the branding before being pretested further.

In June pretest data were also collected to learn the level of driving after excessive drinking that existed prior to the onset of the pilot projects. This pretest was conducted in three pilot communities (treatment) as well as in several communities where there would not be a ride programme (control). The same process was executed in the month prior to the onset of the programme, and during the last month of the demonstration in both the test and the control communities. This pre- and post-test with test and control groups would enable an assessment of the impact of the pilot on various aspects of the behaviour of the target audience.

A marketing research firm was hired to collect data through their computerised phone and data collection service. Bar patrons were given coupon cards by the bar’s staff. Patrons were told to take the coupon, read it the next morning, and then call the 800- number on the coupon. Patrons were offered a US\$7 voucher for non-alcoholic purchases at the tavern where they received the coupon; the coupon would be activated after the patron called the number and answered a few questions. Patrons were assured their responses would be anonymous. When calling the number, the patron heard an electronic female-like voice that assured them of anonymity and then explained what they had to do. For each question the patron only needed to push a number on the phone keypad

to respond. Upon completion, the patron was given a validation code that activated the coupon for use.



Each of the three communities – Polk County, Dodgeville and Mineral Point, and Tomah – formed a coalition to help drive forward their Road Crew pilot projects. These coalitions included representatives from:

- Local tavern leagues
- Bar owners
- Police / law enforcement
- Local government / mayor's office
- An auto body car repair shop owner
- Local insurance companies
- Cab companies
- Volunteers

“One of the interesting things is that a lot of the people that end up working together in a coalition are natural adversaries. Law enforcement and bar owners don't have a long history of being friends. The law gets called in when bad things happen in bars. Now they're working together on a common goal.” (Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)

Based on the initial research, the coalition in Polk County suggested using second-hand limousines as a suitable vehicle, since it was the type of vehicle the target audience viewed as cool and would get them to use the service. Subsequently three second-hand limousines were purchased in an auction from Las Vegas. Limousines were not only viewed as cool, but they also allowed the target audience to socialise and 'continue the party' between bars and on the way home. When they had driven themselves to, between and from bars, the

target audience would continue to drink and smoke in the car, and it was important that the alternative ride service allowed them to do this so that the offer remained attractive.

Dodgeville and Mineral Point had originally planned to use old vans that the auto body shop owner lent to customers while their car was being fixed. However it quickly became apparent that while this was a very cheap option, it was not working because no one wanted to ride in these vehicles. So instead, the coalition learnt from the work in Polk County and also bought second-hand limousines to use for the project, which proved much more successful.

“I think the big breakthrough was the limos. That was really cool. If you really understood these guys, you knew that they couldn't independently make the judgement that 'I'm too drunk to drive home, I need a ride home'. They'd lose face – that would be a tremendous blow to their ego. But when we started to say, 'hey, would you like to ride around in a limo all night, and you can drink in the limo' – they thought that was great. That was really the key breakthrough.” (Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)



Alternatively in Tomah, unlike in Polk County and Dodgeville and Mineral Point, there was an existing cab service. So the team worked to encourage the target audience to use this well-established service, with subsidised rides after 5pm each day.

All three communities used promotions and incentives to encourage the target audience to use the Road Crew service they had set up. These included:

- Leaflets, posters and calling cards
- Local media coverage
- Road Crew T-shirts distributed as frequent rider incentives
- Beer cup holders with the Road Crew logo, distributed to local bars
- In Tomah, bartenders and cab drivers promoted the programme and initialled each voucher for a Road Crew ride they gave out, and the one who had distributed the most each month won a cash prize
- Volunteer drivers in Dodgeville and Mineral Point received free rides when desired and collected tips (ranging from US\$20 to over US\$100 per night)

To cover costs, the pilot projects ran fundraising events such as casino nights, golf events and baked good sales, and worked with local business for direct and in-kind donations.

Twice during the pilot, the state-level Road Crew team organised lessons learned conferences so that the three communities could come together, discuss problems they may be having and learn from each other's work.

The three communities ran their pilot projects from 2002 until 2003. After this, no further central support was provided until 2005. This was to allow programme managers to observe whether the pilot communities could survive on a self-sufficient basis. When this was established, further funding was provided yearly from WisDOT to the central Road Crew team to continue its supporting role to the established community and to bring other communities on board. Other communities were invited to attend workshops and apply to run a Road Crew project locally. Subsequently new communities were added in 2005, 2006 and 2007.



Extensive evaluation of the Road Crew pilot sites was conducted in 2003, following completion of the pilot stage, and published in a full report.

Evaluation mechanisms

- Phone survey to determine awareness and attitudes of the target and the general population towards the programme
- Phone survey to determine awareness and attitudes of community leaders, bar owners and waiting staff towards the programme
- Count of rides as reported in the Ride Logs, to identify how many rides were given

Headline results

- Over 90 per cent positive responses to the question 'How do you feel about the ride programme in your area?'
- 88 per cent of community leaders and 99 per cent of bar personnel believed that the programme should continue
- 19,757 rides taken during the year of the demonstration
- An estimated 17.6 per cent reduction in alcohol-related crashes

Based on these successes, Road Crew was made available in Barron County, Fox Valley, Southern Grant County, Iowa County, LaCrosse County and Polk County. As of February 2008, Road Crew had:

- Given 97,220 rides
- Prevented an estimated 140 alcohol-related crashes
- Saved an estimated six lives

Return on investment

From 2000 to 2007 about US\$870,000 of government funding was spent on Road Crew. About US\$250,000 of this was spent in initial research and development. The remainder was spent working with communities to get local programmes in place.

Each community received around US\$40,000, to be spent over the first 18 months to get the programme under way. Most of that was for a part-time organiser to manage the programme.

In addition, another US\$400,000 was collected in fees paid by riders. While this seems like a huge amount of money, it becomes quite reasonable when the cost-benefit analysis is considered.

Comparing the estimated cost of avoiding a crash by implementing Road Crew at US\$6,400, and the cost to a community to recover from a crash at US\$231,000, Road Crew has shown savings estimated at over US\$31million.

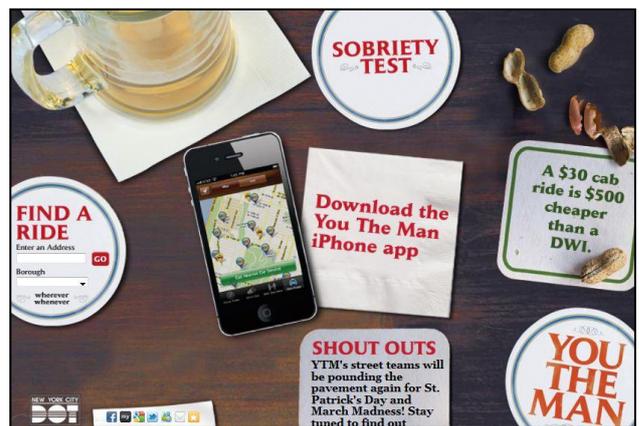
The Road Crew project has achieved measurable success in making Wisconsin's roadways safer. This project demonstrates success in creating public-private partnerships that work, and state-local partnerships that maximise resources to make a difference. Road Crew exceeded its original goal of a five per cent reduction in crashes in a cost-efficient manner, while gaining widespread support in its targeted communities. Project leaders are confident that the work shown here can be replicated in virtually any small community in the US.



In 2007, a final evaluation was conducted by WisDOT and the Federal Government, who had provided the funding to WisDOT. Subsequently it was decided that after 2007,

Road Crew projects would no longer have a state-level central team, but would be run with support from WisDOT. Unfortunately, not having a central Road Crew team to give support to the communities or further funding meant that some Road Crew projects slowly stopped running. However, a small number are reportedly still running at the time of writing (late 2010) on a completely self-sufficient basis.

“When you have something like this where it's going on year after year, eventually new problems come up and the local coalitions – who were not experts in this topic – needed some guidance on how to move forward. One of the problems was we started in 2002 using limousines. Limousines have horrible gas mileage. At the time the gas cost was half of what it is now. So that became a huge expense. What do you do with that? Do you drop the limos and go to other vehicles which are not going to be as appealing? Or do you raise more money so you can pay for more gas? The local coalitions needed continued follow-up from somebody with a bigger picture view to help them to move forwards.”
(Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)



Despite disappointments about the lack of sustained local projects, Road Crew has been heralded by many as a successful social marketing project that seeks to really use the motivations of the target audience to create appropriate interventions. It is used by many as an example of best practice in conferences and

other mechanisms to share learning across the world. It has been cited as influencing the 'You The Man' campaign, which seeks to reduce drink driving by young men aged 21 to 39 in New York, and has likely influenced many others.

Lessons learned

Successes

- Keeping a continuous focus on the target audience and getting constant feedback from them: without research with the target audience, the project could have gone off in the wrong direction
- Paying a local community coordinator so there was someone actually in charge, rather than only having volunteers
- When recruiting team leaders in each community, ensure that those who are passionate about the topic are recruited as they were vital in pushing the work forward so that it could become self-sustaining

"You have to search for the passionate people. There are going to be people who are going to be very passionate about what you're going to do and there can be the total opposite. If you can find passionate people who are going to do what needs to be done, then you can succeed." (Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)

- One of the team leaders working with the programme manager was an expert at community coalition building. Initially she was in touch with each community at least every two weeks to help solve problems – success would have been impossible without her
- Having a project team that can offer an umbrella package and lots of support is vital, but the ultimate local plan must reflect the local community

"Each community is different, so each rollout has been different. Within each community, the teams try to understand the specific strengths and weaknesses of each community and build around these." (Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)

- Meetings were conducted across communities so that they could share problems and solutions. Social marketing has both a social and a marketing component

Challenges

- It can be hard to get established organisations to accept innovative ideas. Any project needs to remember that the marketing does not need to be just directed to the target audience, but it is also important to 'sell' and market your proposals to funding organisations and other influential stakeholders

"In a physiological sense, organisms tend to object foreign bodies, and you can say the same thing here. Organisations tend to reject foreign ideas. It's really hard to get innovation. You really need to think about marketing to managers and bureaucrats, selling to them why it's in their own self interest to do this." (Professor Michael Rothschild, Principal Investigator)

- If it were legislated that communities could receive funding without having to search and apply for funding annually, things could be more efficient