



Volkswagen Teaching the Smart Way to Drive

Volkswagen is one of the largest automobile manufacturers in the world. The company owns 09 brands, 45 production sites in 18 countries and employs around 329,000 people. In 2007, Volkswagen sold over 6 million vehicles for the first time.

Case Background: Sustainable vehicle solutions are the core business at Volkswagen. In addition to the environmentally sustainable characteristics of the vehicles, these solutions also include passing on information on responsible driving.

As a partner of the Federal Environment Agency and the Technical University Berlin, Volkswagen supported the ground-breaking research project "Learning environmentally friendly driving while learning to drive" ("*Erziehung zu umweltbewusstem Fahrverhalten in der Fahrausbildung*") back in 1985. With the organization of the German Fuel-Saving Championship (*Deutsche Sprintspar-Meisterschaft*) from 1996 onwards, Volkswagen highlighted the advantages of resource conservation while driving, especially for young drivers.

Case Description: In 2002 Volkswagen entered into partnership with the German environmental protection organization, Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU). Fuel economy training courses are an integral part of this partnership. In this way, Volkswagen aims to make a considerable contribution to the reduction of CO2 emissions, harmful substances and noise. The training courses also help increase safety on the road.

The unique aspect of these training courses is that local NABU groups, Volkswagen dealer organizations and a professional trainer team all work hand-in-hand. Participation in the training is free of charge and anyone can take part. Demand is high and the trainings are always fully booked.

Training vehicles are equipped with special on-board computers that record all technical data over the entire distance of a test drive, such as speed, time, fuel consumption and, of course, CO2 emissions. Using a direct comparison between two identical routes, the first without instructions and the second under the instruction of the trainer, the driving behavior of the participant on the road can be analyzed in each phase. Most importantly, the effects of the new, improved driving behavior can be demonstrated precisely – with a sustainable learning effect for every participant.

Achievements: The Volkswagen-NABU trainings show that up to 25% savings can be made in fuel and money by applying the rules of clever driving. These savings are possible without having to drive more slowly. The average fuel consumption reduction for all participants after the trainings was 13%. These values were obtained during a scientifically supported training cycle. Based on these figures, NABU estimates that a nation-wide driver training scheme would yield a savings potential of 12 million tons of CO2 emissions annually in Germany. This corresponds to 1.3% of the total emissions in Germany.

The new driving style represents a great potential to protect the climate, reduce air pollution and noise, and increase safety. It also shows that resource-efficient driving does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with slow motion – most trainees even needed less time when driving in a resource-efficient manner.

Over the past 15 years, more than 100,000 people have been trained in "clever driving". No other automobile manufacturer in the world has trained so many drivers from around the world in the correct use of the gas pedal over the past years. With increasing awareness more and more fleet operators are ensuring that their drivers take part in the eco-training courses.

Reference: www.wbcds.org