

LOW-CARBON AWARDS

EARTH IS THE WINNER BY ROB CLEGG

Everyone likes games and gamification psychology is prevalent everywhere keeping people engaged in everyday activities. I want to turn the everyday journey into the office into an activity where overcoming the difficulties associated with taking environmentally good options are recognised and rewarded.

In the UK, about 33 percent of man-made carbon dioxide comes from cars and vehicles. Reducing transportation emissions is one of the most vital steps in fighting global warming and something nearly all of us can contribute to. At great expense, efficient transport systems are in place which if used would make a huge impact on our emissions. The problem we need to solve is that we don't use them as much as we could.

The convenience and the comfort of our own motor car is a hard habit to break. This is entirely understandable, the comfort and safety of your own vehicle ready and waiting whenever you need it against the weather and all the other difficulties of using public transport or walking/cycling.

We are told that electric cars are the answer however it is not appreciated by the public that an electric car will need to be driven for 50,000 miles on renewable electricity before it is better for the environment than it's fossil fuel alternative. Hybrid SUV vehicles are often worse for the environment than standard vehicles.

Carrot works better than stick...

My idea is to reward those choosing carbon-efficient ways to travel through established psychological means like gamification. This



would be a smart phone app where you would record the method of making your daily commute. Green miles such as walking, e-bike, cycling, electric car or using public transport would be recognised using digital methods including levels and badges, these could be linked to real-life awards such as Colas planting a tree for 'x' miles travelled or CO₂ saved. Leaderboards can be created to generate competition between locations and countries with awards for winners or most improved which could then stimulate local management to promote and encourage socially responsible transport.

It's important to recognise that for many, the car is the only viable way to travel to work and may feel resentment or left out. These could be engaged by recording activities close to home or completing awareness campaigns. A survey in the UK revealed that 45% of people used their cars for journeys of three miles or less and there are many who with a slight nudge will change their behaviour even if it's just a small amount. It all counts.