

Carsharing 2.0

Brainstorming results from Stanford seminar class “The Future of the Automobile”

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October 5, 2010

Teaser video shown at beginning of class

Vision 2028 by Volkswagen: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCeMFPJfHoM>

Questions brainstormed in class

Why do people buy automobiles?

- Mobility from A → B
- Entertainment, enjoyment
- Easy, convenient mobility
- Independence
- Commercial purposes (means to do a job)
- Show social status
- Show social character, personality
- Transport people, goods, equipment, “stuff”...

Individual experience with carsharing:

- 100% of all students in the class have heard about carsharing
- About 25% have actually used carsharing

What was your experience with carsharing?

What did you expect before the first experience?

- “Perfect solution” for mobility needs (green, well maintained / organized, clean / appealing vehicles, always available...)

What did you like and dislike?

Liked

- SF: people love it, relief from parking problem
- Great complement to one and only personal car that can't do everything (e.g own convertible, share a pickup / van...)
- Permissible age for sharing is lower than renting

Disliked

- NYC: dirty, gas / toll card missing, previous customer was late, very early scheduling necessary
- Problematic to change plans (extend rental, “leave and return a bit later”...)
- Liability etc. unclear (especially at the beginning), operation of vehicles (reservation, locks...) unclear (at the beginning)
- Need to adapt to different cars all the time
- Fleet focuses on small, “undesirable” vehicles (esp. at Stanford) → “uncool”
- “Return anxiety”, never sure if one overpays (returning too early) or get's fined (returning too late)
- Loosing personal connection with vehicle (anonymous, arbitrary car)
- One-way rental usually not possible (vehicle sits unused but paid at destination)

- Personal things cannot be left in car, not much opportunity for personalizing car

Conclusions

- Density of vehicles per member influences personal experience a lot (compare NYC vs. SF)
- Highly sophisticated (and unprofitable???) scheduling / distribution system would be necessary to meet individual mobility needs / habits / expectations

When would I be willing to share?

- Risk needs to be well covered
- Need to know who drives my car (smoking habits etc., driving record...)
- Price needs to be right (income needs to outweigh inconvenience, risks)
- Private / intimate space that personal car represents needs to be preserved

How could the carsharing model be improved?

Sharing in general

- Better use of resources (make vehicle better available to customers, don't charge when vehicle is parked, rent out vehicle when parked during trip)
- Offer one-way rental
- Flexible scheduling
- Offer desirable cars with opportunities to personalize
- Personal settings for seats, mirrors, radio need to be brought to vehicle (e.g. stored in smart phone...)
- Get always the same vehicle / model
- Car needs to come to customer and not customer to car

Sharing of privately owned vehicles in particular

- Cover risk well (financial implications, but also inconvenience / loss of identity when car is damaged)
- Rating of drivers (similar to ebay...)
- Only offer vehicles from personal social network