

# **TravelWise West Midlands Walking Challenge Case Study**

## **Aims**

The aim of the challenge is to encourage employees in the West Midlands to walk their recommended 10,000 steps a day over a 4 week period in September/October. Hopefully they then realise that they can achieve this on a regular basis and incorporate the extra walking into their daily lives. They could take part as a team of up to five or as individuals. Awards were given to those who had walked the furthest. These were given to winners and runners up in the following categories: Individual, Team and Furthest Walked by an individual or team member.

## **Target Groups**

The target group is employees based in the West Midlands, who work for companies who are developing or who have developed travel plans.

## **Achievements**

The Walking Challenge has now been running for three years. Over that time the numbers taking part have grown significantly. In 2006 there were 250 participants, in 2007 there were 400 participants. In 2008 there were over 1000 participants, who walked over 64 millions steps between them. This equates to over 32,000 miles or nearly one and a half times round the world. Feedback from the participants has also been very positive, with many saying that they will continue their increased levels of walking.

## **Background**

The Walking Challenge was originally developed by the Sport England Everyday Sport campaign under the banner of 'The Angel of the North to the Tower of London Walking Challenge'. The West Midlands Regional TravelWise Group decided to promote the Challenge as part of their Regional TravelWise Campaign in 2006. The group felt that there was potential to develop the Challenge so that it appealed more to participants in the West Midlands. Therefore the group developed their own Walking Challenge which focussed the 'walk' on sites and attractions in the West Midlands. Each participant who took part received a free pedometer when they registered. They also received a spreadsheet to record their steps, a map of the attractions in the area and distances between them and a set of instructions on how to complete the challenge. E-mail encouragement was also given throughout the Challenge to ensure the participants completed the Challenge. After the Challenge had finished they were required to submit their completed spreadsheet in order to see who had won the awards.

## Lessons Learnt

1. Don't try and save money by buying cheap pedometers! It doesn't work. You just get half your stock back again as they don't work and you annoy those taking part, as they can't complete the Challenge. Because of this you don't receive many completed spreadsheets back either.
2. Use a five day working week as the norm. If they only have to submit 5 days out of 7 they can choose the 5 days when they have walked the furthest. This means that they can make up for the day they had to spend in the office tied to the computer by going on a long walk at the weekend.
3. Weekly reminders over the course of the Challenge keeps people motivated. You can give a few hints and tips on how to increase the number of steps they take.
4. Includes a mile calculator in your spreadsheet. Participants like to see how far they have walked. By including a map with distances on it, they can put how far they have walked into perspective and visualise the distance.

## Comments

We are doing OK with the walking, so far we have done 586,822 steps. We are enjoying our lunch time walk together and putting the world to right at the same time. Caroline Hirons – Coventry City Council

I am still going strong! It **is** hard to do 10 000 steps on a normal day! Interesting to measure it every day and realise how much you have to do at a weekend to make up for a sedentary week! Thanks for the inspiration. Shelia Richards – Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital, Birmingham

Great fun, the steps are varied from day to day. Mary Evans – Henley College, Coventry

I'm quite enjoying the walks as I walk along the Wolverhampton canal it's amazing what wild life you see in the city area. I must admit I might even keep it up after the challenge has finished until the bad weather comes at least. Peter Lowe – Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital, Birmingham

## Partners

Those involved in the West Midlands Regional TravelWise Campaign are Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC), Herefordshire County Council, Sandwell MBC, Shropshire County Council, Solihull MBC, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke on Trent City Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Walsall MBC. Warwickshire County Council, Wolverhampton City Council, Worcestershire County Council and Centro, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive.

## **Contact details**

For further information on the Walking Challenge, please contact Joanne Rainbow, TravelWise Co-ordinator, Coventry City Council Tel: 024 7683 1342 or e-mail: [joanne.rainbow@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.rainbow@coventry.gov.uk).

## **Attachments**

Map of West Midlands  
Poster

every step counts

# walking challenge

## Checkpoint Map



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# walking challenge

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