

ITS Return On Investment: What Do Taxpayers Say?

ITS Georgia/TIME Conference
October 21, 2008



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Group

Research Objectives

- Measure drivers' opinions of GDOT's ITS consumer information
 - Awareness
 - Usage
 - Attitudes and Perceptions
- Identify effective marketing strategies
- Track results over time using previous TSG studies in 2002 and 2005



Methodology

- Scientific telephone survey of 600 metro Atlanta freeway drivers ($\pm 3.2\%$)
- Conducted during February 2008
- Study covered:
 - Driving patterns
 - Traffic information sources
 - 511
 - Electronic Message Signs
 - HERO
 - NaviGAtor.com
 - Driving values



Key Survey Findings

- Drivers find ITS traffic information sources very useful (much more so than most non-ITS sources)
- Electronic Message Signs: Drivers read signs and perceive them to be useful for reducing time spent in traffic
- HERO units: Drivers are aware of and perceive them to be valuable for a variety of purposes
- 511/*GDOT: Knowledge and usage of service are increasing, but still have room to grow. Non-users would consider calling 511 for traffic info.



Key Survey Findings

- *NaviGAtor.com: Awareness of NaviGAtor.com is low, though drivers' use of traffic websites in general has increased. Majority of NaviGAtor.com users are likely to change their route based on the site's information.*



Data-Driven Marketing

- Emphasize the value of ITS to GDOT customers – what is the return on investment from the taxpayers’ perspective?
- “True” ROI – determined from engineering analysis
- “Perceived” ROI – measured by what consumers think ITS information does for them
- Marketing goal is to be in tune with what consumers think, feel, and want



Perceived ROI Starts With Values

- Metro Atlanta freeway drivers:
 - Believe maintaining roads is just as important as funding new ones
 - Believe spending as little as possible on gas is really important
 - Are concerned about the impact of traffic on the environment
 - Want solutions other than widening roads



Calculating Perceived ROI

- Series of straightforward questions about the extra time drivers thought they would be in the car if they had no real-time traffic updates. The questions covered radio traffic reports as well as GDOT information services.
- Bottom line: respondents estimated they would spend up to 26% more time a day behind the wheel if they lacked advance information about traffic flow.



Perceived ROI: Saving Gas

- Average ITS user believes he or she is saving 1-2 gallons of fuel per week.
- At \$3 per gallon, savings equates to \$150-\$300 per year



Perceived ROI: Saving the Environment

- Drivers believe they are saving both gas money and the environment by using ITS.
- On a metro-wide basis, a 26% reduction in driving time can eliminate more than 2 billion pounds of carbon emissions over the course of a year.



Perceived ROI: Reducing Traffic

- Average driver spends 2.2 hours less per week in the car because of ITS information.
- Across the region, the savings is about 2.2 million trip hours or 737,000 vehicle trips each week.



Perceived ROI: Safer Freeways

- ITS reductions in traffic also make the freeways safer.
- Using National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data, 26% less driving time across metro Atlanta projects to 200 fewer car crashes a year and 100 fewer injuries.



What Does It All Mean?

- Engineering studies have proven the value of ITS
- Now we know that drivers – taxpayers – perceive the value of ITS
- Points the way to new marketing strategies:
 - Opinions and experiences of existing users add validation from the drivers' point of view.
 - For state policy makers and budgeters, the net effect is that taxpayers are saying, “This works for me.”



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