



The Finnish National Teleworking Day

The winner of the Green Spider Network 2011 Best Practice competition

This year's 'Communication Initiative of the Year Award', launched in 2006 by the Green Spider Network (GSN), goes to an innovative Finnish campaign on telework. All the GSN members were invited to present their best examples of environmental communication campaigns. The prize was awarded at the [Annual Meeting](#) of the Green Spiders in Denmark, which took place on November 16th- 18th.



The National Teleworking Day logo

Campaigning on the Benefits of Working from Home

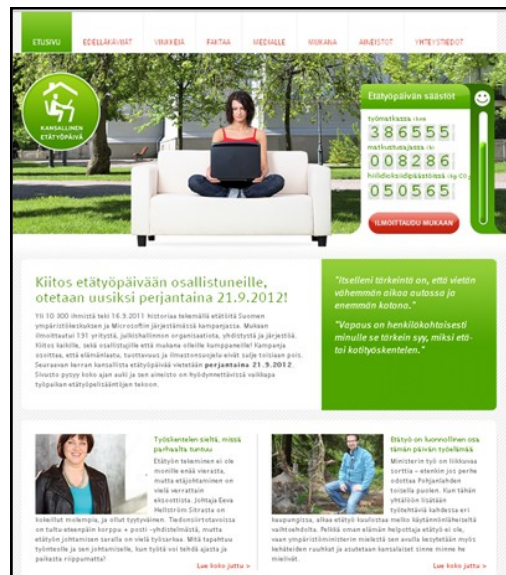
On a regular week day in Finland, the Finnish people commute about two million times, mostly using their personal vehicles, amounting to 69 million kilometres driven. Workers waste time and money while getting to work, but they are also subjected to stress because they fear being late or because traffic jams are stressful atmospheres. Their journey to the office contributes to CO₂ emissions and traffic jams thus causing air and noise pollution. Once at work, some employees lack personal space to be efficient (for instance, sharing an office with colleagues can prevent concentration) and offices have a significant energy consumption and consequent environmental impacts. Personal-private life issues are also often at stake with workers lacking personal time to balance their lives.

On the basis of this grim assessment, the Finnish Environment Institute (also known as [SYKE](#), from the Finnish acronym) decided to address all of these issues at once, through an effective and symbolical campaign. In partnership with Microsoft, SYKE set up for the first time in 2011 a National Teleworking Day. The objective was to encourage as many Finnish employees as possible to work from home on September 16th, with the aim of reducing traffic jams (helping those workers whose job does not enable teleworking) and emissions as well as office energy consumption. An increase in productivity and well-being were also targeted.

SYKE decided to organise the campaign as a one-day event, giving it more symbolical impact and media coverage. The date was also chosen on purpose: it corresponded to the first day of the [European Mobility Week](#) – a European event that shares the same goals to raise awareness on transport-related environmental and health issues. The combination of the two campaigns thus contributed to their mutual reinforcement. The main message was that working from home is environmentally friendly, but also easy, flexible and helps workers to be more relaxed and productive. As such, it should be considered as a valuable option for companies. The campaign was organised with a network of 22 executing organisations, representing a great diversity of private and public stakeholders. Microsoft, as the main partner, provided technical skills and tools for the webpage, some advertisement, attracted private companies, and organised a workshop. This partnership was also consistent with the fact that the campaign took place mainly online.

Facts and figures

- First edition of the National Teleworking Day
- Friday, September 16th
- 22 executing organisations
- 191 participating organisations
- 10,300 workers participated
- 400,000 km not travelled
- 50 tonnes of CO₂ not emitted
- 8,286 hours not spent in commutes



Homepage of the National Teleworking Day website

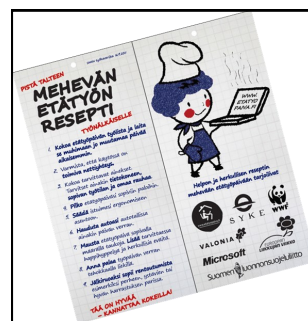


A Web-Based Community, Reinforced by Traditional Media

Since teleworking means working on and with the Internet, SYKE decided to base the campaign online as well. The [website](#) was launched on August 10th and enabled individuals and organisations to register their participation to the Teleworking Day. A meter on the homepage counted the distance, time and CO₂ emissions avoided by people who committed to working from home on September 16th. Interviews with telework “frontrunners” were also posted on the homepage, providing testimony from various stakeholders and users on the benefits of teleworking. The website also presents advice on how to set up a successful telework session (tips to organise a conference call or advice for employers for instance), research articles and material for the media.

Social media were used jointly with the website to create a community of teleworkers. A Facebook page was set up and Twitter was used to promote new material on the website. Microsoft also used their corporate blog hosted by a Finnish finance newspaper website to promote the campaign.

On top of an efficient use of online media, SYKE disseminated its campaign through traditional media as well. For instance, Radio Suomi Pop carried out interviews on the campaign and broadcast them several times before the National Teleworking Day. The front page of Finland’s most read newspaper advertised the Teleworking Day two days before the event to a majority of Finns. A big banner was also hung next to a main highway so that drivers could see it when passing by.



Recipe for a successful teleworking day



One of the teams showing the benefits of telework

“

“The campaign has a broad social significance: telework enables us to contribute to both the environmental and human well-being, but equally to work efficiently. That is why it is of interest to so many different parties.”

Lea Kauppi, Director General of the Finnish Environment Institute

”

Showing the Fun Side of Teleworking for a Successful Day

Sense of humour was on the menu for this campaign: recipes for a successful Teleworking Day were disseminated before and during the event, mentioning the need for an Internet connection and a personal space and advising to ‘season’ the menu with breaks, a tasty home-made meal and some time with family or friends at the end of the day.

After this visible preparation phase, several events were organised during the day to highlight the messages of the campaign in a fun and innovative way. Two teams were sent out in the streets of Helsinki and Turku to distribute the recipes. They were wearing dressing gowns and slippers, thus highlighting another benefit of teleworking: employees can wear whatever they want! The radio presenter from Radio Suomi Pop broadcast from home as well, having SYKE staff as special guests in his show.

This online and offline intensive approach resulted in a very successful Teleworking Day: more than 10,300 people worked from home that day, belonging to 191 different organisations. By not going to work that day, participants collectively saved nearly 400,000 kilometres of travel, calculated to be equivalent to circumventing the world nine times. Even more importantly, 50 tonnes of CO₂ were not emitted that day. The National Teleworking Day will be organised again in 2012 during Mobility Week. SYKE hopes to convince even more people to work in a relaxed and productive atmosphere while decreasing their impact on the environment!

Executing organisations

- Transportation sector
- Ministry of the Environment
- Ministry of Traffic and Communications
- Finnish Institute of Occupational Health
- WWF
- Valonia (Energy office)
- Akava (Confederation for Professional and Managerial Staff)
- Suomi Pop (radio channel)
- Tieto Ltd (private company)
- And [more!](#)