

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	Freight retiming and consolidation		
Objective	Understand current practices, barriers, benefits and reception to solutions of retiming and consolidation for both businesses and operators in London.		
Date	May 2016	Agency	Future Thinking
Methodology	Quantitative and qualitative interviews with businesses and operators across London, speaking to those responsible for managing/ co-ordinating deliveries and services.		
	500 CATI telephone interviews with businesses. Qualitative depth interviews with 20 freight operators and 32 businesses.		

Abstract

Businesses and freight operators are most likely to adopt retiming and consolidation strategies when the strategies help to achieve existing business objectives. However, most businesses and freight operators do not see any reasons (congestion or otherwise) to consider changes. Congestion is not top mind in the London business community and businesses and freight operators do not feel it is their issue to solve.

Key findings

Businesses and freight operators do not spontaneously see that they play a role in creating congestion and so do not see congestion as their issue to solve. Additionally, businesses only attribute minor disruptions like late parcels to congestion, and these minor inconveniences do not motivate them to look at new ways to handle deliveries.

Once prompted, businesses and freight operators agree that other benefits, such as improvements in air quality and better safety for road users, may result from tackling congestion. These Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) benefits are acknowledged as positive, but alone are not sufficient to motivate change.

Where retiming and consolidation strategies help a business or freight operator to achieve a business objective, achieve greater efficiency or reduce costs, businesses and freight operators are more engaged.

Businesses and freight operators are generally more positive to consolidation than to retiming. Bulk buying is commonly practiced by the London business community, and bundling parcels by geography is used by freight operators. However, greater adoption of changes is considered risky. Operators are reluctant to challenge customers to use new approaches because they believe this may compromise customer service. Businesses do not always see benefits to adopting other retiming and consolidation strategies, and will opt to maintain the status quo unless the business benefits are clear.

Job number: 15213