

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	Walking - exploratory research for communications development
Objective	Detailed exploration of attitudes to walking
Date	April 2009
Methodology	Qualitative: 10 x ethnographies and accompanied walks (8 x Non walkers and 2 x Walkers); 20 walking imagery scrapbooks

Key findings

- Most Londoners lead extremely busy lives and are having to make many different short and longer utility journeys
- By their very nature 'utility' journeys have a purpose and there are often other factors at play such as time constraints and multiple destinations
- Modal choices are a combination of convenience and pragmatism
- There is little overt rejection of walking – for many it simply doesn't enter the consideration set
- Walking per se is seen as a good thing by all – it evokes images of scenic calm, reflection and care for the environment, as well as a connection with the locale and the community
- However there is a disconnect between this ideal and the pull factors surrounding most utility journeys and indeed the pace of modern life
- Currently 'non walkers' surround themselves with multiple barriers partly as it would simply be too much of an upheaval to their lifestyles to allow walking in
- For some, walking has connotations of having too much time on one's hands, low income, lack of direction and a disconnect with modern life generally
- However, those who have taken up walking more tend to feel it has improved the quality of their life and they make room for it in their life
- However there are rational barriers which cannot be disputed, there are times when it is simply preferable to use a car or other motorised transport, these are for reasons of speed, because belongings or shopping need to be conveyed, children and other passengers have to be transported, there are multiple destinations, the environment is not appealing or safe or one needs to shelter from the elements