

CopenPay – written proposal

Background:

At Wonderful Copenhagen, we acknowledge that when it comes to climate change, tourism, as we know it, is part of the problem – not the solution. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that with the right actions in place, tourism has the potential to become a force for good. If we as destinations dare to challenge and rethink our approach, tourism can become an industry that fosters and accelerates innovation, positive change and inspiration – locally as well as globally. It was with this mindset that we created the CopenPay campaign

(see video).

Our goal was to create a campaign that was not just about raising awareness about Copenhagen's commitment to sustainability. We wanted to create a campaign that could also help influence visitors' behaviour, encouraging them to act more sustainably during their stay. Why? Data show that while the majority of tourists (82 %) say they want to act sustainably, only 22% have changed their behaviour.

This is an extraordinarily big gap, which we wanted to help close. But in a time when many destinations are confronted with the negative consequences of tourism, such as over-tourism, we wanted to do so in a positive and engaging way. We wanted to offer visitors in Copenhagen carrots instead of sticks and let them play a key role in our quest to address the challenge.

The campaign:

Combining our strong focus on sustainability with an equally strong element of nudging, we created the CopenPay campaign, which is an initiative that rewards tourists for their climate-friendly actions while in Copenhagen.

The concept was simple: visitors could earn rewards at Copenhagen attractions ranging from a free vegetarian lunch or a cup of coffee to a kayak tour or even a free entrance to a museum. All they needed to do was bike or walk instead of drive, take public transport, help maintain the city, or work in an urban garden, to name a few actions.

It was instrumental for us to involve local tourist attractions and suppliers to make it a city-wide and inclusive Copenhagen initiative and not just a Wonderful Copenhagen campaign. We worked together with 26 committed partners, ranging from some of the city's biggest museums to hotels and experiences such as solar-powered boat rental company, GoBoat. By joining CopenPay, each partner committed to rewarding visitors for their sustainable actions.

It was equally touching and encouraging to experience how so many of the city's key tourism players were on board with this campaign and genuinely believed in its purpose. From their marketing teams to their front-end staff welcoming the visitors, this dedication was instrumental in ensuring the best possible experience for the participating visitors.

The campaign ran for four weeks, from 15 July through 11 August. During this time, the initiative and its tagline, "Copenhagen attractions reward climate-friendly actions," were visible to tourists from the

moment they arrived at the airport to when they were walking around in the city centre. At the airport, tourists were met by a wide array of CopenPay displays and banners as well as a campaign film. This included the metro station at the airport, which was completely decked out in CopenPay. In the city centre, there were more than 60 outdoor billboards and displays showing CopenPay. Even one of the busiest bus lines was covered in CopenPay. All the banners and display included QR-codes and website links (www.copenpay.com) for more information about the initiative and our partners.

In the lead-up to the four weeks and during this period, we also promoted the campaign organically on our SoMe channels, including our Visit Copenhagen Instagram account, which has 375,000 followers, just as we sent out a PR release in the week prior to the campaign launch.

Campaign Results

The CopenPay initiative garnered worldwide media attention and social media mentions and engagements in the hundreds of thousands, demonstrating its global impact. The actual tourists in Copenhagen also showed such a high level of interest in the campaign that those experiences which required pre-booking were booked out in no time and partners had to set up waiting lists.

The campaign not only promoted sustainable tourism but also positioned Copenhagen as a thought leader in this space. It sparked conversations about sustainability and nudged tourists towards greener choices, contributing to our city's reputation as a sustainable tourism destination. We have already been approached by several organisations and destinations interested in running a similar scheme.

Finally, the press release announcing the campaign, which was distributed internationally, was picked up more than 1,400 times, achieving favourable media coverage in news outlets such as the BBC, New York Times, Reuters, and The Guardian. In fact, the campaign is estimated to have reached more than 75 million people across online, TV, and radio, all of which has been achieved organically.

This has resulted in over 350,000 social media engagements and an organic social media reach of more than 28 million people.

Moving forward

This year's CopenPay initiative was a pilot with the clear aim of creating a long-term scheme that will involve and engage more partners, as well as actions and rewards. For us, it has been a litmus test to see if an incentive scheme can be the way forward for destinations like Copenhagen that want to encourage and nudge visitors to take green actions and hopefully go home with behavioural change in the luggage.

The interest, encouragement, and general feedback we have received from visitors, partners, and other stakeholders, such as destinations, organisations, and the media, have confirmed that this approach can indeed make a difference.

We are currently evaluating the campaign, and based on our findings, feedback, and experiences, we will set a direction for the next CopenPay campaign. One thing is certain: the involvement of local partners has been key to its success, and we strongly believe that collaboration across the industry is instrumental in achieving long-term positive impact.

We are proud of the impact it has made and look forward to continuing our efforts to promote sustainable tourism.