




## Carrotmob

The Carrotmob Academy for Climate Activists – hands-on advice for launching a Carrotmob

 Consumers | [Information](#) [Qualifications](#) [Participation](#)  
[Campaign](#)



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#### Project information

##### [Support programme](#)

Innovative climate action projects

##### [Project duration](#)

1 February 2012 to 31 January 2015

##### [Project leader](#)

Green City e.V.

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##### [Project contact](#)

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www.klimaschutz.de/projekt/carrotmob-akademie-fur-klimaschutzer

## Consuming to protect the climate

Buy things, protect the climate and have fun! The Carrotmob craze has made its way from San Francisco to Germany. The Carrotmob Academy helped those interested get them underway.

### At a glance

When dedicated people organise a Carrotmob, consumption meets climate action. In a Carrotmob, a variant of the flashmob, as many people as possible are mobilised to meet on a certain day to shop in a certain store. A mob action is usually accompanied by additional activities such as music or the distribution of leaflets to attract more customers. In return, the store implements a climate action measure on its own premises, such as the acquisition of a more efficient air conditioning unit, with a portion of the additional profit.

Whoever wishes to mobilise and carry out a Carrotmob must have a hand for smart public relations and basic knowledge in project and event management. This is where the Carrotmob Academy came in. It hosted a detailed website and offered workshops dedicated to teaching interested persons in successfully launching and carrying out a Carrotmob. The idea was for trained activists to initiate at least 30 Carrotmobs and form a network of committed climate activists.



Carrotmob in a bar



### What were the project goals?

- Holding of a total of five workshops on 'How to organise a Carrotmob';
- Creation of the workshop concept, a website, regular newsletter (manual);
- Building of social networks;
- Initiation of at least 30 Carrotmobs;
- CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of approximately 500 tonnes per year over the long term;
- One-time implementation of 'Carrotmob macht Schule', where the organisation of a Carrotmob was taught as an elective subject and students received marks for it.

## The Academy and its partners: How to do it right

At a Carrotmob, a large number of people converge in a store and celebrate a festival for climate action. The first Carrotmob was held in San Francisco in 2008. One year later, Green City e.V., a non-profit organisation dedicated to environmental protection, brought the campaign format to Germany and supervised nine Carrotmob events in Munich by 2012. On the basis of these experiences, Green City developed a plan for the nationwide consulting platform Carrotmob Academy.

The focus of the Academy was primarily on training. It was also dedicated to offering recommendations concerning the recruitment of small and medium-sized companies to participate in Carrotmobs as well as the right sequence of activities or the appropriate time for promotional measures when organising a mob. For this, Green City received professional support from several partners.

The non-profit consulting agency Co2online gGmbH, for example, provided the activists with energy consultants, upon request. They also consulted the companies intending to organise a Carrotmob about their energy-savings potential and the biggest power hogs.

In addition, the green power suppliers Green City Energy AG and Naturstrom AG operated information kiosks at the Carrotmob actions and workshops and provided funds. Oekom Verlag (an ecological publishing house) donated copies of its climate-friendly consumer and coupon booklet for sale at the campaigns. The proceeds were used to cover some of the costs incurred during the organisation of the Carrotmob.



The Carrotmob Academy was presented in May 2013 at the PEAK conference of an association of SMEs.

## Workshops ...

The centrepiece of the project were the workshops. Experienced 'Carrotmobbers' taught newcomers the necessary practical knowledge for organising an action. A total of seven workshops were held.

Green City also published a 70-page manual detailing all the steps for planning and implementing a Carrotmob. The workshops then offered the opportunity to discuss some of the more complex aspects.

A starter package included work schedules, checklists, templates for press releases, tips for canvassing cooperating stores, and much more.

The course offer of the Carrotmob Academy was advertised online and attracted a wide range of participants. These included private individuals, school students, teachers, non-governmental organisations as well as interested persons from small and medium-sized enterprises.



## What did the project achieve?

- Holding of seven workshops;
- Creation of the website, the newsletter, the workshop concept (manual);
- Establishment of social networks;
- Realisation of twelve Carrotmobs;
- Reduction of 21 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year;
- Implementation of one 'Carrotmob macht Schule' where 20 students organised a Carrotmob at an ice cream parlour as part of a school elective.

... and website

A second focus of the Carrotmob Academy was its internet presence. Its website offered a downloadable five-step Carrotmob plan as well as working documents, video instructions and a Carrotmob marketplace.

Through the platform, ‘Carrotmobbers’ from the entire German-speaking world were able to keep in touch and provide mutual advice and support. This was also facilitated by a comprehensive contact database.

## What were the spillover effects?

- After the end of the project, the Carrotmob Academy ceased operations. The web presence, including online manuals and guides, is no longer publicly available.
- Since 'Carrotmob macht Schule' proved to be a successful format, it continued as a follow-up project and is being funded from 2016 through 2018 within the framework of the National Climate Initiative (NCI).  
[www.carrotmob-macht-schule.de](http://www.carrotmob-macht-schule.de)

## Contribution to climate action

The Academy's initial plan was to initiate and organise 30 Carrotmobs throughout the funding period. The participating stores and businesses were then expected to finance climate action measures from the additional revenues generated through the mobs. This was anticipated to result in a reduction of up to 500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year. In the end, twelve Carrotmobs took place, whose combined energy efficiency measures resulted in a long-term reduction of 21 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

## Lessons learned

Innovative projects such as the Carrotmob offer the opportunity to learn how new ways of doing can actually be adopted. And despite the fact – or because of the fact – that not all of the anticipated output was achieved, the project serves as an important source of knowledge for future climate action projects.

## Enthusiasm alone is not enough

The workshop participants were generally very enthusiastic. Still, the output fell short of the anticipated 30 Carrotmobs. One reason for this was that a number of participants had wanted to carry out one action, together. It was not clear to them that each participant was expected to organise their own Carrotmob. This is thus something to remember and learn from when organising future workshops.

Moreover, although motivated, the participants were confronted with numerous hurdles in trying to implement their mob. One was difficulties in negotiating the conditions for holding the Carrotmob with the store owners. Indeed, the Carrotmobbers learned the hard way that support by telephone or email was not sufficient and that, instead, their presence on the ground was needed.



### Checklist for success

- Open up the trainings to groups, whereby it should be clarified whether a given training should focus on one or more Carrotmobs.
- Integrate experienced Carrotmobbers; their support on site increases the chance of successful actions.
- Offer intensive consulting and hold discussions with potential business partners in order to negotiate mutually satisfactory conditions.
- Engage directly with participating groups of people, for example through talks.
- Avoid complex web pages and instead use less expensive functions of already established online offers, including social media.

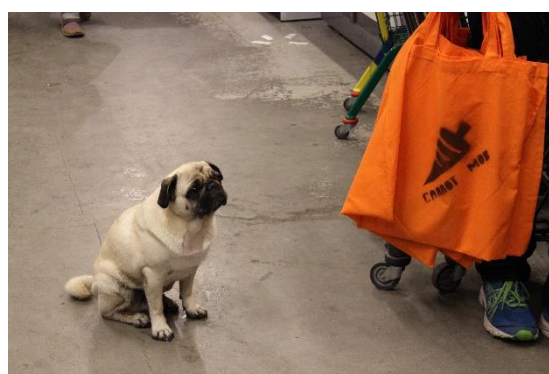
## Debriefing participating businesses

Some businesses that hosted Carrotmobs did not stick to their verbal promise to implement climate action measures on their premises with the additional profit – citing lack of time as a reason. It seemed to be very difficult for them to accomplish the necessary structural energy efficiency measures in addition to their everyday operations.

It follows that particular attention must be paid to the binding nature of the preliminary agreements. However, since legally binding contracts are not always a feasible or appropriate way of securing support for Carrotmobs, the Academy recommends to instead invest in more intensive consultations and discussion with the potential business partners.

Direct engagement with the groups of people to get involved

Promoting the Carrotmobs through online media elicited less resonance than anticipated. Instead, a presentation held at the annual general meeting of an association of SMEs ('Mittelstandsverbund') proved to be unexpectedly successful. A number of participants at this event were so taken with the action model that they developed their own workshop. This prompted Green City to issue the recommendation that future public relations activities should apply a more direct way of approaching and engaging with potential candidates and multipliers for projects.



## A Carrotmob is a colourful event

## The website – keep it simple

The programming of sophisticated functions of an internet platform can run up a costly bill rather quickly. For example, the Carrotmob Academy website had an elaborate database as well as features through which participants could request support for an activity. However, when it has not been sufficiently determined whether users are even interested in such services and options, an organisation would do better to limit its web presence to the existing functions of established online services, including social media such as Facebook. In most cases, these will be more low-threshold and user-friendly.



## Carrotmob goes to school

One successful way of spreading the Carrotmob model proved to be the Carrotmob Academy subproject 'Carrotmob macht Schule' – which in German means both 'Carrotmob is done in schools' and 'Carrotmob becomes a precedence.' High school students took part in a one-year, graded compulsory seminar that was concluded with a Carrotmob.

## Climate action needs your initiative

Since its launch in 2008, the National Climate Initiative (NCI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) has been supporting numerous projects that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Funding has been given to a broad range of activities, from developing long-term strategies to providing practical assistance and investment aid. With a focus on advancing climate action on the ground, the Initiative benefits consumers, municipalities, businesses and educational institutions.

## Legal information

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**Sources:** This project summary is based on the final project report and publications in professional journals.