

Employer Case Study

Downtown Bellevue



Washburn Communication sees green with FlexPass and Zipcar

Founded in 1995, Washburn Communication develops content for many clients in the high-tech industry as well as for non-profit organizations. Nominated in 2008 for a Microsoft Vendor Excellence Award, the company's small staff takes pride in the quality of their work - and their commitment to commuting options that minimize impact to the environment.

"The FlexPass program, combined with other commute benefits like Zipcar, helps us support our staff with practical, comfortable ways to get to our office from all over the region at a price even a small company like ours can afford. Even better, the program supports our company's culture of minimizing our environmental footprint."

- Dixie Crockford, Vice President

Getting Started

Washburn Communication was eager to make the most of transit service when they moved to downtown Bellevue from Redmond in 2004, especially because 50% of their employees were commuting from Seattle. However, they weren't eligible for the discounted transit pass products offered to large companies, so retail-priced tickets were the only option - a costly expense when combined with the cost of providing parking for employees. When Metro rolled out a pilot program allowing them to attain eligibility for FlexPass by signing a joint contract with another local company, they jumped on board. During the first year, 50% of their employees used the passes to the extent that they no longer required full-time parking. Today, Washburn continues to purchase passes through Metro's expanded offerings that embrace small companies, too. Washburn also added Zipcar services, allowing staff to meet with clients outside of downtown Bellevue when the bus isn't an option.

Program Elements

- 100% subsidized FlexPass
- 100% subsidized Zipcar use for business purposes
- 3 free parking days per month for FlexPass users, provided by Pacific Plaza's property manager
- Informal telework opportunities

Return on Investment

- 90% of employees use their pass at least three times a week
- Reduced parking needs to two stalls, saving over \$8,500 a year even after paying for their FlexPasses
- Improved retention & recruiting capabilities

Keys to Success

- **Management buy-in**
Though skeptical at first given that every employee used to drive alone, even the company's founder often rides the bus now rather than commuting solo in his car.
- **Comprehensive package**
FlexPass provides transit and vanpool benefits, plus an emergency ride home. With Zipcars available for midday use, Washburn employees feel comfortable leaving their own cars parked at home.