

Presentation Outline

Are You a Fare Dodger?

Public transportation in a number of cities is faced with the issue of frequent fare dodging when the honor system is in place. Aside from the obvious adverse economic impact (loss of ticket income), there is a deeper social aspect in the Czech Republic: it has become socially acceptable to “game the system” when presented with the opportunity. The city of Prague and its municipal organizations have now set out to change this.

It is not within the transit operators’ practical means to introduce comprehensive enforcement measures without compromising the throughput, speed and financial stability of their systems. Instead, Prague has opted for a different approach—one that directly targets the psychology of the passenger. It strives to convince the general public that it is only natural to pay for services and that petty excuses are just embarrassing. At the same time, it goes on to demonstrate that the anxiety and risk of fare dodging is pointless, since the full transit system can now be used for as little as CZK 10 per day.

This campaign was launched in late 2017 and was named: **Are You a Fare Dodger?**

It is one of the most comprehensive promotional and educational activities ever developed by the Prague Transit Authority and partners under the auspices of the City Hall and with the creative talent of an external PR agency. The campaign reaches out to passengers in numerous ways: prominently displayed in public spaces and on vehicles, as well as having a strong online and media presence.

Two custom-outfitted vehicles, the *Excuse-o-trams*, have now become the symbols of this effort. Along with a comic series, these poke fun at the most ridiculous passenger excuses. The concept has since spread into new realms, including a viral YouTube video with over a million views.

More than a year after launch, the campaign is showing promising results: the number of fare-dodgers has decreased by 14.4 % in 2018, thousands more have taken advantage of the *Half the Fine* scheme, paying a reduced penalty in return for immediately purchasing a yearly pass. The campaign has also spurred new ideas, put forth by students of participating Prague schools.

Our presentation details specific activities, results and further development opportunities. It showcases the visual language, style and public reception, and explains how the answer to “Are you a fare dodger?” has changed over the past 18 months.