



Case study eConnect cars



Organisation	Sector	Number of vehicles	Vehicle type
eConnect Cars	Private Vehicle Hire	8	Cars

Challenges

In 2013, eConnect cars was a new start-up business with ambitions to offer a reliable, chauffeur driven, zero emissions private hire car service in central London, using 100% electric vehicles (EVs).

The founder and managing director, Alistair Clarke, wanted to seize the opportunities presented by new low-carbon technology and also offer a smarter option for travel.

eConnect applied to take part in the Plugged-in Fleets Initiative (PIFI) run by the Energy Saving Trust to help them understand if there were any fundamental barriers to introducing EVs as private hire vehicles in London. The business was in the conception stage when Alistair applied, so the PIFI review was an opportunity to gather additional evidence to present to investors.

Recommendations

Energy Saving Trust analysed theoretical data on daily journeys provided by eConnect cars.

We concluded that:

- ✔ the required duty cycle could be fulfilled by a pure battery EV
- ✔ pence-per-mile costs could be expected to be lower than for running a fleet of hybrid vehicles.

We compared the whole life costs for a Renault Zoe with the Toyota Prius (currently a popular vehicle with private hire companies in London). We found that the cost savings over 62 miles a day would be six pence a mile. This equates to savings of almost £900 a year.



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Results

The findings gave eConnect the confidence to progress from a concept to a start-up. The PIFI report provided by the Energy Saving Trust was included in eConnect's business case presented to investors. In January 2014, eConnect launched the service with a start-up fleet of five top of the range Tekna model Nissan Leafs.

Within six months of beginning to trade, they increased their fleet to eight Leafs, and there are plans for further growth. According to eConnect, the rate of fleet growth is dependent on the roll out of a rapid charger infrastructure in central London, rather than demand from the market for an EV chauffeur service.

“The assistance, support and encouragement provided to me by the Energy Saving Trust via the Plugged-in Fleets Initiative and since has been invaluable. I am extremely optimistic for 2014 and confident that together we can show how, for many consumers and businesses, the switch to electric is a logical step towards a smarter city.”

Alistair Clarke, managing director, eConnect cars

To apply to receive analysis and advice on plug-in vehicles for your organisation, please complete and return an application form which can be found on our website

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/pifi

For further information, email

pifi@est.org.uk, or call Ian Featherstone, Knowledge Manager on **020 7227 0312**.