

What is moving about?

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By introducing car sharing with electric vehicles, Norwegian company Move About combines two of the biggest trends in the transportation sector. Let's hear from one of the founding fathers, Mr Michael Eimstad, about last week's launch of a public electric car sharing scheme in Oslo.

[F040 Image 1](#)

Zero hassle, zero emissions is the slogan of Move About, a Norwegian electric car sharing company. The company was founded in 2007 by experienced entrepreneurs leaning towards the environment. Amongst them was car sharing pioneer Michael Eimstad, who previously worked at Pivco, later called Think Nordic, the company behind the THINK City and THINK public electric cars.

Pulling the cover

The last six months have been busy. After an eighteen-month start-up phase to develop the business case and the technique behind it, in December 2008 the company introduced the world's first corporate electric car sharing fleet in Oslo, Norway. In March of this year, a pilot program was launched in the Swedish city of Gothenburg, and April saw the launch of another pilot scheme at three locations in central Oslo.

Last week Move About opened the world's first full-electric public car sharing service, again in Oslo. "Yesterday went extremely well," Michael tells us on the phone the day after. "We got a lot of [media exposure](#): national tv news and the biggest newspapers and online newspapers were there. And this morning I was on breakfast television – not my favourite part of the job," he adds modestly. As the Minister of Transport was ill, the Transport Secretary performed the official opening by pulling the traditional cover from the car.

[F040 Image 2](#)

From insurance to wiper fluid

With some forty vehicles Move About now operates the largest fleet of electric vehicles in Norway. The aim in Oslo is – depending on feedback of course – to have about 75 vehicles in the public scheme and about the same number in corporate fleets within another twelve to eighteen months. It has advantages to start with corporate schemes and then expand with public schemes. "Corporate schemes have lower margins, but are also lower-risk," Michael clarifies.

The corporate scheme works as follows: for a fixed monthly cost, Move About provides vehicles and a dedicated web portal. They make good on their promise of zero hassle, for the "complete service package includes everything from insurance to wiper fluid," as it says on their website.

The public scheme is just as simple and involves a monthly membership fee plus an hourly rate. Local incentives vary, but in some places electric cars have free parking, are exempt from road pricing or are allowed in bus lanes.

Coincidental

Except for general incentives without requirements, Move About have not applied for any government funding. “The first forty-five cars were a considerable investment, but we'll be able to make a profit soon – possibly next month,” Michael says. “Of course, we are scaling up and reinvesting and will start looking for investment partners soon.” Current partners are clean energy company Statkraft and the Norwegian railway company, which promotes the cars placed at railway stations to their customers.

For the moment, Move About is a small firm, of five. “Who does what is pretty coincidental,” Michael explains. His tasks include “pretty much everything. This morning, after the tv interview, I've been 'managing cars', which means driving them to the right place and cleaning them. I'll now go on to the mail and bills,” he laughs.

Where next

Michael takes pleasure in “working on an innovative product, important for our times. It is good to be working towards where you want go and to see that people appreciate it.”

In terms of expansion, where does Move About want to go? “We're providing a group of office companies in Gothenburg, Sweden, with five cars and have corporate and public expansion plans there for this fall. And hopefully we'll be in Copenhagen, Denmark, by the third or fourth quarter of this year. We're also persuing parties in the Netherlands, London and Germany.” So don't be surprised to hear more from Move About soon.