

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	LU TV Series Research		
Objective	To explore customer response to the TV series and understand the impact on perceptions of LU as an organisation		
Date	12/04/2012	Agency	2CV
Methodology	Eight focus groups (four held after the first three episodes aired, and four held after all eight episodes aired), media discourse analysis and social media monitoring prior to and during the series		

Abstract

The series has been received positively by customers who are drawn in by the engaging characters and captivated by the behind-the-scenes information. The overall impact of the series on perceptions of LU has been very positive and has helped to build empathy towards LU by humanising the system and organisation and giving customers the knowledge to appreciate the Tube system in a holistic way. Treating customers as stakeholders and encouraging them to think outside of their me-centric attitude towards Tube journeys are effective ways of building empathy for LU, and could be considered for future LU comms development.

Key findings

Customers find the series to be highly engaging for a number of reasons:

- The interesting characters draw people in and the coverage of TfL staff's passion and hard work positively surprises people
- Customers' bad behaviour shocks viewers, prompts self-reflection on their own behaviour and increases empathy for staff amongst viewers
- The scale and complexity of keeping the Tube system running impresses customers and they enjoy learning new information about the system
- The series demonstrates the rich heritage of the Tube which reinforces the sense of pride and ownership that people have in the system
- The series communicates the Tube Upgrade Programme to customers in more detail than they have previously received and customers are impressed by the plan and interested in the information

The overall impact of the series on perceptions of LU has been very positive,

helping to build empathy for LU by:

- Educating customers about the system, upgrades and challenges faced, encouraging them to make more allowances for disruptions
- Humanising the Tube through the portrayal of LU staff experiences giving LU more a personality and identity as an organisation

Elements of the TV series that help build empathy towards LU should be considered for future LU comms development:

- Treating customers as stakeholders by feeding their appetite for information about the Tube's heritage and keeping them in the loop about the TUP vision, future plans etc
- Encouraging customers to think outside of their journey by educating them about how the holistic system operates and encouraging them to think of others (customers, staff)

However, educating customers about the Tube and how it operates can have some negative implications: it can lead to raised expectations on the Tube, start to set new standards and make customers more critical.

While the show has had an overall positive impact on perceptions of LU in the short term, negative media discourses around the Tube (industrial action/politics and delays/disruptions) may cause some of this positivity and empathy felt towards LU to be eroded over time. Day to day experiences on the Tube also have a powerful influence on perceptions of LU, and a bad experience can affect positive attitudes towards LU.

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