RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title   Countdown and Live Next Bus

Objective   To explore how customers feel about and use different sources of bus information, in particular to explore the value of Countdown at bus stops vs. other information sources

Date   13/05/2013   **Agency**   2CV

Methodology 4 x Observations/intercept sessions; 4 x Accompanied journeys; 6 x 1hr 30 minute group discussions with pre-task

Abstract

Whilst Countdown is not available at every stop, it is the preferred information source. Customers are generally unaware of the broader range of sources provided by TfL (incl. Live Next Bus, Countdown SMS, twitter feeds) and use of these resources is niche, but with potential to grow if awareness increases.

Key findings

- By and large customers feel that the **Bus service delivers against their transport needs** and are satisfied with both the service and information provision

- Information needs differ between familiar and unfamiliar journeys

    - Information relating to bus arrivals is not always proactively looked for on more familiar journeys as customer behaviours for these journeys are habitual and bus use is seen as an in the moment low involvement activity

    - Customers more likely to **actively seek information when planning less familiar bus journeys** (but typically require route information & journey length information)

- However, when provided, live information on Bus arrivals does provide reassurance and a sense of connection with the Bus service.

    - Customers **use a hierarchy of sources** at stops to help determine when buses are going to arrive (live → printed → personalised)

- Due to customers' passivity in seeking information **Countdown is the preferred information source -** it is low-involvement and provides **reassurance** and reduces anxiety. Countdown is also easy and quick to use

- If Countdown is unavailable and customers are worried about bus arrival, some **customers default to a range of secondary sources**

    - Typically timetable posters at stops in the first instance, then either bus arrival apps or web based information

- Awareness and motivation both inform preferences:

    - an awareness gap exists which can limit information-seeking

    - push is greatly preferred to pull information; effort involved in seeking information and the need to pay can both act as deterrents

- **Most customers are not aware of the range of information feeds provided by** TfL (incl. Live Next Bus, Countdown SMS, Twitter feeds)

    - They believe TfL should be more proactive in communicating the range of information tools to customers

    - An ongoing campaign at the bus stop could potentially facilitate awareness and usage of other sources.

Job number: 12255