

**Tube upgrade
communications
development**

10059

January 2011



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Research conducted by 2CV

Tube Upgrade Research

Topline report

December 2010

Objectives

- Establish whether there are any significant negative reactions to the advertising that would mean we should reconsider the plan to launch the advertising soon in 2011 (ie whether we are right to go ahead with the campaign largely as planned)
- Test the strategy amongst the target audience:
 - To check comprehension and whether the ads are helpful in understanding the Tube upgrade plan
 - Inform us to whether there are major problems with the proposed campaign, any minor refinements which would improve it

Methodology and sample

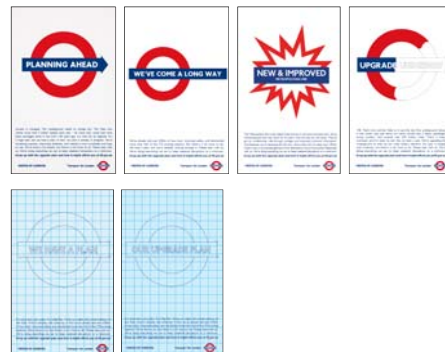
We conducted three, one hour focus groups with six-seven participants in each.

In each group we included a mix of gender, age (20-44) and ABC1/C2 participants, including:

- Mixed attitudes to LU, no outright rejecters
- Mix of commuters and leisure users
- All affected by planned engineering works within the last year

Stimulus

- A series of five executions with two alternative lines for 'We have a plan' – 'Our upgrade plan' and 'Sharing our plan'
- Press ads
- Wireframes for website



Findings

The overall response to the campaign was positive.

- Message comprehension was clear and consistent across the groups. The use of strong, bold headlines across the campaign reinforced that there is a plan, and progress has been made to date. LU were seen to be trying to keep people informed and calm about disruptions to their journeys:
 - *“Lines have improved, they’re getting better”*
 - *“They’re asking us to bear with them while they try to make things better”*
 - *“Keep calm and carry on”*
 - *“It’s informative, I appreciate that”*
 - *“It’s the start of a conversation”*
- The copy offers explanation for why the works are needed and comes across as ‘facts’ that people appreciated learning about:
 - *“I didn’t know the Metropolitan line was the oldest one”*
 - *“148 years old – it’s no wonder they have so much to do”*
 - *“It’s to accommodate London’s growing population – I don’t blame the Tube for that”*
 - *“We like information, this gives us little bits to talk about”*
- The use of the roundel was seen to be a strong, visual shortcut to the iconic and historical significance of the Tube, and the importance of the works.
 - *“It’s playful, it would catch your attention”*
 - *“The Tube is an icon, it’s been around a long time”*
- Most people were left feeling ‘better’ and ‘reassured’ after seeing the ads:
 - *“I feel reassured, happy, almost excited, and a bit proud!”*
 - *“It’s good to let people know what’s been done so far”*
 - *“It’s the least they can do – we’re paying for it”*
 - *“This doesn’t change the way I feel, but I’m a little more enlightened now”*
- However some people were left thinking the campaign signalled that new, major disruptions were being introduced, and/or didn’t make the link to visiting the website to find out more details:
 - *“There’s another plan for major disruptions”*
 - *“I want to know what this means to me – how long, when’s it going to be done”*

- *“The ads are pretty vague about the details – they’re being nice, but they’re not telling you anything”*
- *“I didn’t see the website, it’s hidden down there...and it could do with a special link like ‘tfl.gov.uk’ forward slash ‘upgrade plan’ or something”*
- Overall, this campaign will serve to temper the negativity towards the Tube generally and engineering works specifically, but won’t mitigate them totally. Rather it will help support LU’s brand reputation while the planned investment programme continues.

If it is desired to encourage people to visit the website, the call to action could work harder.

- Questions about ‘how this will affect me’ were top of mind, and yet there wasn’t a strong pull to visit the website for more detail:
 - *“I might go and visit the website”*
 - *“I use Journey Planner all the time, so I’d expect to see if my line’s affected then”*
 - *“I wouldn’t run home to look at the website”*
- People were first and foremost concerned about the implications for their lines/journeys and then, the overall plan. Expectations for the website ranged from the current Journey Planner information, to potentially seeing information about line closures, disruptions and delays, what’s been done to date and the overall plan:
 - *“I expect information about line closures and delays, like on Journey Planner”*
 - *“I’d like to see what’s been done, and the vision”*
- Response to the website ideas was positive – it delivered the level of detail people are interested in knowing about their journey, and more information about the overall plan:
 - *“This is good – I like knowing what’s going on”*
- The call to action line could benefit from emphasising the immediacy and dynamism of information and tools available online, pertaining to each person’s journey:
 - *“Keep up with the upgrade’ sounds long term, doesn’t make me want to check”*

- *"I always check before I leave the house on the weekends just in case – they could remind us to do that online so we're not caught out"*
- *"They should show this overview box – 'view the works happening on each line' – then you know there's this tool to use"*
- *"Is there an app? Or maybe they should talk about the text messages – my friend gets those and they're brilliant"*

Executorial watch-outs

Use of the roundel

- The only negative reaction to the use of the roundel was in the 'New and Improved' execution which was felt by some people to signal a bomb explosion, and inappropriate for the campaign:
 - *"I was in the 7/7 bombs and that's unacceptable"*
 - *"It's an explosion, quite scary"*

Alternative lines for 'We have a plan': 'Our upgrade plan' and 'Sharing our plan'

- The research led with 'We have a plan' in the first group and 'Our upgrade plan' in the second and third groups, comparing the lines after the initial reaction to the set of ads was discussed. 'Sharing our plan' was introduced as part of the discussion comparing the lines.
- None of the respondents spontaneously mentioned either line as part of the initial reaction to the concepts – it was only on probing for the alternative lines that we heard positive or negative associations with either line discussed, as presented below. This would suggest that issues with the lines are not top of mind.
- 'We have a plan' came across as informative, and has the potential to make people feel comforted and reassured:
 - *"It makes you want to read the small print...like well what is your plan?"*
 - *"It shows intent and responsibility...like we care"*
 - *"My instant reaction when looking at the words is that "We have a plan" is more reassuring than "Our upgrade plan"*
 - *"It works with the blueprint"*
- However for some people, 'We have a plan' came across as defensive:
 - *"When you say you have a plan, it usually means you don't"*
 - *"It's like the ship's sinking, and now they're like 'we have a plan!'"*

- *"It reminds me of the A-team, a bit much"*
- 'Our upgrade plan' was at worst seen to be a bit bland, and at best came across as inclusive and direct:
 - *"It's a bit boring"*
 - *"It's a bit dull"*
 - *"I like the use of 'our' – it's nice to hear that"*
 - *"Upgrade is a good word – it's something we're used to seeing like with mobile phones"*
 - *"It's saying there's a plan, without saying 'we have a plan!'"*
- 'Sharing our plan' had a strong negative reaction from some people:
 - *"I don't want to share things with the Tube – just tell me what's going on"*
 - *"I don't like the word 'sharing' in advertising"*
- Given this response and the fact that it was only on deliberate exploration that we elicited any positive or negative feedback, both 'We have a plan' and 'Our upgrade plan' could be considered viable lines for the campaign.