

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	River Services campaign development
Objective	Preferred sources of information and barriers to using the river amongst potential and current customers
Date	April 2010
Methodology	Qualitative methodology comprising two focus groups with current riverboat users, thirteen ethnographies and accompanied journeys with potential and current users and two intercept sessions with visitors in London

Key findings

- Currently there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the river service as a mode of transport amongst potential users.
- The current delineation of services between a mode of transport and a boating experience makes sense to both Londoners and Visitors when told about the services. However, the current naming of the services – ‘Commuter’ and ‘Leisure’ – is misleading.
- ‘Commuter’ describes a journey to and from work and doesn’t encompass the broad range of journeys that could be taken on this service. Both Londoners and Visitors have the potential to use the service as public transport for work and/or non-work purposes at peak and/or off-peak times.
- ‘Leisure’ is not clear as a term and doesn’t do the service justice as a unique and exciting boating experience on the Thames.
- As a mode of transport, other TfL services (Tube, bus, etc) provide the benchmark for how information is expected to be delivered. Primary information needs are price, scheduling and available routes.
- As an experience, other leisure activities (London Eye, London bus tours, etc) provide the comparison point for how information is expected to be delivered. Primary information needs are price and an explanation of logistics and description of the tour.
- As a mode of transport, current and potential users expect certain aspects of the service to be managed by TfL, for example the boat, pier experience and price of the service. Addressing factors that are expected to be under TfL’s control is the first port of call for increased usage and can help mitigate factors that are more unpredictable, such as the weather and time pressure.
- Potential users enjoyed using the service when they tried it during the research and current users enjoy using it too.