

## Delivering Unprecedented Travel Behaviour Change – London 2012

### Marketing

Submission for the Marketing Society Award for Excellence 2012: Customer Insight

#### Summary

During the London 2012 Olympics, 12.5 million spectators and 25,000 athletes and officials were expected on the transport network, enough to bring London to a grinding halt. To ease this pressure, we aimed for a 30% reduction in background demand, primarily commuter travel through the biggest travel behaviour change programme the UK has ever seen.

London 2012 was a triumph so it will be no surprise that our campaign was a success. We didn't just meet our targets, we exceeded them, making the world's first public transport Olympics a reality.

High value customer insight, gained through a rigorous research programme, helped us create a campaign which combined an informational tone of voice with a light-hearted illustrative style, triggering behaviour change whilst raising a smile. It helped people avoid the coming disruption, distilling their options into simple, precise, achievable behaviours and presenting these under a memorable rallying cry, 'Get Ahead of the Games'.

Against our 30% behaviour change target, results showed a 35% reduction during the weeks of the Games and as high as 45% on some specific days. We also achieved around 12% reduction of drivers on the roads.

We also achieved the campaign objectives with a high 86% awareness rating, which is significant given the campaign, only ran for 8 months. TfL's reputation score also doubled from 46% to 95%.

And finally, we have seen more long term behaviour change in planning journeys. Before the Games (end of June) almost 60% of people were planning a journey within an hour of intending to travel, planning at the last minute. During the Games and since then this figure has reduced to 40% with about 35% planning over 1 and up to 12 hours in advance. Advance journey planning rather than chancing it, was a key message platform of the campaign which stuck.

**Word Count: 300**

## **Context**

London 2012 presented the largest logistical challenge since the war. How do over 12.5 million spectators get around during the Games and keeping London *moving*? Getting spectators and the Games Family to events on time and minimising disruption to others needing to travel became the twin objectives of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and Transport for London (TfL). With the underground network and roads already close to capacity, this was no easy task.

The Travel Demand Management (TDM) Programme was tasked with creating a 30% reduction in demand at certain times and locations. Businesses, commuters and spectators needed encouragement to either reduce travel altogether, revise their mode, retime or reroute their journey.

A behaviour change campaign on this scale, over so many audiences and tackling so many different modes of transport had also never been done before. With the world watching and the media perpetuating the view London would fail to deliver successful transport for the Games, the pressure was on. Understanding London's travelling public and how they might behave was critical in creating a successful campaign.

Our specific challenges included:

- *shift on a huge scale* – reaching and mobilising a huge and diverse audience
- *travel as a behaviour* which is hugely habitual - influencing hardened (and already dissatisfied) commuters to travel differently
- *Conveying busyness to both Londoners and other venue locations* - conveying the problems of *busyness* and commuter/traveller 'responsibility' without preaching, scaring or prompting negativity about either the Games or travelling
- *sensitivity of the 'London effect'* - conveying the transport issue in other UK locations without it seeming like 'those Londoners' were telling them what to do
- *remaining agile* - understanding both audience propensity to change and messaging needs over a short period of time (given their understanding of the issue evolved as the Games approached, and changes/information from employers and media (albeit often driven by TDM) changed both perceptions of the issue and messaging needs).

## **The Research**

Experience of TDM from other host cities confirmed we could affect behaviour change if we *could get the messaging and the creative vehicle right, choose the right channels, engage a multitude of audiences and manage stakeholder expectations*.

It was clear we needed a fuller understanding of travellers' current behaviour (both frequent and leisure), as well as attitudes towards and reasons for travel behaviour change in the context of the Games. We also

had to understand business attitudes and what their plans were. As influencers, they were a key target group.

Research was conducted in phases: to define the challenges, develop effective creative and, finally, to check and adapt messaging. The multi-method programme included:<sup>1</sup>

1. Observation of commuters' behaviour at busy locations and times
2. Focus groups with commuters and frequent travellers to identify knowledge base, barriers to behaviour change and establish tone of messaging required
3. Interviews with employers, business owners and key industry leaders
4. Stakeholder forums
5. Series of focus groups to test communication propositions, strength and tone of messaging, creative material and other initiatives
6. Desktop listening research to understand what was being said about travel and the Games on social media and other online channels (blogs, forums, new sites)
7. Surveys of commuter hotspots to understand current behaviour and intention to change

Across the research, sampling was an important consideration. As well as comprehensive representation of London and traveller demographics (gender, age, ethnicity, SEG), we needed to take into account the complexity of different types of commuters and mode users. This meant all transport network users of adult age on Rail, Tube, Car, Bus, River - for whatever purpose they were travelling – leisure and/or work.

A research agency specialising in behaviour change (Define) was commissioned to undertake the work. Case studies from public campaigns like Change4Life were also consulted, alongside learning from TfL's work on travel planning behaviours for campaigns like 'Check before you travel'.

## **Defining the Challenges**

Our research confirmed the extent of the challenge ahead. Despite audience complexity, the main findings were consistent; commuters' key behavioural barriers included:

- thinking it wouldn't affect them because 'it was all happening in East London'
- thinking there weren't any travel alternatives as they had already worked out what was best for them
- discounting any option that seemed harder or more inconvenient than their current commute

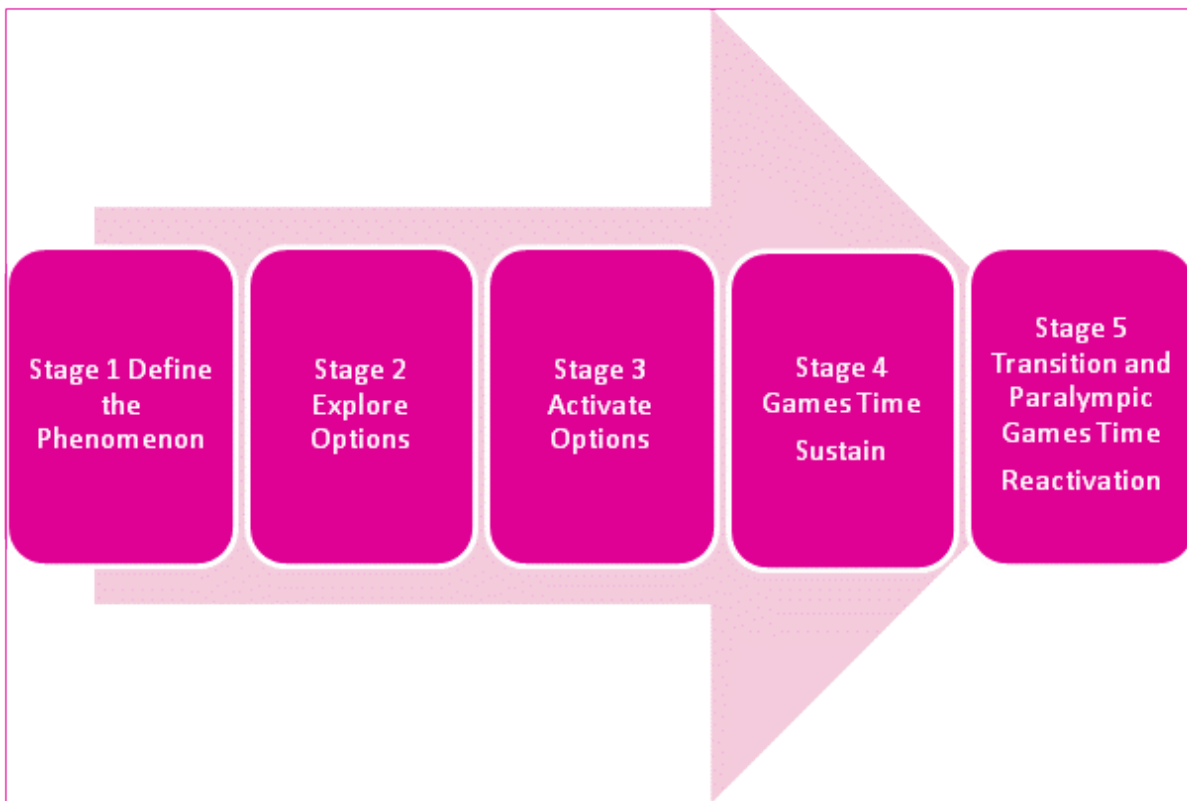
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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for full list and timings of research conducted.

- dismissing options that felt likely to be unsupported by their employer (e.g. working from home or retiming journeys)

### The Campaign Development Phase

From these initial insights we knew we needed to embed initial TDM thinking - provide a *range of practical information* to facilitate change plus an *emotional benefit strong enough* to motivate action. We knew from behavioural economics theory that phasing would be important, as reflected in our initial marketing strategy (Fig 1) and within each phase we needed inbuilt capacity to scale messaging tone up and down to keep the campaign agile in line with audience needs.



**Fig 1 – Strategic phasing of the TDM campaign**

Messaging needed to incorporate killer facts to deliver a personally relevant story, appropriately supported by reliable information and advice on a website. While factual information on *the issue* and *scale* made Games information personally applicable (busyness, time, locations and mode), they also needed an overview of how the network was going to be affected and what mix of options was available to them personally.

In terms of emotional benefit, research showed altruism toward the Games was not a major motivator. Linking personal action to the success of the Games was helpful for some but they were not going to make an effort without gaining *increased personal ease* and *reduction of discomfort*.

Personalising and localising information assisted with another challenge. As this brought traveller needs and their solutions to the foreground (as opposed to the Games), communications were able to convey the severity of the travel issue without appearing negative to the Games.

Influence was increased further by providing people with feedback, reminders and rewards for engaging with the campaign and ensuring the information they received was current and relevant via online tools, live updates and other more immediate communication channels.

The original concepts for this campaign (Fig 2 and 3) were tested as a starting point. While they fit within the strategic phasing framework and strict branding guidelines, they did not resonate with our audience. They did not convey who it was aimed at, what the benefit was, any specific facts and figures to make it credible or reflect travel and the Games well enough.

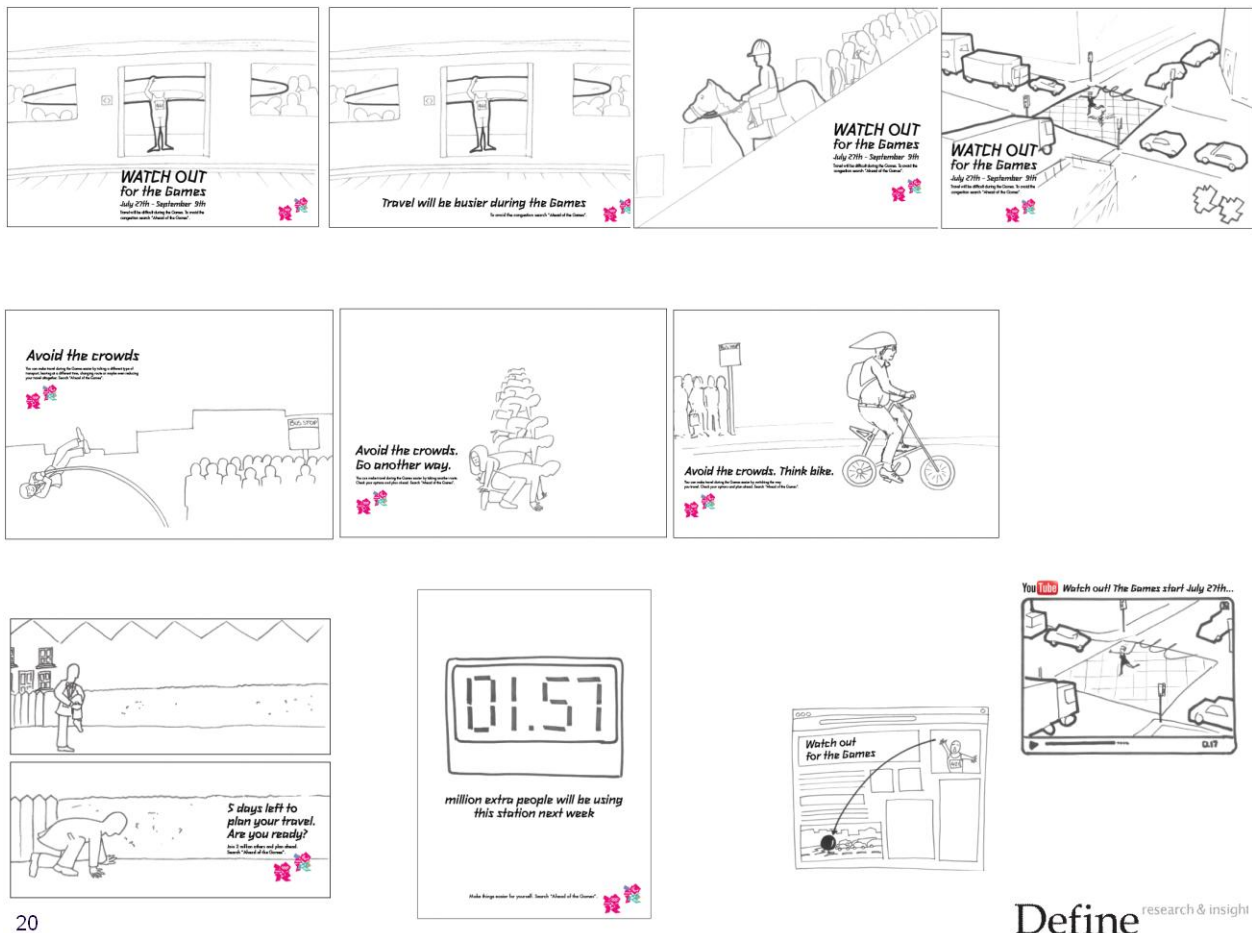


Fig 2 – Original concept one – Games Plan



Fig 3 – Original Concept – Way to GO

The work had not been seen by the public so it was possible to go back to the drawing board for realignment with the research findings.



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Define research & insight

**Fig 4 – Ahead of the Games, the winning concept**

From new options researched, *Ahead of the Games* was taken forward (Fig 4). While still sketches, this route provided the audience with strong visual signifiers of both travel and Games, which contributed directly to messaging.

The tone of voice and gentle humour both appealed to ‘Britishness’ and softened messages by putting them in the context of positivity of the Games through sporting iconography. By reminding people of what they liked about the Olympics, it helped create a more open and collaborative frame of mind as messages were received. However, while the creative was engaging, the content was not action-orientated enough and some individual executions were less effective. All executions and copy options were researched in focus groups to understand the nuances required.

The Answer – *Get Ahead of the Games*. An action-orientated lightly humorous campaign, which incorporated cartoon Games and transport iconography to stand out from traditional transport campaigns.

The creative in Fig 5 shows our efforts to provide a complex set of messages in an integrated way.

Fig 5 – Get Ahead of the Games campaign creative examples

**How will your travel be affected during the Games?**  
27 July - 12 Aug and 29 Aug - 9 Sept  
Find out how travel will be affected at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Transport for London, HIGHWAYS AGENCY

**Certain Roads will be affected during the Games**  
27 July - 12 Aug and 29 Aug - 9 Sept  
Find out about restrictions and plan alternative travel at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Department for Transport, HIGHWAYS AGENCY, Transport for London

**If you can, work from home during the Games**  
On the busiest days only travel when you have to. Find out which days will be most affected and what to do if your travel options at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
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**The DLR will be much busier than usual during the Games**  
27 July - 12 Aug and 29 Aug - 9 Sept  
Find out about restrictions and plan alternative travel at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Transport for London, HIGHWAYS AGENCY

**Certain roads will be affected during the Games**  
27 July - 12 Aug and 29 Aug - 9 Sept  
Find out about restrictions and plan alternative travel at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
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**Cycling could be the quickest way during the Games**  
27 July - 12 Aug and 29 Aug - 9 Sept  
To find out how to get around safely and save yourself for cycling and walking visit [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
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**Walking part of your journey may be quicker during the Games**  
27 July - 12 Aug and 29 Aug - 9 Sept  
Find out how travel will be affected at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
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**Certain bus routes will be diverted during the Games**  
27 July - 9 Sept  
To find out which routes are affected and to explore all the options visit [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com) and follow us on Twitter @GAOTG

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Transport for London, HIGHWAYS AGENCY

**Certain roads will be affected during the Games**  
Find out about restrictions at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com)

Working together:  
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**Marylebone station will be much busier than usual between 7.00am - 10.00am during the Games.**  
There will be a knock-on effect on other lines and stations.  
Find out how you will be affected at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com)

Follow us on @GAOTG

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Transport for London, HIGHWAYS AGENCY

**Get ready to change the way you travel**  
Don't blame it to change during the Games. Plan your journey at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com)

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Transport for London, HIGHWAYS AGENCY

**Don't chance it during the Games. Plan your travel now**  
The travel situation will change daily during the Games. Get help planning your journeys at [GetAheadoftheGames.com](http://GetAheadoftheGames.com)

Follow us on @GAOTG

Working together:  
MAYOR OF LONDON, National Rail, Department for Transport, HIGHWAYS AGENCY, Transport for London

It wasn't just about the creative though. We knew from the research that delivery channels, tools, information and advice would be vital to getting traction and creating a credible, trustworthy voice.

Consumer insight supported our communication channel choice. Radio as well as social media utilised sporting heroes in transport settings. Campaign PR also gave the programme an avenue to have some fun and engage the consumer in a different way. For example, recreating ads on the tube, using sporting heroes racing across London, having London theatre icons taking up the cycling challenge and using well known radio personalities to blog about what to do in London to avoid the busiest times during the Games. Of course the campaign was also supported throughout by our work with businesses.

### **Checking and adapting**

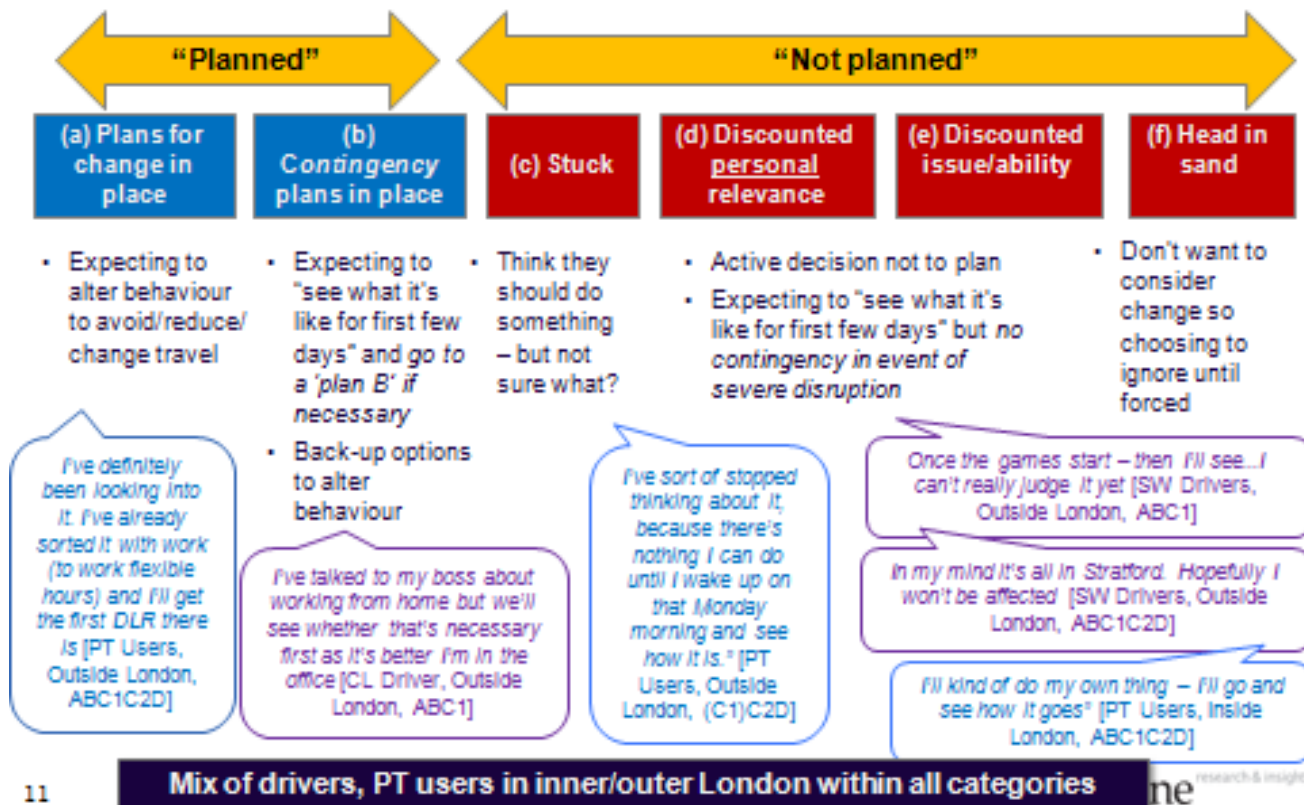
Researching in stages allowed an ongoing temperature check and campaign adaptation, with the clearest example in the final research (May 2012).:

- Tracking research showed that campaign awareness was high and some intended to change - but too many were going to 'wait and see'.
- Qualitative investigation (Fig 6) showed that softer messaging was leading people to believe they wouldn't be affected and allowed inertia to remain, with people intending to chance it on the day instead of planning ahead.
- Online information we were driving consumers to, contained substantial proof that change was necessary. However, we needed to work harder to connect them to it and took steps to increase the sense of severity in messaging and their personal ownership of the problem alongside a reminder of real personal benefit and social proof of change.
- Insight showed we needed to nuance the messaging to use stronger wording – 'will or would' versus the previous 'may or could'. We also directly challenged the attitudes of those that would leave it to chance by incorporating key terms like ' 'Don't chance your travel, plan ahead now' and for car users who thought they could get around it – ' Don't get caught out, roads will operate differently find out where and when at GAOTG.com'
- We also had to make sure people *connected* with this information, so we developed new PR and social media ideas to drive engagement and interaction by providing evidence of change through competitions and vox pops. We also increased the promotion of maps, video advice and other tools through radio, digital and press advertising.



## Current planning activity

- Respondents recruited to reflect a mix of action and intention with six groups apparent overall



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Mix of drivers, PT users in inner/outer London within all categories

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Fig 6 – May 2012 Audience attitudes

### The Outcome

Importantly, the 30% reduction target was achieved and exceeded, with results showing a 35% reduction during the weeks of the Games and as high as 45% on some specific days. We also achieved around 12% reduction of drivers on the roads. We saw record ridership on the Tube and DLR services, one million Barclay's bike hires and accommodated some 2.5 million people watching the free road events in Central London.

While we achieved the programme objective we also achieved the campaign objectives with a high 86% awareness rating, which is significant given the campaign only ran for 8 months. This level of awareness got us some 16 million page views on the Get Ahead of the Games Website and 76,000 Twitter followers with over 64,000 following at any one time. We also achieved 2012 pieces of news coverage via an extensive PR programme, 1.7 million personalised emails sent to TfL customers and TfL's reputation score doubling from 46% to 95%. And finally, we have seen more long term behaviour change in planning journeys. Before the Games (end of June) almost 60% of people were planning a journey within an hour of intending to travel, planning at the last minute. During the Games and since then this figure has reduced to

40% with about 35% planning over 1 and up to 12 hours in advance. Advance journey planning rather than chancing it, was a key message platform of the campaign which stuck.

## **CONCLUSION**

The firm evidence above outlines the effective delivery of the most successful travel behaviour change campaign ever run. We also achieved what we set out to do - enable the Games Family and spectators to get to the events on time using public transport and keep London moving.

An agile programme of customer insight underpinned the campaign *throughout* its development and execution. We made sure we fully understood the barriers to travel behaviour change and, how we could facilitate change. Our multi-channel campaign incorporated findings about messaging, channel use and visuals to drive awareness, personal connection and secure the all important intent to change which led to actual change.

**Word Count – 2063 (including titles)**

## Appendix A

### Travel Demand Management Consumer Insights Research Programme

Research	Scope
In field research at Vancouver Winter Olympics 2010	Survey of spectators and commuters to understand travel behaviours and the change occurring due to communications.
June 2010 – Ongoing - KPI tracking surveys	Survey conducted with businesses and commuters to track planning and intention to change as well as current travel behaviour at Hotspots. 3 monthly for 2010 -2011. Monthly for 2011-2012, weekly in June-July 2012 then daily during the Games with travellers.
August 2010 - Focus Groups and Depth Interviews <i>Strategic Research</i>	7 x pre-tasked, extended focus groups with commuters and frequent travellers 16 x depth interviews with business influencers (major employers)
October 2010 - Depth Interviews <i>Creative Development Research – execution development</i>	10 x depth interviews with business audience to inform development of the TAB campaign
November 2010 - Focus Groups <i>Creative Development Research – creative route</i>	4 x focus groups with commuters and frequent travellers to inform direction on creative route
May 2011 - Focus Groups <i>Creative Development Research – wide range of executions tested across three phases, plus intention to change and messaging assessment</i>	27 x pre-tasked, extended focus groups with commuters and frequent travellers, split across 3 location types (London, other venue locations, non-venue locations)
October 2011 - Focus Groups <i>Creative Development Research – new executions, radio and campaign messaging update</i>	19 x pre-tasked, extended focus groups with the target audience split across 3 location types to test new Phase 2 executions (print and radio) and refine messaging/tone
October 2011 - Listening Social Media Research	<i>Desktop research to find out the online spheres of influence for the target audiences, - who they are listening to, where are they commenting, what are they searching</i>
November 2011 – Ongoing Ad tracking research <i>Monitor the campaign KPI's of awareness, Intent to change and planning. Media effectiveness also tracked</i>	Online survey to establish a baseline and then track campaign KPI's on a monthly then weekly basis with London and Non London audience – provide insight into pre Games thinking and plans as well as provide media effectiveness figures.

December 2011 - Depth Interviews <i>Creative Development Research – creative route and messaging requirements</i>	12 x depth interviews with range of businesses to inform creative route for freight campaign
January 2012 – Ongoing social media monitoring	Weekly analysis of social media channels to determine sentiment and provide insight into issues and concerns of the audience
May 2012 - Focus Groups <i>Creative Development Research – new executions tested, plus intention to change and messaging assessment</i>	20 x mini groups of 5 respondents, split between commuters and London drivers
A quantitative research programme was established from 2010 for KPI tracking purposes with business, commuter and hotspots users as well as spectators	A mixture of online surveys, telephone interviews and face to face surveying dependent on the audience to track KPI's

Qualitative research programme conducted Define Research & Insight Ltd, Social media monitoring conducted by Human Digital and Quantitative research conducted by Opinion Leader Research on behalf of the Olympic Development Authority and Transport for London (TfL)