



# Victoria station contactless messaging

Research debrief

September 2015

# Background



- Ahead of the ticket office closure at Victoria station, TfL have **increased contactless messaging through posters, signs, announcements and staff**
- **2CV conducted 3 x 2 hour intercept sessions** (one pre-launch of information poster and two post-launch) to:
  - Understand experiences / expectations of the ticket office closure
  - Explore responses to contactless messaging
  - Gauge impact of messaging on awareness, switching and attitudes towards ticket office closure



# Key findings



Victoria station already feels 'chaotic' and customers are concerned about the impact of the ticket offices closing

- Customers are mostly concerned about the impact of the closures on their **purchase experience** and the **station environment**

Frequent customers are more motivated to use contactless when thinking about the 'post TOC' experience eg queues / crowds

- The benefits of contactless are '**clearer**' when thinking about **them solving a problem** caused by ticket office closures

Whiteboard 'in a hurry?' poster doesn't work hard enough to engage and motivate

- Customers feel it is **too 'text heavy' and doesn't stand out** from all of the other information in the station. Often not placed in optimal position to influence behaviour

'Use contactless today' message on the digital screen is most motivating to switch in the moment

- It **stands out**, is in an **ideal position** and **communicates that contactless is 'ready to go'** - customers can make a **quick decision**

Contactless is appealing and customers appreciate the offering, but it does not allay all concerns around ticket office closures

- Customers still **want reassurance** that **staff** will be **truly available** to **assist** and **manage flow**

# Victoria station already feels ‘chaotic’ and customers are concerned about the impact of the ticket offices closing

- Customers can already feel fairly **flustered** about buying their ticket in this busy environment
  - It can feel particularly **chaotic** and **overwhelming for** tourists and visitors
- Customers are mostly concerned about the impact of the closures on:

“I like that face to face help, I doubt there will be enough staff to help everyone at the machines”

“All the tourists will take ages to use the machines and the queues will be a nightmare”

“If the queues are too much to bare I’ll have to deal with it, I don’t have a contactless card right now but I may ask my bank for one!”

## Ticket purchase experience

- Larger queues for the machines
- Less ‘human’ interaction and help

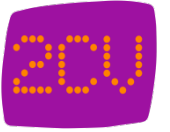
## Station environment

- Ticket hall will be harder to navigate eg flow of the station

- Tourists / visitors feel nervous that they won’t get the right ticket / fare if they have to rely on themselves
  - They are somewhat reassured to hear that staff will be out in the ticket hall to help them, but some are **sceptical of how ‘available’ they will be**
- Commuters and other regular users see the closure as a **big inconvenience to them**, not because they want to use the office, but because more people will be in the queue they are in for the machines

Many customers feel they can solve any problems caused by the closure themselves eg use contactless / move online eg auto top-up

# Response to contactless messaging differs between customer types



- Customers have varying awareness of contactless:

**Tourists** are less familiar with contactless and initially think it is about Oyster



Many do not have contactless cards that they can use in this country

“Contactless is what oyster does right?”

**Visitors from outside of London** are less aware but more open to using contactless after seeing comms



They want reassurance that this is the best ‘ticket type’ and that it is hassle free to use it today

“This is good, I wouldn’t have thought to use my card”

**Frequent customers eg commuters** were either already using contactless and if not are happy with what they have eg Oyster

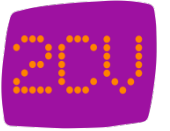


Respond with more interest when considering the upcoming closure of the ticket office and the wider impact

“When they’re closed the machines will be a nightmare, I can see myself using my card then just to avoid that”

Many customers feel they can solve any problems caused by the closure themselves

# Whiteboard 'in a hurry?' poster doesn't work hard enough to engage and motivate



- The whiteboard poster struggles to have impact alongside all of the other information in the station
  - Not one customer we spoke to had read the whiteboard poster before the intercept
    - Some feel this is because it is too text heavy and they don't have the time
    - Others (particularly tourists) are put off by the amount of text as it is a lot to understand and decode
- It is often used as a 'room divider' when crowd control measures are put in place, therefore customers are walking straight past it
- Customers feel they can **quite quickly take out that they can use your contactless card if you're in a rush**
  - But can suggest you only use it 'in an emergency'
- While the benefits communicated feel **relevant** and **informative**, many customers claim they **would not read this far into the poster**



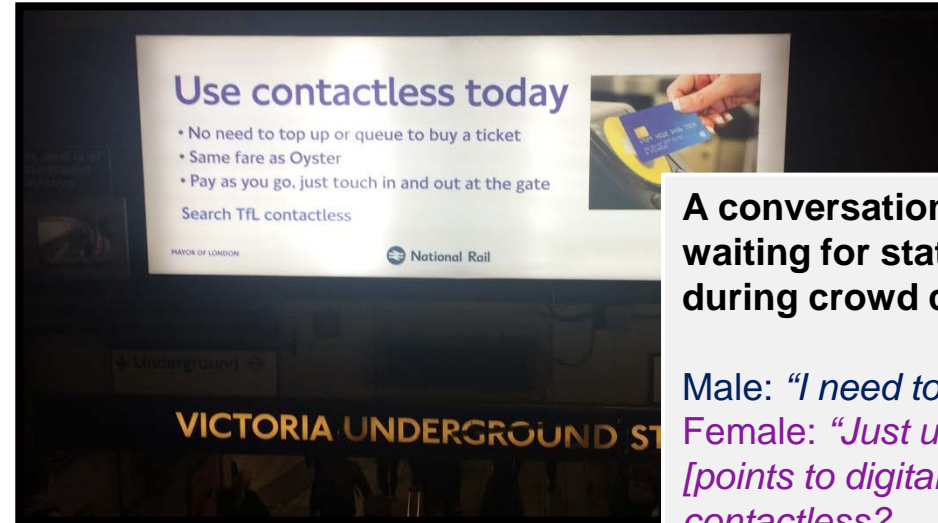
"I don't really read things on here [whiteboard] unless it's one of those thoughts of the day, it's too long and I would just never stop to read it!"

"Well if you're in a hurry then I guess it would come in handy, I wouldn't use it all the time though, just as a back up"

Ultimately, being in a hurry is a limited 'problem to solve', messaging should focus on engaging with a range of customers, not just those in a rush

# The ‘use contactless today’ message on the digital screen is most motivating in the moment

- **Contactless messaging on the digital screen is working harder to get customer’s attention**
  - Particularly when crowd control is in place and customers are held at the entrance
  - This allows them ample time to read the message and prompts discussion among peers / colleagues as well as encouraging solo travellers to either ask a member of staff about it or go straight through and use their card
  
- **‘Use contactless today’ communicates a ‘ready to go’ take out that customers can make a quick decision from**
  - It is **effective** and gets customers to **reconsider their ticket type**
  - It does not make contactless feel like a ‘back up’, but more of a **genuine option** to consider **here and now**



**A conversation overheard while waiting for station to open during crowd control...**

Male: *“I need to buy a ticket”*  
 Female: *“Just use your card, look [points to digital screen], is yours contactless?”*  
 Male: *“Yeah I think so, cool I’ll do that then”*  
 Female: *“Sorted! Thank god I haven’t got to wait around for you in that queue”*

*“I like that I can use my card right now, I probably do this next week instead of topping up”*



# Many customers point out the blue 'short' messages – they stand out and get people out of the queue

- The blue signs in the queues are spontaneously mentioned by customers
  - **They stand out well and target people while they queue**
- When customers are familiar and comfortable with contactless (and have a card), they are **likely to leave the queue and use it**
- Customers like how **short** and **concise** these messages are and prefer them to the whiteboard poster



“I’ve seen the other blue ones... they are punchier. It literally told me to go straight to the gate so I did! Happy days”

“I saw that blue and yellow sign just this morning, I got out of the queue and went straight through the barrier! I don’t see a reason to use my Oyster anymore”



# Contactless is appealing and customers appreciate the offering, but it does not allay all concerns around ticket office closures

- **Customers appreciate the benefit of contactless** and can see how driving use will help relieve the demand put onto ticket machines after the ticket office closes
- When **considering the closures**, customers are **more open to contactless** but their **negativity towards TfL is not completely allayed**
  - They are **still concerned about why they are closing** and the **wider impact** it will have on customers who don't have a contactless card / don't want to use it
- Whether they are open to using contactless or not, customers feel that TfL should be **catering to everyone's needs** and that **TfL must demonstrate this with impeccable customer service** in the ticket hall when the offices close
  - Customers are most concerned about **how it will make tourists feel** and the **subsequent impact that will have on the service 'everyone' else has**

“There is nothing I can do about it closing, it's going to happen, I wish I could stop it, but seeing as they are doing it anyway the way they handle us is going to be really interesting. The staff need to up their game and be prepared”

“Sure there will be staff but they will be helping all of the tourists, we'll never get to speak to them!”



# Thank you

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