

**Cyclists & HGV's  
communications  
development**

**09222**  
May 2010



# Cyclists and HGV Communications Development

## Topline report

June 2010

### Objectives

To pre-test the creative approach amongst the target audience:

- To check comprehension and that the target market is motivated by the campaign message
- To provide guidance on development of the campaign

### Methodology and sample

We conducted three, one hour focus groups with six participants in each. All participants cycled at least three times/week for both commuting and/or leisure purposes and with a particular focus on journeys at peak hours (when most collisions occur).

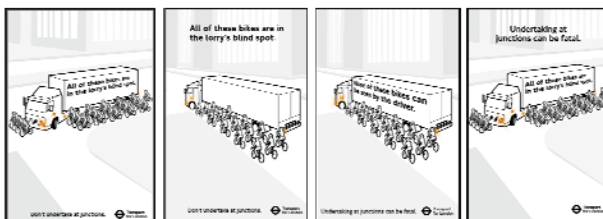
In each group we included a mix of gender, age (20-55) and ABC1 participants.

- Group 1: experienced cyclists, living in outer London
- Group 2: experienced cyclists, living in inner London
- Group 3: inexperienced cyclists, living in inner London

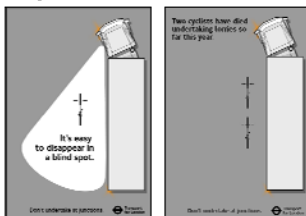
### Stimulus

We tested two routes: The 'side' route (four executions) and the 'top' route (two executions):

#### 'Side' route



#### 'Top' route



## **Findings**

### **The 'side' route was the clear winner.**

- The visual of cyclists showing the size of a blind spot delivered new news that blind spots are larger than cyclists realised.
  - *"It is the number of cyclists in that spot that makes it really clear"*
  - *"I didn't know it was the width of three cycles"*
  - *"I would tell my sons who are in their late teens and 20s – do you know how wide that blind spot is on a lorry?"*
  - *"(The blind spot is) three cyclists wide the entire length of the lorry"*
  
- Copy on the side of the lorry was easier to take in at a glance due to its proximity to the central image and the bikes/blind spot information.
  - *"Because the text is on the actual image you don't have to move your eyes...it's easier to take in"*
  
- Including the word 'fatal' in the endline communicated the consequence of the behaviour.
  - *"The word fatal should be bigger – I didn't even read what was on the lorry, I just remember the fatal bit"*
  - *"Without the word fatal it doesn't seem as serious"*
  
- As a result of these factors, the message was clearly understood and encouraged the necessary behaviour change, e.g. hang back, be more careful with lorries at junctions, etc. All participants, both experienced and inexperienced cyclists, felt the message was relevant.
  - *"This would make me not try to sneak up the inside but to hang back"*
  - *"This is for everyone cycling in London"*

### **The 'top' route was felt to lack impact.**

- The visuals took 'too long' to be internalised and didn't give precise information about the size of the blind spot.
  - *"I found it quite hard to work out what they were showing at first. You wouldn't get it if you were cycling by"*
  - *"I found the white shape confusing...is it a light or what?"*

- *“It’s really artsy and not what they should be using for this purpose. Maybe once people know about blind spots, then they can use this kind of ad as a reminder message”*
  - *“It doesn’t show the lorry on the road – you don’t know how big the blind spot is”*
- The line ‘Two cyclists have died undertaking lorries so far this year’ was not seen to be a significant number of fatalities to cause alarm and behaviour change.
  - *“Two!?! Out of all those couriers...only two?”*
- The line ‘It’s easy to disappear in a blind spot’ was felt to be a nice line to remind cyclists about a lorry’s blind spot but did not provide any ‘new’ information about the blind spot per se.
- Therefore at best the executions in this route reminded cyclists about a lorry’s blind spots but failed to deliver new news and therefore would not cause the necessary behaviour change.
  - *“It’s better for new cyclists in London. I am aware of this already – it’s just a reminder that a lorry has blind spots”*

**Within the ‘side’ route, we have clear guidance on copy and imagery:**

*The copy line*

- ‘Blind spot’ is a commonly used expression understood by most people, and an effective short hand for ‘what you can’t see’, invisibility and danger.
  - *“Blind spots...I drive as well and it’s a language that I understand”*
- The copy ‘none of these bikes can be seen by the driver’ personalised the message for cyclists by including the word ‘driver’ (as opposed to ‘lorry’)
  - *“I think it’s better if it doesn’t say ‘lorry’s’ – ‘driver’ is better”*
  - *“It’s nobody’s fault – it’s just a blind spot that the driver can’t see”*

- 'All of these bikes are in the lorry's blind spot' was felt to be more statement of fact, rather than a personal relationship between driver and cyclist. However 'all of these bikes' is more inclusive and appealing than 'none of these bikes'.
- Recommendation to consider 'All of these bikes are in the driver's blind spot' as the copy line.

### The endline

- The word 'fatal' conveyed a strong consequence for being in the blind spot and allowed the cyclist to draw their own conclusions. This contributed to the feeling that TfL were providing helpful information about the risks by creating these ads.
  - *"It feels like somebody has put their arm around you and said be careful"*
  - *"I think this is subtle – when you see shock advertising you turn your head. This one doesn't put you off cycling, it just shows the mechanics of how it can happen"*
- The line 'Don't undertake at junctions' was felt to be too authoritarian and did not provide an overt explanation for why cyclists shouldn't undertake at junctions.
  - *"Nobody likes being told 'don't'"*
- The endline needed to be clearer/larger and connected to the central visual idea. Comprehension will benefit from placing the endline after the copyline i.e. educate about the problem and then provide the consequence.
  - *"When you have the text up top you don't read what's on the lorry. It's better if you see the lorry first, then have the text under it"*
  - *"I prefer to see the picture first and let my eye be drawn in"*

### Imagery

- Showing a lorry turning left communicated at a glance the danger of being in a lorry's blind spot. Both rear and front profiles communicate the dangers of turning left, although the front profile is currently stronger as it demonstrates more of a 'jackknife' positioning on the road.
  - *"When it's obviously turning you can see where the accident can happen. It makes you question if you would be safe there"*

- The bikes at the front of the lorry have the potential to detract from the core message of discouraging undertaking of lorries.
- The graphic style of the adcepts was appealing in that it communicated the starkness of message in a simple way and was expected to stand apart from other advertising on the street. That said, there was interest in seeing more context for the scene e.g. clearly depicting a street in London, markings on the road, potentially including railings at the junction etc. Splashes of colour were also suggested to help the ad have more stand out.
  - *“It needs to be more realistic – in London you don’t get an open road like that, you have lots of railings”*
- If the ads are to be presented photographically, we would recommend ensuring all of the above in the treatment (starkness of message, simplicity and stand out) and crucially that the size and space of the blind spots be the focus and accurately depicted i.e. it’s important to avoid the cyclists looking like individuals instead of a ‘block of space that represents the blind spots’

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