# MARKETING SOCIETY AWARDS 2018

## YES WE CAN: How Transport for London harnessed the power of the collective to achieve justice for victims of unwanted sexual behaviour



**Agencies:** VCCP & Wavemaker
**Brand:** Transport for London
**Category:** Partnering for Good

# Executive Summary

The issue of sexual harassment has exploded into the world's consciousness in the light of the Harvey Weinstein allegations.

However back in 2013, this was still a relatively low profile subject that was struggling to gain traction in the national consciousness.

After research conducted by TfL revealed that incidents of unwanted sexual behaviour (USB) on public transport were unacceptably high, Project Guardian was conceived as a joint initiative with the British Transport Police, Met Police and City of London Police to tackle this problem and create an infrastructure that would enable victims of USB to easily report incidents, and drive significant improvements in the volume of arrests and successful prosecution of perpetrators.

The marketing challenge was two-fold. The first part was to raise awareness and educate Londoners about the existence of USB and how it could be reported and dealt with. This was the relatively straightforward element.

The second element was more challenging. Research following the first campaign, was showing that levels of "consideration to report" amongst the target audience was proving a harder metric to shift.

By applying best practice principles of behavior change theory, TfL used the power of the collective to drive significant increases in motivation to report.

This campaign has proved to be highly effective in driving real increases in hard metrics including a 65% uplift in reporting USBs and a total of 1200 arrests since the campaign started.

**Word Count: 232**

# The Context

Project Guardian is an initiative by **Transport for London** (TfL) BTP, Met Police and City of London Police to increase reporting of unwanted sexual behaviours (USB) on public transport.

In late 2017, the issue of sexual harassment suddenly became one of the most high profile issues in the press and across social media as the Harvey Weinstein allegations emerged. In this post-Weinstein era, we are witnessing an unprecedented level of scrutiny and exposure of an issue that had previously struggled to gain the necessary traction. On a daily basis, media coverage worldwide is finally highlighting cases of sexual harassment suffered by women in many different contexts, particularly amongst the target audience range of Project Guardian, 16-34 year old women.



Most importantly, we are seeing a fundamental change in attitudes. Incidents of sexual harassment are no longer seen as something that women have to tolerate in silence as a normalised behaviour, with little recourse to address the issue and penalise perpetrators. We are seeing a growing level of confidence amongst women that victims of sexual harassment will be both listened to, and the issue taken seriously.

## The Context

In 2013, the issue of unwanted sexual behaviour was still very far from the mainstream. This, however, failed to be a deterrent to action for Transport for London.

Project Guardian arose following a 2013 YouGov poll which revealed that 19% of women had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour on public transport in London, such as groping, flashing, masturbation or sexual comments, yet 90% of those women did not report incidents to the police (Source: 2CV/TfL 2013 Safety and Security Survey)

In other words, the overwhelming normalised behaviour was to avoid reporting any such incidents. Indeed in 2013 we only received 1,000 reports of unwanted sexual behavior. (Source: TfL/BTP/Met Police data) This was ultimately reducing a key deterrent, fear of prosecution, especially for serial perpetrators.

A lack of comprehension as to what constituted USB was clearly a major barrier.

Recognition that such incidents were unacceptable and could lead to a criminal prosecution of perpetrators was also low. Possibly the most troubling revelation from qualitative research amongst the target audience was that resignation reigned supreme. It was just part of day-to-day travelling in London and therefore people, usually women, just had to accept it.

*"I'd kind of forgotten about this till we started chatting, but a while back I was travelling on the tube to meet my friends. I was standing on the escalator and out of nowhere this drunk guy put a bottle up my skirt...I just quickly started walking up the escalator to get away. No one seemed to notice and it was all over so quickly. I just tried to forget about it, I didn't know I could report it but now I wish I had told someone official."*
        *- Source: 16-34yo woman, 2CV qual research 2013.*

The research analysis summarised current attitudes...

*"These were normalised experiences that were generally ignored. They were viewed as a social nuisance."*

*"There was a need amongst victims to internalise the situation, escape and forget about the incident as quickly as possible."*

# Educating London

The first campaign of Project Guardian necessarily started with emphasis on explaining what constituted USB, and encouraging victims to report an incident to a dedicated BTP/Met Police team via text message or phone.



VO: The man in the grey suit is staring at you, would you report it?
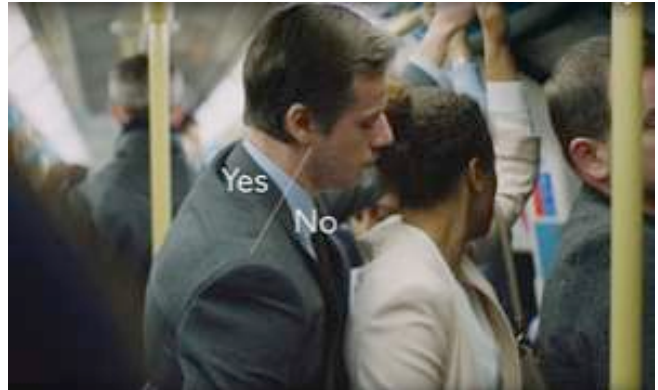


VO: He finds an excuse to lean into you, would you report it?



VO: You can report anything that makes you feel uncomfortable



VO: Report it to stop it.

Report It To Stop It TVC, April 2015

## An Encouraging Start...

The results from the first phase of this campaign showed that Project Guardian had been successful in significantly increasing awareness and understanding of USB. Key to this first campaign was making people aware that anything that made them feel uncomfortable could be easily reported. Over the course of two years, this campaign grew understanding of the simplicity of reporting USB by 22% (41% May 2015 to 50% November 2015). (Source: TNS Campaign tracking)

We also saw an increase in understanding of what a USB is, particularly for those less intrusive offences which nevertheless disturbed and upset women, and still constituted a criminal offence, with understanding growing over the course of the first phase of the campaign from 35% in May 2015 to 40% in November 2015 (Source: TNS Campaign tracking).

Despite attitudinal improvements and growing comprehension of USB, this represented only half of the desired behaviour change objective that Project Guardian was designed to deliver.

## ... But Much Work Still To Be Done

A key frustration for the Project Guardian team was that consideration to report remained relatively flat, building only by 2 percentage points (62% May 2015 to 64% Nov 2015) over the first campaign phase. (Source: TNS Campaign tracking)

Further research with the target audience suggested there was still a significant degree of fatalism that was affecting people's readiness to report incidents of USB. Understanding the multiple elements behind that fatalism would become critical to the success of this campaign.

# Resetting Three Norms

Within TfL, one of the most influential models of behaviour change thinking is Modes of Influence framework developed by Professor of Psychology, Robert Cialdini.

## The 6 Principles of Persuasion by Robert Cialdini

| 1. Liking | 2. Reciprocity | 3. Social Proof |
|---|---|---|
| If people like you they're more likely to say yes | People tend to return favours | People will do things that they see others doing |
| **4. Commitment and Consistency** | **5. Authority** | **6. Scarcity** |
| People want to be consistent. If they make a voluntary, public commitment they'll follow through | People defer to experts and to those in positions of authority | People value things if they perceive them to be scarce |

In looking for new ways to strengthen the campaign message, it became very apparent that one of the key modes of influence we could leverage more prominently was "social proof" - the importance of encouraging people to act by seeing what others are doing.

# Resetting Three Norms

### 1. Make it the norm to report it

In the case of Project Guardian, the "social proof" factor could be dramatized by demonstrating that:

> <u>Many people were already doing the desired behaviour:</u> i.e. refusing to view USB as a normalized part of the day-to-day travel experience, and reporting the incidents

### 2. Make success tangible

Research also uncovered a persistent scepticism that police could actually catch the perpetrators.

This informed a significant part of the creative brief – the need to ensure that our target audience would be able to see the "normalized" behavior as an end-to-end process, from initial reporting to successful arrest:

> <u>Show the desired behavior was leading to desired outcomes</u>: the reported incidents were leading to actual arrests

### 3. Couldn't I just move on?

The same qualitative research revealed another barrier that had to be overcome - a lack of individual motivation. Put simply, people struggled to understand how their individual reporting could possibly catch a perpetrator.

Understandably, individual victims were often choosing to "move on and forget about it", with almost half of women feeling unwilling to report USB to the police or other authorities. (Source: TNS Campaign tracking)

# YES WE CAN

Our breakthrough emerged from a new piece of research published by Professor Robert Cialdini. In it, he proposed an additional seventh mode of influence be incorporated into his established model of behaviour change; the concept of 'Unity'.

> *"The more we identify ourselves with others, the more we are influenced by these others"*

Persuading individuals that they were part of a potential collective was a theme we began to actively explore in strategic research. It proved to be highly impactful.

Out of a variety of creative territories tested with respondents, we discovered that the motivation to help others avoid being victims, rather than just achieving justice for their own individual experiences, was an exceptionally powerful motivator.

> *"It would hopefully prevent future re-occurences"*

> *"Less chance of them affecting someone else"*

> *"To avoid there being another victim who might experience something similar or worse"*

Source: TNS/TfL qual research, Nov 2016

# Setting the Scene

We now had a very clear brief for what our creative execution needed to achieve in order to overcome the main barriers and leverage the strongest set of motivations.

*1. Denormalise USB* by demonstrating that their report mattered to police. This was an issue that is taken very seriously by police.

*2. Dramatise the path* from an individual's contribution to a successful arrest was key for creative.

*3. Empower their individual contribution* by showing every report matters. Every report contributed to a collective solution and benefit for multiple victims.

# The Creative Answer

Of the three elements to our communications, appealing to the power of the collective appeared to be a powerful new dimension to the overall campaign message, and it was one that we chose to lead with.

Our campaign idea was "every report builds a picture"

In AV, we used the execution to dramatize an account of a typical process. We showed how seemingly "vague" pieces of personal testimony, made up of multiple reports provided in phone calls from multiple individual victims, could, as a collective, help identify the common perpetrator. The film ends with the arrest of the perpetrator at his workplace.

The choice of context for the arrest was important. We needed to show that perpetrators were just as likely to be smartly dressed "professionals" as they could be any other individuals. There was no one "type" of perpetrator.

## The Campaign



VO: I'd like to report being sexually harassed on the tube



VO: And then he put his hand on my thigh



VO: You know. He shouldn't get away with it.



VO: Every report helps build a picture.



VO: Until we catch them.



VO: Report it to stop it.
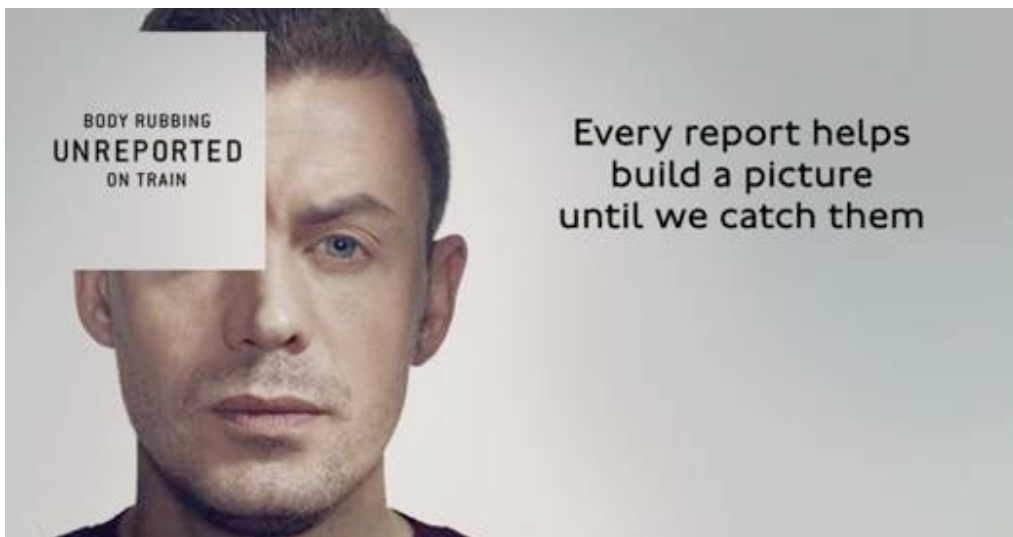
Every Report Builds A Picture TVC, April 2017

## The Campaign







Press executions, April 2017

## The Campaign



Digital banners and social content, Every Report Builds A Picture, April 2017

# The Media Strategy

The media strategy had a heavy focus on channels that could prime our audience, to explain what constitutes USB before encouraging them to take action. It was imperative that they felt empowered and in control in this situation and that we avoided causing a negative reaction or scaremongering. Emotionally engaging channels, with the ability to build impact and talk to the user in a safe and personal environment, were therefore critical.

Video on demand offered the opportunity to serve longer form content in a highly engaged and undiluted environment. The solitary consumption time provided us with the opportunity to speak to our audience around this sensitive topic whilst giving women the time to take in and digest the message.

Facebook was our secondary channel to engage users in a different environment and reinforce the campaign messages. In order to do this we ran a 10" video asset to reflect the faster-paced nature of the Facebook environment and ensured that targeted was focused towards the evening, where we had seen historical campaign performance peak.

Throughout the campaign, we ran social listening studies to understand the sentiment and key topics of conversation around the campaign. This provided themes, trends and key influencers which helped shape posts inform copy and feed in to future creative learnings. The reports studied both paid and organic posts to ensure we had a holistic view of the campaign as per the view of the consumer.

# Real Results

It's common for awards papers to wax lyrical about campaign tracking scores whilst glossing over the real behaviour outcomes. In the case of Project Guardian, the most important results over the period of the Project Guardian campaign (April 2015-Dec 2017), represent the most tangible of metrics:

*A 65% uplift in reporting unwanted sexual behaviours*

*The arrest of 1200 people who have sexually harassed on the public transport network*

The fundamental objective of Project Guardian's existence, the creation of a virtuous circle of reporting, leading to prosecution, creating a significant deterrent to perpetrators thereby generating  a reduction in incidences of unwanted sexual behaviour, is coming into place.

# Campaign Metrics

The impact of the campaign is also starting to demonstrate significant uplifts in the key attitudinal metrics that are essential to turning the desired behaviour into a new norm.

Consideration to report is now at a normative level of intention, with over three-quarters of the target audience stating their willingness to act.

There has been an increase from 64% to 78% in agreement that "they would consider reporting an incident of unwanted sexual behaviour if it happened to them" since the 2nd phase of the campaign first started. (Source TfL/TNS tracking 2017)

This has been undoubtedly aided by highly effective use of paid media, where the power of collective action played out in the response. Women wanted to share the message that every report mattered to all women, and we saw sharing rates of 77% above benchmarks, and social mentions of the campaign over double the predictions, based on previous campaign performance.

## PROPENSITY TO REPORT UNWANTED SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS
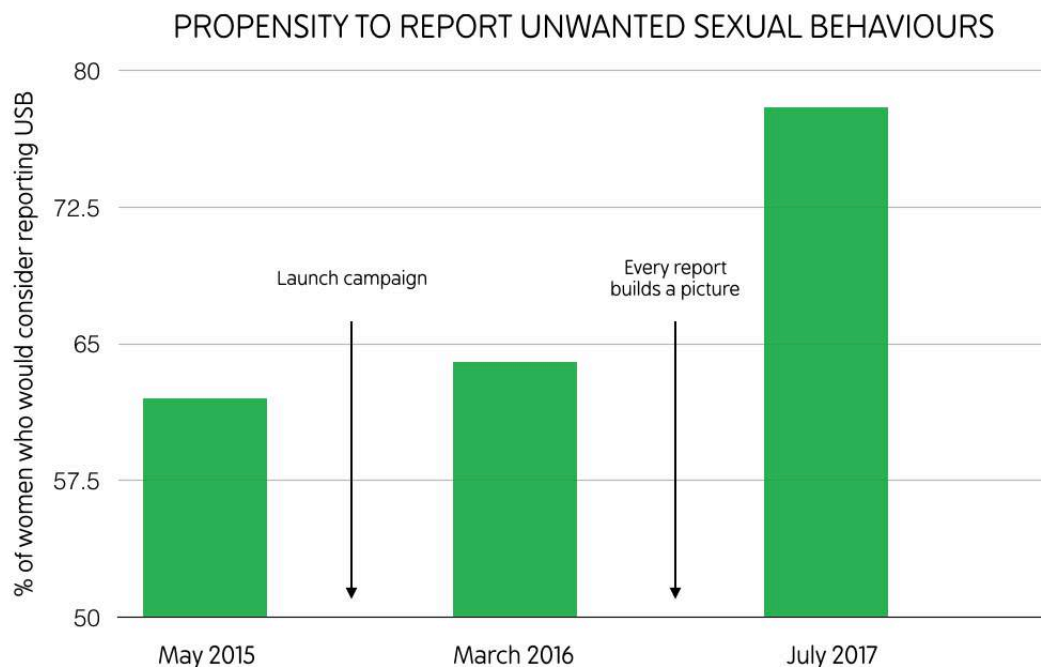
# Earned Media

Reach achieved by earned media has also been impressive:

The campaign video has been watched more than 35 million times on YouTube, we have achieved more than 200 pieces of media coverage from April 2015 to November 2017 and BBC, CH5 and ITV carried out filming of undercover operations on the transport.

Most importantly, the campaign has helped to transform the issue of unwanted sexual behaviour from a covert, invisible issue that had to be silently tolerated, into one that is now part of a national dialogue on sexual harassment.

*"The real win is the cultural shift this signals - women won't accept this behaviour as routine any more, and neither will the authorities"*
**- The Guardian**

And it is having a tangible impact on women's experiences and safety when travelling in London.

*"As someone who has experienced unwanted sexual contact on the tube, I can testify to the professionalism with which the matter is dealt with. I sent a text message when I got in to work and was immediately contacted by a BTP officer who took a statement including details of me and the perpetrator. Yes it took a while as they had to get the CCTV footage, identify the guy and then take steps to charge him but I was kept in the loop at all times and not once did I feel that all those I came in contact with weren't trained to handle the matter efficiently. The process is not perfect but it really is a lot better than it was in the past. Kudos to Transport for London."*
**- Twitter User**

# Conclusion

In the post-Weinstein era, the issue of sexual harassment has rightly become a front of mind issue that has forced individuals, employers, media and legislators to address this issue seriously and openly for the first time. In many cases, it has revealed a scale of incidence that had previously been ignored or denied in multiple organisations and industries worldwide.

It's important not to forget that Transport for London's ground breaking decision to acknowledge the scale of this issue, and commit to put in place a process to allow victims of USB to seek justice was an exceptionally bold one. There were clear risks. In bringing this issue to light, it could have created a perception that public transport was an unsafe and vulnerable environment, particularly for young women.

However Transport for London is a non-profit organisation with a culture of safety and care at the core of its DNA. It takes great pride in its ability to demonstrate that it cares deeply about its customers. Simply doing nothing, and taking refuge in the existing societal norms that denied that USB was a serious issue that could and should be addressed would have been anathema to this culture.

Every Journey Matters is its brand mantra, and all its customers have the right to know that they're able to enjoy using public transport knowing that they are being looked after.

Word count: 1913