

Enhanced Communications for utility works

TfL Lane Rental Industry Publication



Introduction

Transport for London (TfL) is an integrated transport authority responsible for delivering London's strategy and commitments, running day-to-day operations of the Capital's transport network and managing London's main roads. Every journey matters and TfL seeks to encourage and enable all mode users to experience better journeys and to mitigate impacts of congestion on network operations by considering travel options and changing behaviour by re-routing, re-timing or re-moding. Communication is therefore essential to facilitating movement on the network.

To understand the importance of communications, an exploratory proof of concept was proposed to look at enhanced communications in advance and during disruptive utility works.



The project

The project looked to tailor enhanced customer, road user and stakeholder communications, of up to a maximum of five major utility works anticipated to cause considerable disruption on the TLRN during 2017/18. This was to establish if the process would be scalable to smaller works, focusing on value, feasibility to deliver, and replicable beyond a small discrete set of works locations. Through engagement with the Coordination and Permitting (CaP) team four works, were identified around which this approach could be applied.



The Locations

- Brixton Road gas main replacement by SGN

The works were to replace the old cast iron gas main with a new plastic pipe to ensure a safe and reliable gas supply. The project started on 4 August 2017 and was estimated to take up to 18 months (in two phases) to complete. This trial was to focus on communications for Phase I (August 2017 – March 2018).

- Upper Street water main replacement by Thames Water

Works were to replace the water main that burst in December 2016, causing heavy flooding to residents and businesses in Islington. This project was split into two phases; this trial was to focus on communications for the more disruptive Phase 2 works (16 August 2017 – 30 October 2017).

- Bishopsgate network upgrade by UK Power Networks (UKPN)

UKPN were to undertake power connection works, which required a southbound closure of Bishopsgate for 8 weeks. The works started on 3 Sept 2017.

- Chelsea Embankment site part of the London Gas Mains Replacement by Cadent

Cadent's works were to replace the gas main underneath Chelsea Embankment as part of the major London Gas Main Replacement programme undertaken by the company. The works would require a westbound closure of Chelsea Embankment for 18 weeks from 4th November.





Enhancements

- A wide variety of enhancements to customer, road user and stakeholder communications were used for the project, which included;
- Leaflet drop area extended to a wider area using TfL's Select Link Analysis data to highlight greater number of impacted businesses and organisations
- TfL travel advice for road users link used on promoters' websites.
- TfL travel advice section added to promoter leaflet
- Twitter utilised
- Targeted CRM email to TfL customers
- Works added to the TfL Freight Bulletin
- Included in TfL's pan-London weekend travel information e-mail
- Posters at TfL bus stops, shelters and local tube stations.

Outcome

Enhanced communications presented value to both Thames Water and SGN and a number of positive outcomes were achieved;

SGN

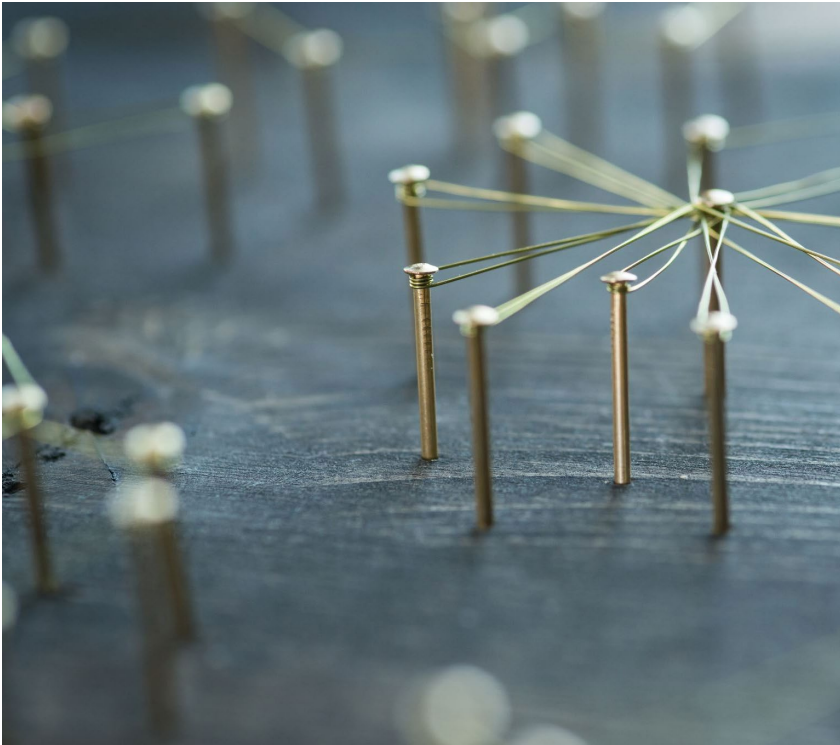
- Additional 40k businesses and residents receiving TfL's travel advice to support SGN's work
- Additional 350k possible recipients receiving information about the works through TfL CRM.
- 40% additional traffic to SGN's project page from TfL's CRM
- SGN's twitter impressions increased, from approx. 3,000 to over 30,000 from TfL re-tweets

Thames Water

- 164 additional key stakeholders contacted over and above Thames Water engagement area.
- Additional 19k businesses and residents receiving travel advice to support Thames Water's work
- 14.5k views to page (1st Aug – 7th Sept)
- Additional 330k possible recipients receiving information about the works.



Conclusion/ Recommendations



Utility companies already deliver various examples of customer and stakeholder communications good practice. The extent of this good practice and opportunities to complement / augment with TfL's own communications are not necessarily understood by those involved in works planning.

To address this, a better understanding and combining of both parties planned communication activities during planning could be built into BAU; specifically through:

- TfL sharing network knowledge to inform geographic reach of any targeted comms such as letters or leaflet
- Requirement to include either generic or tailored travel advice within utility companies' comms and sharing of information to inform this; and
- Shared social media plans and retweeting of one another's relevant posts.

Utility companies found particular value from the use of TfL targeted road user CRM e-mails and expanded the reach of their communications. As a result TfL will consider the use of this channel by utilities, potentially as paid for service where relevant /warranted.

Like TfL, some partners tailor the level of their communication activity by site / works using set criteria (site based on length and/or impact of the works). Going forward, utility companies should consider providing a consistent framework of categorisation across companies. This would ensure that there is consistency for customers, road users and any other impacted stakeholders, for any company wishing to undertake works. Utility companies and TfL should share knowledge and learn from each other to enable proliferation of good practice across the industries.

In conclusion, replicating the delivery of these enhancements, in a scaled fashion is feasible.

TfL Lane Rental Scheme

Optimising customer journeys through the delivery of safer, innovative and sustainable roadworks



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