

## **Responsible Gambling Council: Lessons from road safety promotion**

### **Summary**

*Great Britain has an envied record of improving road safety.*

*For the first 50 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the inexorable rise in motor vehicle numbers and use was accompanied by a rising toll of death and injury.*

*The three Es of engineering, enforcement and education, working together, have been the key factors in bringing about casualty reduction. The Government-led publicity campaign has played a consistent and demonstrable role in helping to deliver that improvement.*

*The purpose of this paper is to illustrate some of lessons from the success of the road safety campaign that may be translated to other social issue campaigns, such as promoting responsibility in gambling.*

### **Introduction**

Government marketing campaigns, aiming at achieving social change, are a feature of all our lives today. Their scope is broad. For example, they encourage compliance with the law and with regulations, responsible behaviour on the roads, moderation in sexual behaviour, avoidance of drug or alcohol abuse, healthy diet, lifelong learning, etc....and a willingness to pay taxes!

Whatever the social or behaviour change required, any marketing or advertising campaign must be based on sound understanding of the issue and outcomes and on research which identifies:

- scale and nature of the problem
- behaviours which contribute to the problem
- existing attitudes,
- existing understanding or beliefs
- awareness of benefits of behaviour change,
- recognition that these are worthwhile
- triggers that may motivate change.

This paper looks how the road safety campaign has contributed to the attitude and behaviour changes that make Great Britain's roads among the safest in the world. It looks at how long term campaigns have evolved and how we have measured their effectiveness. It touches on how we have used limited resources to trigger the support of others who can help us to deliver change.

In addition to market research which helps us to construct, deliver and monitor the effectiveness of campaigns, we rely on other real data too. It is not enough just to measure awareness, we must get real indications of understanding and attitude change and indeed, ultimately, of behaviour change. The campaigns exemplified in the paper indicate the challenges we face in marketing road safety and in building on the improvements we have

gained. And, from them, we can draw out principles which can be applied to social issue campaigns more broadly.

### **Road safety in the UK**

The UK's achievements in reducing casualties on the road have been considerable. In 1930 there were only 2.3 million motor vehicles in Great Britain but over 7000 people were killed. Today there are over 27 million vehicles on our roads and the death toll is less than 3500.

In the UK we have used publicity for many years as part of the package of measures necessary to reduce the numbers killed and injured in road accidents. This package comprises the three Es:

- Engineering (road and vehicle design, technology, etc)
- Enforcement (legislation, enforcement, penalties)
- Education (information, publicity campaigns).

Experience indicates that none of these measures can work alone. Legislation can be ignored if it is not enforced. It can be counterproductive to enforce legislation that is unpopular or in a way that is perceived to be unfair. Similarly, engineering measures to force traffic to go more slowly cannot be introduced without public understanding and acceptance. In order for road safety education to be effective, it must be supported by practical training, experience and constant attention. However, later experiences, attitude changes and the poor example of others may undermine the value of education. Publicity exhorting an audience to behave in a particular way will only work if it is credible and acceptable and for a purpose that will gain support. But publicity can work to ensure the success of the other measures.

Road safety publicity campaigns raise public awareness that accidents don't just happen, they are caused. Public awareness campaigns can help to provide the information that can influence the attitudes and behaviours that cause accidents. They also create public acceptance for safety engineering and police enforcement and they give national focus and context for local initiatives aimed at making roads safer. They also provide an environment for businesses to carry road safety messages in the context of their own commercial activities – whether in terms of the road safety of their employees or in promoting the messages generally to their customers.

Road user behaviour is a key element in casualty causation. The campaign embraces and integrates a wide range of messages. It includes high profile advertising on drinking and driving, speed and fatigue, seatbelts, mobile phones and driving, child road safety and publicity and promotions on many other topics.

There is no single advertising solution to road safety problems. The message, the tone and the treatment all need to take account of the existing physical and social environment, the views of the public and of particular segments of the public, what their perceptions are of what is right and wrong, their view of

what is acceptable or unacceptable and what they think other people think is acceptable.

We have used advertising successfully to address those areas where there are identifiable attitudes or behaviours that, if changed, will lead to a reduction in deaths on the road, eg getting people to wear seat belts, not to drink and drive and to cut their speed. More recently we have been promoting messages too on not using a mobile phone while driving and not driving when tired. It is also important that we keep addressing the road safety message to children - they are a particularly vulnerable group and an important one as the adults of the future.

### **Role of advertising**

Advertising is a key component in the Department for Transport's road safety campaigns. However, it is important to remember that, in any campaign, this advertising cannot work in a vacuum. Advertising needs to:

- raise the profile of the issue as a matter for general concern
- address specific behaviours
- promote acceptance of the rationale for various interventions [enforcement and engineering measures]
- generate media interest and discussion of the issue, and, very importantly
- provide a backdrop for and stimulate activity by stakeholders [regional and local authorities, the police and private and voluntary sector partners and individuals].

To work successfully, advertising needs to be an integral part of policy development and delivery. It needs to be part of a broader campaign that provides support, information and encouragement to consumers. Those involved in delivery need to be engaged in campaign development and be prepared to deliver the support appropriate to their area.

It is by following these principles that the Government's road safety campaigns, led by highly visible and, at times, challenging advertising has contributed to the general aim of reducing road casualties.

### **Targets**

On the road safety front, nationally set targets help to give a focus to all of those involved formally in the delivery of safer roads.

In 1987 the Government set a target to reduce the number of road deaths and injuries by one third by the year 2000 (ie from 5000 deaths a year to 3500). This target was achieved in respect of deaths and serious injuries ahead of time.

In March 2000, the Government committed to reducing road deaths and serious injuries by a further 40 per cent (50 per cent for children) by the year 2010. Four years in, the target is on course.

To assist delivery of these targets the Government made a long term commitment to publicity.

### **A logo for road safety**

The Think! road safety campaign, with its new logo, was launched in June 2000 to support the casualty reduction objectives. It builds on the success of decades of road safety publicity. The campaign heralded a fresh approach to road safety campaigns, aimed at getting all road users to be mindful of their own and others' safety.

The logo adds consistency to the wide range of road safety messages that help to encourage safer road use. It is used not only by the Department but by a wide range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to carry complementary messages.

Market research surveys show that, within three years of its launch, the Think! road safety logo was spontaneously recognised by over 90 per cent of young drivers.

### **Measuring the effectiveness of road safety publicity**

National publicity campaigns structured around powerful advertising help to educate, to change attitudes and to change behaviour.

The effectiveness of the road safety campaign is monitored continuously by market research surveys, which track changes in

- awareness of the publicity
- understanding of the messages
- attitudes to road safety behaviours and messages.
- comparison with observed behaviour measures, and ultimately
- changes in road casualty statistics and the factors contributing to them.

Research demonstrates that the publicity campaign keeps road safety high in the public consciousness and, over the longer term, has changed attitudes and behaviour, thus contributing to reducing road casualties.

The Government currently spends around £15m per year on the Think! road safety campaign, which brings together key road safety messages on speed, drink driving, pedestrian safety, cycling and motorcycling safety and many other specific messages. A not inconsiderable amount, and one that certainly is not spent without the security of proven effectiveness.

Monthly surveys are commissioned to track changes in awareness, understanding and attitudes. Research is used not only to measure impact, but also in the development of the campaign and in determining long term trends.

Of course, while market research is a constant and essential component in the campaign pack, it is actual road user behaviour and casualty statistics that are the ultimate judge of the campaign.

### **A year round presence**

High profile national television and radio advertising lead the effort to keep Think! in the public consciousness. Local and regional activities are supported with leaflets, posters and other traditional and electronic media. This combination of media ensures high visibility for Think! campaign messages with bought advertising space and airtime for much of the year. The aim is that this presence will stimulate further promotional activity from public and private sector organisations that will create a year round presence for the Think! message.

### **Getting the message across**

Everyone is a road user and the campaign aims to address everyone with specific messages. The Think! campaign website at [www.thinkroadsafety.com](http://www.thinkroadsafety.com) demonstrates the range of messages aimed at drivers, motorcycle riders, horseriders, pedestrians, etc. In the boxed areas in this paper, I look at some examples of how key issues have been addressed.

#### ***Child road safety***

Children are a priority. Much of the advertising aimed at drivers and other adult road users will of course benefit children's safety on the road. However a key element of the campaign addresses children themselves, their parents and carers and those involved in their education.

Even before children are born, parents need to know about child car seats and making their children safer in the car. Parents of young children need to be aware of how to keep their children safe in the car as they grow. They need to help them to learn how to behave at the roadside and how to cross the road. A wide range of materials is made available for parents and for those who advise them.

Child pedestrians are reminded in 'hedgehog' TV commercials, launched in 1996, to stop, look and listen to make sure it is safe to cross. New films were added to the series in 2000, 2002 and in 2003. The hedgehog characters are used in a range of materials (posters, leaflets, website) which are available to schools and other organisations. There is a high level of awareness of the hedgehogs campaign among mothers and primary schoolteachers. Awareness of the campaign and the messages is very high among children. While it is not possible to isolate the direct effect of this advertising on children's behaviour, it is clear that the advertising encourages the use of hedgehog branded road safety advice (leaflets, posters) in schools and helps to sustain interest in road safety in the classroom.

For teachers in primary and secondary schools, a range of lesson plans and worksheets, which cover key curriculum areas while using road safety topics, is available to teachers from the Think! campaign website. The Department also makes available to schools copies of Arrive Alive, a highway code for young road users, which is well used and aimed at raising 7 to 11 year olds' awareness of how to use the roads properly as a pedestrian, a cyclist, a car passenger, etc.

Advice for parents and carers on child restraints and seat belt use is important. Materials and targeted advertising (on radio, in supermarket child changing rooms, etc, advise on the proper selection and fitting of child restraints for children aged 0 to 11.

The intention with such a range of materials for parents is to produce easy to follow advice as far as possible in a way that does not require a high level of competence in the English language.

Introducing children to social campaign messages is relevant across the range of social issue campaigns.

### ***Drink driving***

The campaign against drinking and driving demonstrates the success of long term publicity in changing attitudes and behaviour. What was once accepted behaviour is now generally condemned. Numbers killed each year are down from around 1700 some 25 years ago to around 500 now. However, this figure has not moved much over the last ten years and care has been taken, via focus group research, to keep in touch with those who do drink and drive, and their attitudes and motivations so that we can be sure our advertising gets through to them.

Drink driving is a year round issue. A drink drive TV advertisement launched in October 2002 reminds potential drink drivers of the excuses they use to justify their own drink driving ("Only had a couple", "Feel safe to drive"). Awareness of the drink drive campaign by 2003 was around 90 per cent among drivers. Radio advertising supports the campaign through the year. Discussions with pub and drinks industry interests aim to develop ways of working together to get across messages in the most appropriate way to drinkers. In order to investigate novel ways of getting across the message, the Think! campaign 'sponsored' the GB Rugby Football League Team for the 2002-04 seasons. The cost of this was readily justified in term of visibility of our message in TV coverage of the matches. But the sponsorship also delivered substantial added value in using RFL personalities in local road safety promotions. In 2003, the DfT also signed up to work with the Football League.

The drink drive campaign exemplifies the benefits of long term campaigning in getting the public at large on side. It is also an area where many agencies (police, local authorities, drinks industry, etc) are engaged. For example, the drinks industry runs a 'responsible drinking' campaign, which includes 'designated driver' promotions.

While the drink drive campaign can be counted as successful, a fair number of drivers continue to weigh up the odds for getting away with a few drinks.

### ***Speed***

Speed has been a key area of concern. High profile TV and radio advertising illustrating the consequences of driving too fast and urging drivers to slow down has run since 1991, first with the 'Kill your speed. Not a child' slogan, and subsequently with the 'Think! slow down' campaign.

Over the longer term, the campaign has helped to underpin the rationale for initiatives that make roads safer (eg, people's attitudes are positive towards traffic speeds reduction measures, 20mph areas near schools, cameras that detect speeding motorists). Observational measures of speed in free flowing traffic are encouraging, but the majority of drivers observed still exceed speed limits by more than 5mph in free flowing traffic.

The speed campaign is an area where encouragement and enforcement work together.

### ***Driver fatigue***

The Department launched its drive fatigue message in August 2000, following research it commissioned from Loughborough Sleep Research Unit, which indicated that perhaps as many as 300 deaths a year might be resulting from drivers falling asleep at the wheel.

Think! Don't drive tired advertising has continued to be developed. The Highways Agency has run 'Think! Don't drive tired' messages on its variable message signs (VMS). Research carried out for the Highways Agency on the effectiveness of using VMS signs for this message indicated that many drivers had been reminded about taking a break on long journeys by these signs. Since early 2003, truckback advertising has helped to increase the awareness of the 'Take a break' element of the campaign. Currently, in taking it forward, the DfT is using radio to raise increase recognition of the dangers of 'microsleeps' and to advise on planning long journeys and taking effective breaks.

This campaign aims to 'educate' drivers to recognise symptoms, which most will admit to experiencing at one time or another, and to take appropriate action.

### ***Mobile phones***

The Department ran press advertising and distributed advice widely in 1998 about the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving. It has since run TV and radio advertising. Because of the high level of publicity about mobile phones generally, it has not been possible to isolate the effect of the Department's publicity. The Department has recently been focussing around the distraction of using a mobile phone while driving and alerting the public to new penalties for using a hand held mobile phone.

A key aim of all this activity was to engage mobile phone companies to carry this specific safety message to their customers for us. Reminders about the law on using a mobile while driving are now built into their communication with customers.

### **Seat belts**

High profile TV advertising for 12 years prior to the introduction of front seatbelt wearing legislation ensured a high level of compliance among drivers and front seat passengers once the law came into force 20 years ago. Rear seat belt wearing, which came into force in 1992, was not so well taken up - partly because of a lesser level of publicity and partly because of a lack of recognition of the risk to self and to front seat occupants.

The seat belt campaign launched in 1998, Always Wear a Seatbelt, has been successful in increasing rear seat belt wearing rates. Transport Research Laboratory's survey in October 2003 showed the highest level yet of rear seat belt wearing, with 61 per cent of adults and over 90 per cent of children wearing seatbelts (compared with around 45 and 80 per cent in the years running up to the campaign which began in 1998). Awareness of the consequences of not wearing a seatbelt, as demonstrated in the 'Julie' advertising has been maintained at a high level, and is reflected in improved wearing rates. TV advertising runs in March and September and radio then and at other times. A new TV advertisement was launched in September 2003 to build on this success and to cut off some of the excuses that some non wearers continued to deploy.

This campaign demonstrates how a call to action in high profile advertising was taken forward at local level and created a change in behaviour. Nevertheless about 10 per cent of drivers and front seat passengers and nearly 40 per cent of rear seat passengers still find excuses for taking the chance and of not wearing a seatbelt.

### **Motorcycling**

In the UK, motorcycles account for around 1 per cent of vehicle of vehicles used, but the scale of fatal casualties is high. Motorcyclists account for 600 of the 3400 deaths on Britain's roads. In about two thirds of those deaths, no other vehicle is involved.

In addition to a programme of publicity to remind drivers to look out for motorcyclists, a programme is being developed by the Government, the industry and motorcyclist groups themselves to promote safer and less risky behaviour among motorcyclists.

### **A campaign with widespread support**

The national publicity campaign does not happen in isolation. It involves many stakeholders. It stimulates complementary activity by police, local authorities and voluntary and private sector organisations and it stimulates media coverage. A rolling programme website aims to help supporters to plan their own complementary activities. The Think! magazine and the Think! website keep supporters of the programme informed.

Nevertheless, even today, nearly 3500 people are still killed each year and 40,000 seriously injured.

### **Lessons to be learned**

Striking and powerful advertising, leading a comprehensive campaign, can stimulate media interest, especially when accompanied by high profile media launches. By attracting public and media attention, the profile of the issue and of the campaign is raised.

Particularly important is the role of stakeholders (in the case of road safety these are local authorities, the police, private sector supporters and others). They are brought into the campaign planning process. Advance information about the timing and content of the Government's publicity programme enables them all to reinforce the message with their own publicity events, police action and private sector initiatives. A campaign website and regular printed or electronic newsletters are essential.

A campaign logo can help to unify the various messages of a campaign. It also provides a banner under which a wide range of supporters can operate. In the case of road safety, while the Government provides basic resources, leaflets, posters, factsheets for local media use, locally, all those who play a part in delivery, can take the actions that are most effective in their areas, eg development of their own locally based campaigns, visits to schools, local distributions of leaflets, roadside checks, local liaison with the media and media events, etc.

Children are great consumers of television, cinema and of advertising. Besides the advertising we aim at them, they see and hear the advertising we aim at adults. This means that they grow up with new norms, eg young people now approaching thirty have grown up with the consistent message from Government that drinking and driving should not be mixed. If they do it, they do so knowing it is socially unacceptable.

Campaigns work on many levels and should be seen as relevant even by those who are not your prime target.

Market research is a vital component in campaign planning, development and assessment. But it is the real data on behaviour that ultimately determines the campaign's direction and success.

A long term commitment to road safety publicity has succeeded in changing attitudes and behaviour. This has helped considerably in the development of

legislation, enforcement and engineering changes which have given us a road safety record to be proud of.

The lessons of long term commitment to a campaign, engagement of allies and the broadest range of consumers, which have served the road safety campaign so well are equally relevant to other areas of social change and can, I hope, be of assistance to those developing the promotion of responsibility n gambling..

### **References**

*The Department for Transport website is at [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk). In the road safety area of the site, you will find detailed road casualty statistics and articles on road casualties, as well as a large number of research reports on a whole range of road safety issues.*

*The Think! campaign website at [www.thinkroadsafety.com](http://www.thinkroadsafety.com) holds a wide range of information on the Department's campaigns, including current and past radio and television advertising, including the materials referred to in this paper.*