

Committee(s): Policy & Resources Committee	Dated: 09/06/2022
Subject: Interim evaluation of Square Smile campaign	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	7, 8 and 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	A total of £550k was awarded to deliver this campaign from your Covid Contingency Fund and PIF
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Innovation & Growth and Director of Communications	For Information
Report author: Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

Summary

This report provides Members with headline interim results for the *Square Smile* marketing campaign, the core purpose of which was to encourage workers back to the City in the wake of the pandemic.

The headlines include:

- a. an overall reach of 5.5m people and 1.3 times more engagements with the campaign than industry level benchmarks.
- b. the target 500k target audience of City workers is estimated to have seen the campaign 8.5 times.
- c. those who saw the campaign during November 2021 were 2.2 times more likely to increase their visits to the City within the next 30 days than those who had not been exposed to the campaign.
- d. renewed and enthusiastic appetite for partnership working by London and local businesses and national travel operators to deliver mutual advantage. This is a strong springboard for Destination City.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and appendices

Main Report

Background

2. This report seeks to provide Members with a headline understanding of the activities undertaken and key learnings identified during the delivery of the *Square Smile* marketing campaign. The core purpose of this campaign was to entice workers back to the City in the wake of the pandemic. Residents and business visitors were also targeted.
3. Headline interim results relating to campaign performance are also included in the report, noting a full evaluation is not yet possible due to the lag in receiving spend, footfall and other campaign metrics. It is hoped that a full report that includes this data will be submitted to your Committee in July.
4. The campaign was funded by a total of £550,000 awarded by your Committee from your Covid Recovery Fund and Policy Initiatives Fund, following requests approved at your meetings on 11 March 2021 and 8 April 2021.
5. The campaign was launched on 11 October 2021 and concluded on 29 April 2022 with some PR and influencer activity running over May.
6. The campaign was led by the Directors of Innovation and Growth, and Communications with key officers from these divisions working with appointed consultants and agencies to achieve outcomes.

Current Position

7. Campaign activity is detailed on page 3 of appendix 1. In brief, this included “organic” marketing (blog posts, social media, and other unpaid media opportunities), “earned value-in-kind” media (delivered at no cost to the City Corporation using channels provided by partner organisations (e.g., travel operators)) and paid media (advertising).
8. The marketing mix was supported by a dedicated PR campaign. This included traditional coverage (such as press articles) and coverage achieved through social media influencers, partners (such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and travel operators) and Square Mile employers, who used their regular communications channels (including worker newsletters and intranets) to engage the audiences with whom they are in regular contact with *Square Smile* content.
9. The campaign ran against a backdrop of macro-environmental factors which provided some significant challenges to its success. These can be seen in detail on page 5 of appendix 1. In summary, they are:
 - a. The NHS calling for Plan B during the week the campaign launched (October 2021)
 - b. The Omicron variant being identified in November 2021 and a substantial increase in cases.
 - c. Plan B being initiated by Government in December 2021, including work from home guidance in place from 13 December 2021 to 19 January 2022.
10. The campaign was underpinned by extensive research and worker insights. Interviews with City workers delivered an essential understanding of the barriers

and motivations in relation to a return to the office. These informed the *Square Smile* creative, channels to market and campaign content.

11. Initial research took place ahead of the campaign launch in October. A second phase was undertaken after Plan B work from home guidance was lifted (to understand any shifts in behaviour and motivations).
12. The second stage of research undertaken after Plan B (February 2022) resulted in a slight pivot of the campaign to include a call to action. It also resulted in the promotion of the newly launched “In the City” app with its incentives to drive spend through retail (or other) offers. Previously, campaign work had focussed on raising awareness of the advantages of being “in the office” and driving an intent to return.
13. Delivery of the *Square Smile* campaign resulted in some key learnings that may be applied to future campaigns. Notably, the campaign was delivered in a context hitherto unknown with behaviours of target markets. Potential partners have also shifted on a seismic scale and macro environmental factors enabling or disabling activity.
14. These learnings include **a renewed and enthusiastic appetite for partnership working** by London and local businesses and national travel operators to deliver mutual advantage. Headline partners included:
 - a. **Transport for London (TfL):** this partnership delivered a *Square Smile* roundel at Bank Station which achieved a good level of press and social media coverage (through the sharing of imagery using the campaign hashtag). Both TfL and the campaign sought to encourage people back onto the network, removing barriers to travel through motivational incentives.
 - b. **Southeastern Railway and Greater Anglia:** both partners provided free-of-charge media space across their networks. Southeastern Railway provided 151 posters at 109 locations and a *Square Smile* dedicated email newsletter to a subscriber base of 49,300 contacts, alongside social media postings. Greater Anglia provided 90 premium poster sites at locations across their network and a dedicated email newsletter to 90,000 subscribers. Again, motivation to travel and to come into central London was a shared objective that enabled these partnerships.
 - c. **Uber Boat by Thames Clippers:** this partnership saw a 30-second *Square Smile* video being broadcast free-of-charge across the company’s vessel fleet with the shared objective to motivate and engage audiences to come into and explore London more.
 - d. **Executive Channel Network:** this workplace media provider supported the campaign with free-of-charge digital advertising space across City workplaces. This included office waiting areas, lift lobbies and outside of key business areas. Again, with the objective to drive a more regular return to the office by showing inspirational content.
 - e. **Primera:** the City BID provider worked in partnership with the campaign to maximise the visibility of their new *In The City* mobile app which sought to drive spend in BID areas by encouraging workers to take advantage of offers from local business.

15. A second key learning of the campaign arose from the research undertaken and described in items 10 and 11 above. This showed that, while awareness of the campaign was achieved in the first phase of campaign activity instilling a sense of desire to return, **a clear call to action** was needed to encourage participation and spend. The *In the City* app (item 13e) helped facilitate this, providing clear reasons to “Download. Get Together. Enjoy the savings.”
16. Given the backdrop of an ever-changing climate, the campaign was set up for **flexibility and speed**. This key learning emerged from early contingency planning with use of digital media allowing for updates to messaging and imagery or a pause in the campaign when required (e.g., over Plan B) in a matter of hours rather than weeks.
17. Finally, it was imperative to counteract shifts in worker sentiment against an ever-changing backdrop of macro environmental factors. To achieve this, **research** was conducted twice amongst the worker audience alongside real-time social media listening. This ensured that campaign messaging always resonated with target markets and helped drive the achievements listed below.

Key Data

18. A full evaluation report set against campaign targets is not yet possible due to the lag in receiving spend, footfall and other campaign metrics. It is hoped that this will be submitted to your Committee in July. It will include campaign results against agreed KPIs for footfall; spend; value-in-kind; media and PR value; and engagement. In the interim, the following known metrics are provided.
 - a. The campaign had a planned target (across all paid media channels only) of 21,470,426 impressions (one “impression” is a single digital view or engagement with content related to the campaign). Overall, the campaign achieved a 61% uplift against this figure, achieving 35,100,384 impressions.
 - b. The reach of the campaign was 5.5m (this is the number of people who saw content related to the campaign (unlike impressions which counts the number of views)).
 - c. It is estimated that most of the target 500k target audience of City workers will have seen the campaign 8.5 times.
 - d. At the campaign’s highest impression period (November 2021), those who had seen the campaign were 2.2 times more likely to increase their visits to the City within the next 30 days than those who had not been exposed.
 - e. The campaign had 1.3 times more engagements than industry level benchmarks (that is to say, engagement in the campaign was 1.3 times higher than the average for this type of campaign).
 - f. Videos were the most popular advertising media and received 2.3m views across platforms.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- **Strategic implications:** the *Square Smile* campaign has supported a return to the office by City workers and a wider return to the City by other communities. In this, it has delivered against key objectives in your Recovery Strategy *Square Mile: Future*

City. It has also paved the way, with learnings and established channels on which to build, for work under the new Strategic Destination Review.

- **Financial implications:** the *Square Smile* campaign was funded by £550,000 awarded by P&R Committee from the Covid Recovery Fund and Policy Initiatives Fund following requests approved at meetings on 11 March 2021 and 8 April 2021. The campaign was delivered within this budget envelope with added value derived through partnerships and co-promotional activities. The value of this will be reported to your July Committee.
- **Resource implications:** the campaign was delivered by a core team of consultants and agencies appointed to work on *Square Smile* exclusively (the cost of which was met from the budget specified above). Officers from the Media and Cultural and Visitor Development Teams have supported this work.
- **Legal implications:** none identified
- **Risk implications:** none identified
- **Equalities implications:** none identified
- **Climate implications:** none identified
- **Security implications:** none identified

Conclusion

19. This report provides interim headline results, key learnings, and a campaign overview for the *Square Smile* campaign. The success of the campaign against agreed KPIs cannot be evaluated until the full complement of data has been received. However, results reported thus far show significant achievements against campaign targets and evidence the campaign's effectiveness in driving a return to the City.
20. Furthermore, the learnings listed help pave the way for the new Strategic Destination Review, providing a firm foundation on which to build, not least through the ongoing development of core partnerships with travel operators, and the delivery of extensive research showing key motivators (and barriers) for audiences during recovery.
21. A full evaluation report will be returned to P&R in July.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – *Square Smile*: end of campaign interim summary report (May 2022)

Background Papers

- Recovery Promotional Campaign, report to Policy & Resources Committee, 11 March 2021
- Recovery Promotional Campaign, report to Policy & Resources Committee, 8 April 2021

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