

Visit Portsmouth Destination Campaign - 2024/25

Background

With buy-in from destination partners Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Gunwharf Quays, Victorious Festival, Spinnaker Tower, The D-Day Story and South Western Railway, we ran campaigns in summer (throughout July and August) and autumn (October and November), using poster sites around London Waterloo and a digital campaign to support this and drive further engagement.

Results at-a-glance

Impressions - 18,250,508

Reach - 6,034,884+

Website visits - 42,800+ (digital only)

Summer campaign

Results at-a-glance

Impressions - 9,357,860

Reach - 3,108,427

Website visits - 26,340+ (digital only)

London OOH campaign

Background

Following pitches from a number of agencies for an outdoor campaign in London (both inside and outside Waterloo Station) we instructed JC Decaux to run digital poster sites, following the success of their recent campaigns for us and the relative strength of their offer against others who had pitched.

This Digital Out Of Home (DOOH) campaign saw us take the large-scale Digital Rail Special board (by the main departure boards) to run at set times, and digital D6 boards to display continuously throughout the campaign.

The London summer campaign was live from 8 to 21 July.

JC Decaux's campaign brief was to raise awareness of the wide range of leisure and tourism attractions available in Portsmouth among commuters at Waterloo station, and to encourage both business and leisure travellers to consider visiting Portsmouth in the lead-up to the summer holidays of 2024.

A strategic network of Rail D6s were selected, positioned throughout key locations at Waterloo station, including the concourse and on certain platforms frequented by South Western Railway

commuters. These were complimented with the prominent Waterloo Digital Special site positioned on the central concourse, to capture the attention of commuters during peak times.

The objective was to deliver an impactful DOOH campaign, maximising visibility, driving frequency, and enhancing brand recall.

Details

25x D6 ads, running all day

1x Digital Rail Special, 'PM commuter' time (4pm-7pm) Tuesday to Friday

1x Digital Rail Special, 'leisure commuter' time (10am-4pm) Saturday

Creative

Below are examples of the ad creative used in the campaign.

The Digital Rail Special ads were primarily 20-second videos, framed within a border that provided more information, and gave the 'Visit Portsmouth: More to explore in '24' tagline, plus website URL. They also mentioned South Western Railway and included the logo.

The D6 posters featured the above information but with still imagery (animated with a small zoom-in to attract attention).



Digital Rail Special boards in place at London Waterloo.



D6 Poster Sites in place at London Waterloo

Results

The following results were presented by JC Decaux following the conclusion of the campaign:

Promised impressions: 4,600,000

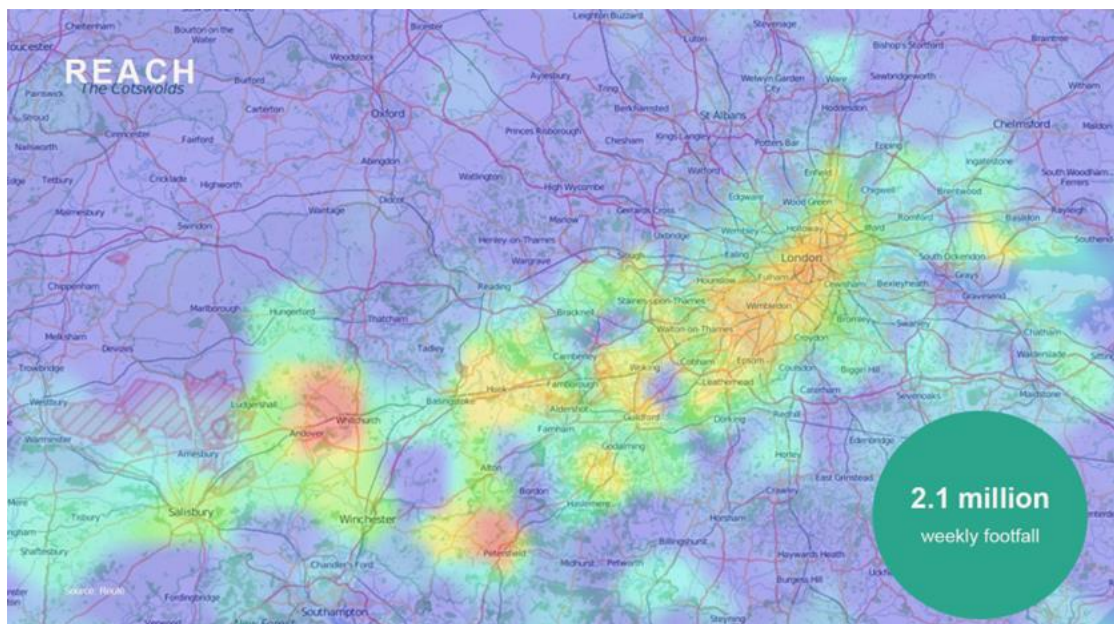
Delivered impressions: 7,238,051

Over-delivered impressions: 2,638,051

Note: The 'Market investment' refers to the standard trading rate for the sites. The 'Partner investment' is what we actually paid, having secured a significant discount by JC Decaux.

There was a significant over-delivery on impressions, which was due to a combination of adding extra slots to the Digital Rail Special ads where available, as well as a switch of some D6 sites to new installations located within prime areas of Waterloo.

The reach for this campaign (based on weekly footfall through London Waterloo) was 2.1 million. The below heatmap shows where those individuals who will have seen the advert live or have travelled from.



Digital campaign

Background

Over July and August 2024, we ran a digital campaign to support the DOOH campaign in London. These took the form of ads on Meta (Facebook, Instagram and their related networks) and Google (YouTube video ads).

Each partner (Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Gunwharf Quays, Victorious Festival, Spinnaker Tower, The D-Day Story and South Western Railway) had a Meta ad of their own, using the same or similar creative as the London campaign to boost familiarity and encourage users to interact with the ads. For South Western Railway, a more general destination image was used.

Details

The goal was set as link clicks because the London campaign would have generated good awareness - for the digital element we wanted action - and for people to click through to find out more.

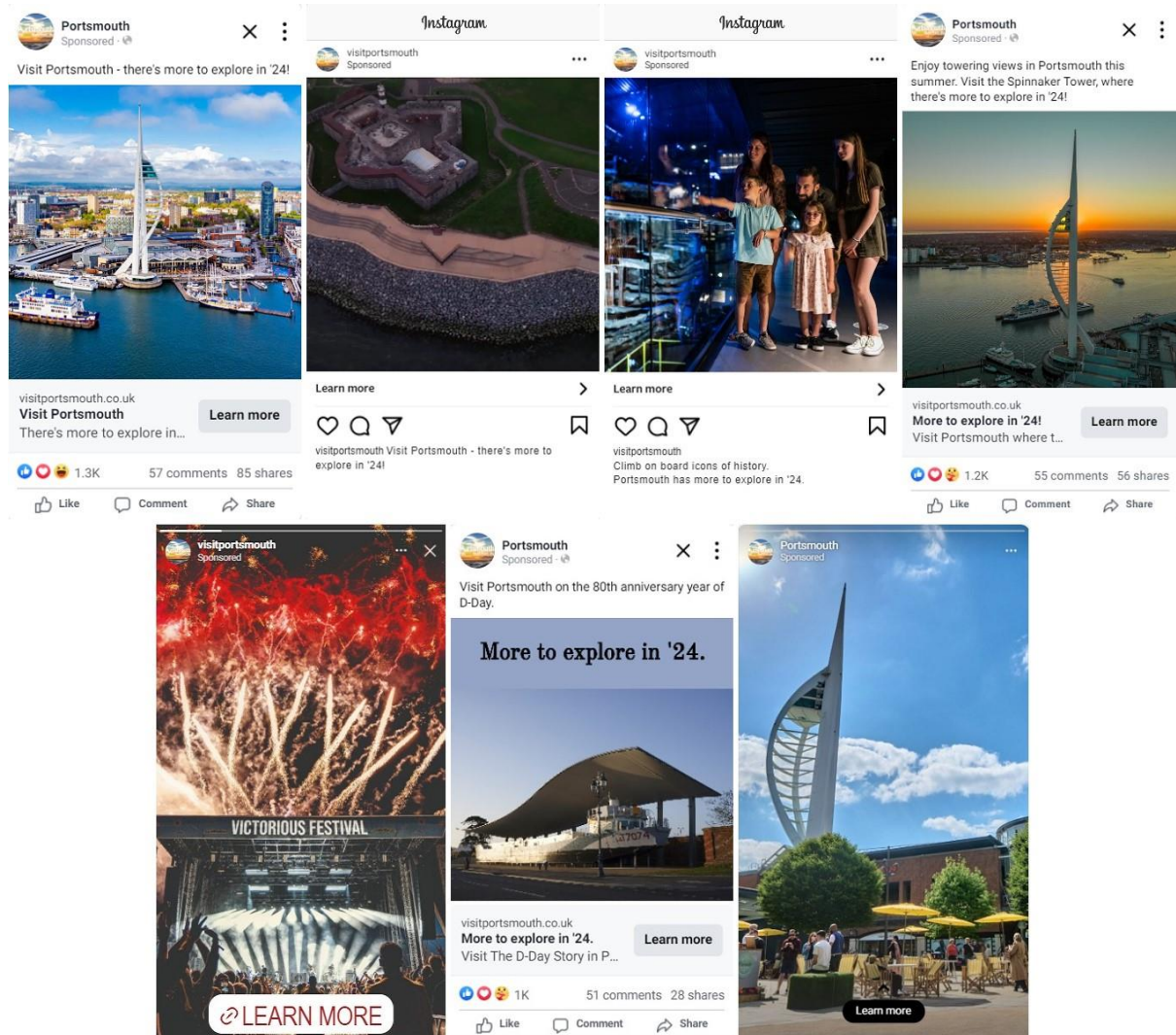
All ads were targeted at people living near London Waterloo, or who had recently passed through the area, as well as those living on and around the South Western Railway route from London to Portsmouth. There was further demographic and interest targeting, so each ad reached a relevant audience (history buffs for D-Day, shopaholics for Gunwharf Quays, etc.).

In addition to the Meta ads for partners, we ran a more general awareness campaign for the destination on the Google Ads network, utilising YouTube video ads. This was to promote the city more generally and further boost brand awareness, having seen positive results on our Google ads in previous campaigns. We also ran a more typical Meta ad for the destination, with a small budget.

Creative

The same or similar images to the London D6 poster sites were used in the initial run of social media ads. However, some of these were changed later in the campaign to mitigate against 'creative fatigue' where users may have seen our ad imagery too often. In those instances, the second image that was used is what's been shown below.

Ad text was unique to each partner mentioning some of their unique selling points, whilst also containing the 'more to explore in '24' messaging. Five different iterations were provided so Meta's algorithm could determine the one to send to get maximum impact for each individual user.



Composite of various social ads in a number of different placements

Results - total

Impressions - 2,119,809

Reach (Meta only) - 1,008,427

Clicks (all) (Meta only) - 61,590

Link clicks (Meta only) - 26,340

Video views - 93,120

Results - by partner

Destination video ad

Type - In-stream skippable

Impressions - 151,570

Views (30s plus) - 81,682

View rate - 53.9%

Watch time (seconds) - 4,308,455 (1,196.8 hours)

Destination Meta ad

Impressions - 13,861

Reach - 5,802

ThruPlays - 11,438

Clicks (all) - 30

Link clicks - 13

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 8

(Note the lower budget here as more was channelled into the Google Ad network)

South Western Railway

Impressions - 390,956

Reach - 200,719

Clicks (all) - 8,976

Link clicks - 4,868

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 1,505

Gunwharf Quays

Impressions - 279,140

Reach - 133,574

Clicks (all) - 9,831

Link clicks - 4,063

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 523

The D-Day Story

Impressions - 314,151

Reach - 174,186

Clicks (all) - 13,475

Link clicks - 4,829

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 1,232

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

Impressions - 275,019

Reach - 116,655

Clicks (all) - 6,255

Link clicks - 4,405

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 323

Spinnaker Tower

Impressions - 453,870

Reach - 224,567

Clicks (all) - 10,414

Link clicks - 3,930

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 1,431

Victorious Festival

Impressions - 321,242

Reach - 152,924

Clicks (all) - 12,609

Link clicks - 4,232

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 309

Cost per click

As noted, 'Link clicks' were set as the primary goal for our Meta ads so I wanted to dive into this more specifically to measure the campaign's success or failure. According to WordStream, the average cost per click (CPC) for the travel and hospitality industry is £0.48.

CPCs for our digital campaign were:

Victorious - £0.19

Gunwharf - £0.20

D-Day - £0.17

Dockyard - £0.18

Spinnaker - £0.20

SWR - £0.14

This put the average CPC for the campaign as a whole at £0.18, which is 62.5% below the average for our industry. Or to put it another way, if we were hitting the average we'd have had 9,791 clicks from the budget spent. We had 16,549 more than this, with our total actually reaching 26,340.

Autumn campaign

Results at-a-glance

Impressions - 8,892,648

Reach - 2,926,457

Website visits - 16,491+ (digital only)

Background

The agreement with JC Decaux included a second campaign to run in autumn. This was to build upon the success of the summer and further drive visits, consideration and ad recall from those who may have seen the first campaign or be likely to travel during the shoulder season.

It would again be supported by a digital element, using similar creative and messaging to increase reach further and encourage clicks through to the Visit Portsmouth website where people can find out more and start to arrange or book their next trips.

Albeit with some updates to creative and minor tweaks to budget allocation, the campaign was largely the same as the summer in its aims and outputs.

London OOH campaign

Background

JC Decaux again ran Portsmouth ads featuring all major partners at D6 and Digital Rail Special locations at London Waterloo.

The agency was tasked with raising awareness of the wide range of leisure and tourism attractions available in Portsmouth, and to encourage both business and leisure travellers to consider visiting.

Its campaign utilised a strategic network of Rail D6s positioned throughout key locations at Waterloo station (including platforms frequented by commuters travelling to and from the south west), as well as on the main concourse itself. These D6s were complimented with the prominent Waterloo Digital Special site positioned on the central concourse, to capture the attention of commuters during peak times.

The aim was to deliver an impactful DOOH campaign, maximise visibility, drive frequency, and enhance brand recall.

Details

The DOOH campaign ran from 21 October to 3 November, utilising:

25x D6 ads, running all day

1x Digital Rail Special, 'PM commuter' time (4pm-7pm) Tuesday to Friday

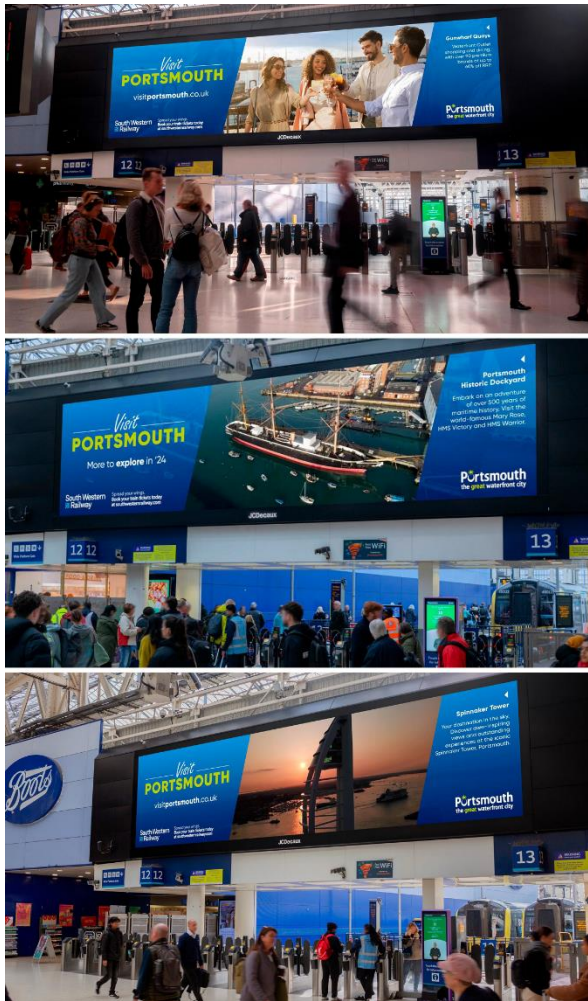
1x Digital Rail Special, 'leisure commuter' time (10am-4pm) Saturday

Creative

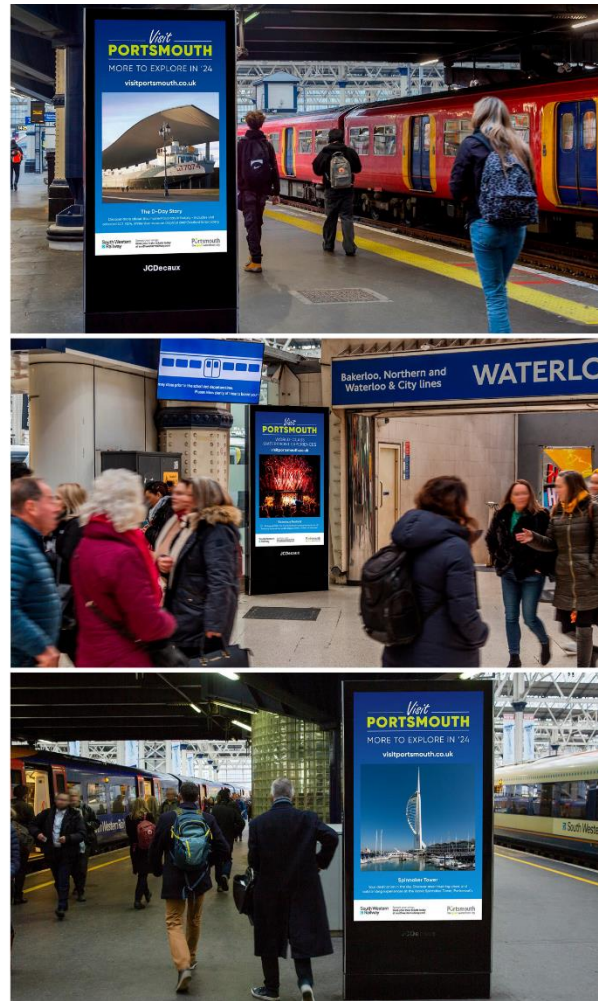
Similar ad creative to summer was used, with the same blue border featuring the Visit Portsmouth name and URL, as well as that of South Western Railway in the footer and information on each partner in the copy. The 'More to explore in '24' tagline was retained after partners agreed to continue with it.

Digital Rail Special ads were primarily 20s videos, whilst the D6 posters utilised still imagery, animated slightly to zoom in and catch the eye.

There were only minor adjustments to the content (such as Victorious Festival positioning itself for 2025 Early Birds rather than final tickets for 2024).



Digital Rail Special ads in situ on the London Waterloo concourse



D6 ads located on the platforms and concourse of London Waterloo

Results

Total (promised) DOOH impressions: 4,600,000

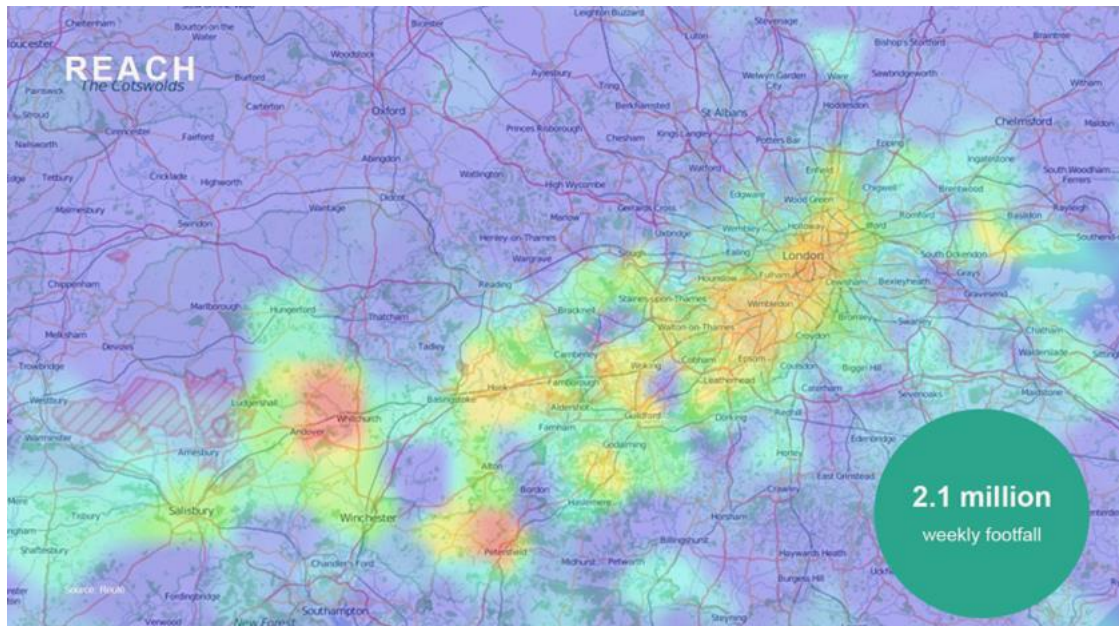
Total delivered impressions: 7,337,288

Over-delivered impressions: 2,737,288

Note: As above, 'Market investment' refers to the standard trading rate for the sites. The 'Partner investment' is what we actually paid, having secured a significant discount.

The number of over-deliveries was similar to that seen in summer, thanks once again to having additional playouts on the Digital Rail Special, as well as the relocation of some D6 ads to stronger sites recently installed around the platforms.

As before, the campaign reach (based on weekly footfall through London Waterloo) was 2.1 million. The below heatmap shows where those individuals live or have travelled from.



Digital campaign

Background

A digital campaign was run to support of the OOH ads in London, to further promote ad recall among those who had seen the Waterloo sites, and to encourage clicks through to the Visit Portsmouth website where people could find out more and click through to partner websites.

Meta ads (across Facebook and Instagram) were used once again, with the campaign being managed in-house by the Visit Portsmouth team to remove agency costs so the entirety of the budget for digital could be spent on the campaign itself and not fees.

Details

Whilst previous digital campaigns have run for a number of weeks after the London element (to act as a reminder for people to visit the website and find out more), this autumn campaign ran almost entirely alongside it - with partners agreeing to allocate all the budget to the lucrative half term period, ending on 3 November. Only The D-Day Story elected to stretch this out a touch; its ads (spending the same total budget) ran to 8 November.

The objective for this campaign was set at 'Landing page views', instead of the 'Link clicks' of previous campaigns. Whilst on the surface they may seem the same (the URL in question for both campaigns was a Visit Portsmouth landing page), it was changed because Landing page

views are only counted when a page actually loads. Therefore they give a much more accurate idea of who has visited a site, with stats that discount anyone who clicked a link erroneously or bounced immediately away, for example. Whilst inevitably this results in a smaller figure, it's a more accurate and therefore informative one.

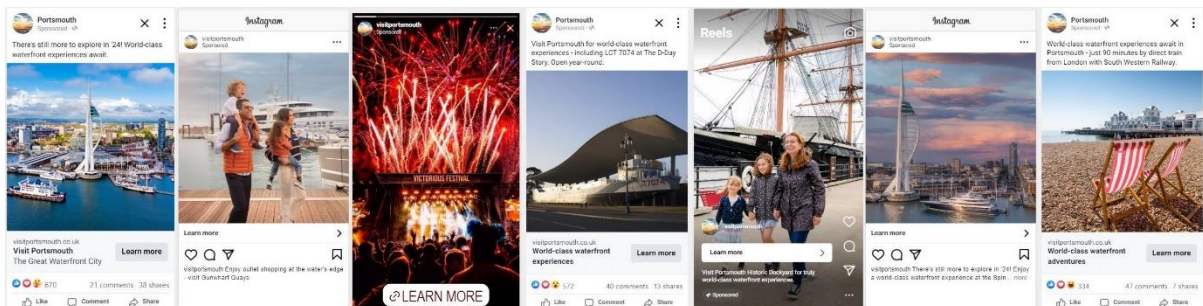
Creative

As in previous campaigns, each partner had their own specific ad, using similar or identical creative to the D6 posters, to foster recognition and encourage clicks. Multiple creatives were used where possible, not just to offer variety (and prevent creative fatigue) but also work to the different ad placement orientations - i.e. landscape, square and portrait so that imagery wouldn't be cropped or minimised.

Each ad geo-targeted people who live near or had recently passed through London Waterloo, as well as other main points on the South Western Railway route between London and Portsmouth.

This was refined further with demographic targeting relevant to each ad. The Victorious Festival one was delivered to those with an interest in live music, the Gunwharf Quays ad was presented to keen shoppers, and so on.

As in summer, text was unique for each ad, mentioning each partner's unique selling points, whilst also containing the 'more to explore in '24' messaging. Five different iterations were provided so that Meta's algorithm could determine the best one to display for each individual user to get maximum impact.



Screengrabs of digital ads across various placements, creatives and dimensions.

Results - total

Impressions - 1,555,360

Reach - 826,457

Clicks (all) - 38,148

Link clicks - 16,491

Landing page views - 13,731

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 2,248

Results - by partner

Destination

Impressions - 264,486

Reach - 148,844

Clicks (all) - 4,326

Link clicks - 2,384

Landing page views - 1,993

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 717

South Western Railway

Impressions - 196,459

Reach - 113,053

Clicks (all) - 6,487

Link clicks - 2,378

Landing page views - 2,020

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 384

Gunwharf Quays

Impressions - 268,875

Reach - 133,238

Clicks (all) - 3,608

Link clicks - 1,958

Landing page views - 1,530

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 112

The D-Day Story

Impressions - 226,675

Reach - 141,036

Clicks (all) - 8,058

Link clicks - 2,846

Landing page views - 2,408

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 601

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

Impressions - 154,894

Reach - 70,220

Clicks (all) - 2,518

Link clicks - 2,089

Landing page views - 1,738

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 72

Spinnaker Tower

Impressions - 218,247

Reach - 102,134

Clicks (all) - 2,894

Link clicks - 2,158

Landing page views - 1,744

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 222

Victorious Festival

Impressions - 225,724

Reach - 117,932

Clicks (all) - 10,257

Link clicks - 2,678

Landing page views - 2,298

Interactions (reactions, comments, saves and shares) - 140

Results

With clicks through to the website the primary objective once more, the CTR of the autumn campaign were pitted against Wordstream's industry benchmarking for travel and tourism to see where it stacked up.

Note, Wordstream's ad result benchmarking doesn't consider Landing page views but link clicks more generally, so this has been used for the below results.

According to its latest figures, the average cost per click for our industry is £0.33 (which is down somewhat from what it reported in summer). Wordstream hasn't stipulated whether this is CPC (per Link click) or CPC (all). However, we were below it in both.

The autumn campaign had an average cost per link click of £0.30, whilst the cost per click (all) was just £0.13.

This means the campaign delivered, at best, 23,750 more clicks than the average for our industry, or 1,643 more at worst.