

Developing a Targeted Consumer Campaign

Case Study: Secondary Ticketing



Executive summary

The Consumer Empowerment Partnerships strategy is led by national Citizens Advice, but gives a local focus to national plans, allowing us to operate independently, maximising local knowledge and skills.

Our work is part of the national consumer advocacy and education programme which is supported by a network of 11 **Consumer Empowerment Partnerships** (CEP) across England.

Consumer legislation and regulation provides every citizen protection when buying goods and services. The role of the CEP is to enhance that by preventing consumers making choices that are detrimental. By running campaigns which educate, empower and advise we enable and equip consumers to make the best informed choices.

Our first year as a CEP has seen us develop and execute a range of campaigns for a range of our consumer population. Central to this has been our Secondary Ticketing project which we were tasked to develop as a focus to our work.

The initial focus of this work was to evaluate what people knew and thought about secondary ticketing with a view to developing information strategies to enable them to make the right ticket purchases.

We found the secondary ticketing environment was complex and changed throughout our research. Analysis of our resources, expertise and position in the debate led us to develop a targeted campaign strategy.

We have been privileged to have worked with various stakeholders, students from three different Universities, MPs, music industry representatives, fans and consumers. We have also provided evidence and expertise in partnership with the Consumer Empowerment Alliance, Consumer Protection Partnership, Competition and Markets Authority. At a national level we attended parliamentary select committee and industry roundtable discussions. These strategies have enabled us to keep up to date with the changes in the secondary ticketing sector.

The culmination of our work has been to create a toolkit for 'developing a targeted campaign'. In it you will find a breakdown of robust research methods, examples of the benefits of working with targeted groups and detailed building blocks for defining your consumer issue and creating public resources.

Using secondary ticketing as a case study we worked with University of Nottingham and University of Derby students, collected evidence through focused interviews and group work to design and produce an educational and empowering peer to peer video which gives 6 top tips on how to buy tickets safely.

We hope that by following our guide you will find the tools, creativity and inspiration for your own successful campaigns.

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Defining the issue...

Behind every campaign is an issue. Behind every issue there's a consumer needing our help. Attracting people's attention in a busy multi-media world can be hard. Ensuring a campaign will cut through the 'noise' means being focused right from the start. By defining your issue in stages you can create the building blocks to maximise campaign success.

Do your research. Make sure you do your research on your issue area thoroughly. Every argument must be supported by robust evidence if it is to be convincing. Identify who the key stakeholders are and what work has already been done.

Know what you want to change. Once you have identified the key issue you need to be clear what your aim is. What do you want to change? Why do you want to change it? If you are looking to affect an industry, policy or legislative change make sure you're aware of the structures and framework within which you'll be operating. If you're looking to increase consumer empowerment and change behaviour start to identify what is motivating people's current attitudes and actions.

Timing is everything. What is the impetus for the campaign? Why now? Timing can be critical to the success of a project. How long will you have to execute your campaign - is there an 'end' point or deadline? For example, if you're running a consumer campaign would it be better launching it in National Consumer Week? If doing something on living wills could you get the best impact in November when it is National Wills month. All these factors will direct the nature and shape of your project. You can make time work for you too. Timing a campaign to coincide with activities taking place by either supportive or opposition forces can increase your impact. Always be aware of the environment in which you are operating especially if it keeps changing.

Identify best influencing strategy. Who are the stakeholders, how can they help you and who has the power? These may be MPs, local councillors, local authorities, a community service, whoever has the influence to change a policy or decision. You may not be able to access and build working links with all, so think about what the right strategy is for you and what resources you have? Networking and stakeholder management is important but will it help you achieve your specific campaign objectives? A strategy that worked for one campaign might not be right for this campaign.

Working with partners. Developing collaboration and partnerships can maximise the impact of a campaign as well as tapping into to new expertise, reaching new audiences and easing the workload. There are pros and cons working with partners and the partners you choose will depend on what your aims and objectives are. You may want to see if you need a formal agreement or whether a more informal arrangement would work better. For more information about working in partnerships see the Citizens Advice Southend CEP 2016 toolkit 'Building Partnerships'.

Monitor and evaluate progress. Setting clear objectives at the beginning of your campaign will allow you to monitor your progress and ask whether you are making not just an impact but the right impact. Campaigns will continue to evolve after the research and framework stage. This may be in response to the impact you're having or may be due to external factors in the industry or market you're working in. Monitoring and evaluation will allow you to stay ahead where possible and responsive when necessary.

There's no doubt that the entertainment industry for live events is big business. The contribution of the live music sector (concerts, gigs, festivals and other large scale events) to the UK economy was £924m in 2014.

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Fans are not getting
a fair crack at getting tickets

Sharon Hodgson MP, Washington
& Sunderland West

It is also a highly complex industry - which is increasingly in the public, political and consumer advice spotlight. 2016/17 has seen renewed criticism about the potential exploitation of ticket buyers. Over-inflation of prices, fake and invalid tickets, tickets not arriving with fans are among some of the issues under scrutiny.

There are a number of different stakeholders within the field - politicians, artists, promoters, venue representatives, industry regulators, consumer protection organisations, grass root action groups and the ticket companies (primary and secondary) themselves.

A key aspect of our campaign plan was to define exactly where we should position ourselves in this changing market place and what outcome we were aiming for.

Our targeted campaign was focused solely on the issue of **secondary ticketing** and the risks to consumers when purchasing these 're-sold' tickets.

We defined a two pronged strategy of local and national influencing and practical consumer empowerment work.

National influencing focused on those stakeholders who had the power to shape and change legislation. A number of MPs nationally have been leading the campaign for tougher action against reselling and in particular the electronic 'bot' harvesting of tickets. We developed links with them providing evidence, information and insights.

We also briefed our local MP Andrew Bingham who spoke in the select committee hearings.

We attended the **House of Commons select committee** hearings and were requested to represent Citizens Advice at a series of national roundtable meetings between the entertainment industry and the **Competition and Markets Authority**. We have also reported to the national **Consumer Protection Partnership** and the **Consumer Empowerment Alliance**.

Monitoring and evaluation of both the secondary ticketing 'landscape' and our own consumer campaign became an increasingly significant aspect of our work.

There was increasing public and political attention with investigations announced into bad practice and increasing pressure to strengthen the Consumer Rights Act 2015 for ticket purchasers and to enforce provisions already given in the Act.

These changing factors had potential impacts to the shape of our campaign and advice content and had to be constantly evaluated.

Abuses of what should be a good system have increased to such a level that ... I believe that legislation may be needed.

Andrew Bingham MP, High Peak



Targeting your campaign...

Anyone who uses goods and services, whether within the public or private commercial sectors, is a consumer with rights and protections enshrined in law, regulation or codes of behaviour. But are your resources and efforts well spent trying to campaign, change behaviour of all consumers all the time?

Who do you want to empower and why do you want to empower them?

Spend some time to discover why this group in particular needs support. It could be because they're most at risk of exploitation or harm, or that they simply constitute the largest cohort of consumers in a particular market. Do they have any particular needs or requirements? Are they marginalised or vulnerable? Having a campaign on a specific group can sometimes be more effective than trying to reach out to too broad an audience.

Understand the effects. Investigate why this issue matters to people. What is the impact on their lives when things go wrong. It could be financial or possibly even a matter of life or death such as faulty electrical goods, unsafe properties or mis-sold medication. You can build up this picture through a number of different means - data collection, case studies, frontline worker experiences. This will help you target the right consumer group and will also provide important information about how you can deliver your awareness messages to them later in the campaign process.

Questions, questions. Look at the issue through your target audience's perspective. Make sure you can answer the following questions ... Why me? Why is it relevant? Why should I care? What's in it for me?

Campaigning in action...

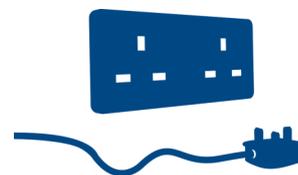
Our case monitoring identified that older people were not accessing our services as readily as possible. Research also showed people aren't aware of the financial support they are entitled to. Some faced barriers to accessing much needed help through poor mobility, lack of transport or isolation.

We used this information to develop an older person's campaign. Our Outreach service has advisers based in more than 50 GP surgeries across our area. We partnered with the surgeries to roll out an Attendance Allowance awareness campaign focussing the action around their flu-jab programme to optimise audience reach.

We also introduced an Older Persons Champion in our northern district who is able to offer tailored advice and make home visits.

We ran a multi-targeted campaign for National Consumer Week.

- Aware that while people may hear safety messages they may not act on them. We ran an electric blanket swap-shop in partnership with Derbyshire Fire Service. We teamed up with Rural Action Derbyshire to help people who had no access to mains gas
- A successful social media campaign partnered with local businesses.
- We hit a new audience of consumers when working with a local primary school to develop an Art & Advice trail for the town high street. The pupils designed electrical safety posters to spread the word on buying electrical goods safely and knowing your consumer rights. These artworks were displayed by 14 local shops and businesses in a public exhibition.



Secondary ticketing ...who is at risk?

Any consumer wanting to buy tickets for a concert or event could be at risk of losing out because they've bought a secondary or resold ticket. There could be a financial impact - paying way over the odds for a ticket, the risk of fake or non-existent tickets. There have been some cases recently of venues turning away or ejecting fans from concerts if they've bought a resold ticket.

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The risk is heightened due to the lack of transparency between primary and secondary ticketing sites and markets. There's growing concern about the practice of harvesting tickets, the purchase of tickets on a large scale by people in order to resell them on the secondary ticketing market. More recently there are reports of artist's managers putting tickets straight onto a secondary ticketing site where they're sold at grossly inflated prices.



Our target group

Alongside the influencing strand of our campaign a key focus was to be an active empowerment programme with active consumers of live music and events.

We chose students as they are at the start of their 'consumer life' journey. They're very active consumers of live music and events, are familiar with social media and communicating digitally. They're also less cautious about buying on-line and unseen than perhaps older generations. As they have less disposable income the wrong purchasing choices can have a greater impact on them financially. Peer pressure and the desire to get into the 'right' gigs can drive a need to follow the tickets at any price.

I knew about touts selling resold tickets but hadn't really thought about fact that there are companies and websites doing it.

Clayton, University of Derby

I thought if you bought online you'd probably be ok.

Callum, University of Derby

Our campaign addresses how to navigate a changing industry to give consumers the right information and advice to buy tickets safely at a fair price and give them the best shot of seeing their favourite music live.

Secondary Tickets - know your rights

Making the case...

You've identified your target group now you have to examine in more detail the impact of this consumer issue on their lives in order to develop a coherent and engaging campaign action plan.

There are a number of different ways you can explore these issues and undertake in-depth research with the cohort.

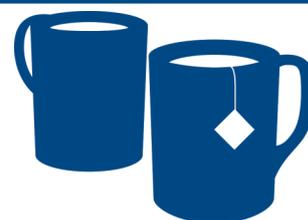
When choosing which method to use for your campaign you may need to think of the following

What information do you already have? What information do you need to progress your research further?

Case studies, surveys, running focus group or individual interviews can bring rich data to your campaign but each will have cost, time and data implications for you to consider. For more information about research in a campaign see the Citizens Advice Blackpool CEP 'How to do local research' toolkit. **Partnering** with the group you wish to target is a productive way to ensure you understand the case and can communicate effectively.

Student to Student - Peer to Peer

We were keen to get authentic responses from student consumers, to understand the issue from their perspective. We felt that developing a peer to peer aspect to the campaign as a whole and particularly the research stage would be beneficial.



It would also enable us to address time and practical constraints, with the student researchers able to engage with fellow students more readily and across a range of times during the day.

For more detail on partnering with young people and developing student volunteering see our toolkit on BMIS volunteer model : [Law students at Derbyshire Districts.](#)

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We had already developed contacts at **Nottingham Trent University** and as we were looking to work with students who had an understanding of law, legislation and processes we applied to the University's Acceler8grad programme. The aim of this project is

to help law students gain rewards for their extracurricular experiences and the skills they have gained.

The students are tasked to each give 15 hours of their time. In reality though we found the students gave a lot more and wanted to continue to work on secondary ticketing after the Acceler8 project was complete.

As we working with students as part of the programme a more formal partnership agreement was appropriate. As lead partner we outlined our aims, objectives, research completion schedule and highlighted the partners roles.

Throughout the campaign the students were able to contact us for support and advice. We made sure we had the framework to make ourselves available as agreed in our partnership agreement.

Our application was successful and so we started with a 2 hour workshop with the University students putting a campaigns plan together.

Workshop 1

- Overview of secondary ticketing as a consumer issue
- Identifying specific roles in the research campaign
- Considering different methods of conducting research
- Developing a schedule for active research
- Ways of analysing and evaluating results

Tip:

Ahead of the workshop we developed a discussion guide to facilitate a focused session.

The students decided a survey would be the most appropriate way of gathering a large amount of evidence. Questions were designed to reveal students' choices when buying tickets; their awareness of the risks of buying secondary tickets and any understanding of consumer rights.

71%

of students felt the **face value** and **full cost** was the most important criteria when buying a ticket.



62%

of students felt seat location was an important aspect of buying a ticket.

55%

wanted to know about any restrictions of terms applying to the use of the ticket.



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25%

of students surveyed couldn't distinguish between a primary and a secondary ticketing site.



Students wanted a sense of immediacy to the survey and developed an online survey which was promoted and accessed via social media.

It was not without its challenges. Initially the students wanted to run the survey via the University's internal online system. As this was an academic site it wasn't practicable to use it without undertaking a potentially time consuming ethics process.

Instead they contacted Nottingham Trent University Student Union who agreed to publish the survey on its facebook page.

70 students from a range of courses completed the survey.

More than **50%** were aware of secondary ticketing



17% didn't know the importance of the link between primary and secondary ticketing sellers.

76%

had **no** knowledge that the Consumer Rights Act requires seat, row, cost and restrictions to be printed on each ticket.



Refining your key campaign message...

A targeted campaign process is a constant journey of evaluation and refinement. Defining which group to target, conducting in-depth research about the impact the issue has on the lives of your consumer group allows you to build a relevant and broad picture.

Now you have to strip that wealth of insight back to your key campaign messages and actions.



What are the most important messages your targeted consumer group needs to know?

What will give them the tools to make active informed choices in the future?

Here are some things to consider when refining your campaign messages...

Make it real - humanise the issue, reflecting the concerns of your target group and also the impact a purchase could have on their financial, physical safety or emotional wellbeing.

Make it original - look at ways your campaign may be different to others. Focus on telling your target group something new and useful.

Make it simple - don't get bogged down in too much detail. Identify exactly what it is your consumer group wants and needs and keep it relevant.

A key learning point has been that secondary ticketing is not an immediately recognisable issue for consumers. After being prompted in discussion the students were able to identify what the risks are when buying tickets which are not primary tickets, but the terminology itself is a barrier to understanding and empowerment.

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We wanted the campaign messages developed to be relevant and to resonate with students in particular. By testing and developing the messages in informal focus groups and individual interviews with a selection of students at the University of Derby, Buxton campus and local colleges, we identified 6 key warnings for students

Are you about to be ripped off?

Who's selling the tickets?

Are you paying safely?

Will they arrive on time?

Do the tickets look right?

What can you do if it does go wrong?

What students were telling us was that they needed a quick and easy guide to what to look out for and where to go for help. With their help we'd developed target resource target and a title!

**Will your ticket get you in?
A guide to buying tickets safely.**

There are a number of ways you can get your campaign messages out to the public. All have cost, time, production and distribution implications. Some may require you to buy in external skills or equipment such as graphic design, audio video production. Others may impact on your staffing such as public awareness events / presentations.

But the key consideration is : **What is the best way to communicate with your target group?**

How to get the message out there...

Deciding on the best channel of communication will depend on who your targeted campaign is directed at. There's no better way to identify this than to speak to them directly. This may be within the community, via partner organisations or even within your own volunteering pool.

You'll want to get a sense of ...

How do they like to get their information...?

How much time do they have to take in your campaign messages?

Where will they be getting that information?

What are the key points to get across - will they need to refer to it again for contact details?

Campaigning in action...

Target group: Over 65 years old unaware of Attendance Allowance eligibility.

The nature of the campaign was to target people who may be isolated within communities and even their own home. So a high street campaign may not be effective. While there is some internet use among this group, social media does not have great impact in their lives.

Campaign channel: Leaflet. This is a familiar resource for this group, with the possibility of developing larger print leaflets if required. It also provided a resource which can be kept for future reference and easily passed on to a family member.



Distribution point: We identified that GP surgeries could be a focal distribution point. We also timed our campaign around the annual flu-jab programme to maximise the resource being seen by the target group.

Added value: It also tied into our GP Outreach service with advisers based in nearly every GP practice in our area. We were also able to offer people help quickly as they had the opportunity to book an outreach adviser appointment direct through the GP reception.

Making your campaign resources work harder...

Think about ways your individual resources can provide '**added value**' to your wider organisation.

By developing a resource which can be easily used in leaflet or digital form and as a social media campaign.

Creating your resources...



Don't use leaflets – no one picks them up or reads them. The last leaflet I saw I used to put my used tea-bag on!

Oliver, Student, University of Derby



Our 'vox pop' focus group with students confirmed that this target consumer group like to get their information through a tailored and direct means, with immediacy. They're attracted by things which are visual and engaging. They're also actively seeking media which they can share.

This feedback has led us to develop an alternative campaign resource - an awareness film.

What's your story?

Your key messages: Don't try to say too much in your film. Identify early on what you want your film to contain - sharing experiences, raising awareness, providing advice, signposting for support. Films can contain all of these elements but don't underestimate the length of time each key message may require.

Narrative style: Case study & documentary, animation, dramatization, there are number of ways you can develop your narrative. All will have time, cost and practical implications. Interview based filming can be relatively cheap but you will have to consider research times in identifying contributors, travel to different filming locations and time editing interviews down into bite-size clips. Animation and drama can be more controlled as you're directing the action but will have higher production costs.

Tone of voice: this will be dictated by the audience you're wanting to engage with as well as the campaign content. In all cases you'll want to keep your language as authentic and straight forward as possible and relevant to your target group.

How long have you got? How and where you're promoting and placing your film can influence what the duration is. For social media promotion the shorter the better. An issue based film outlining the impact of your service to clients, stakeholders and funders may sustain viewing interest longer particularly if you are following compelling case studies.

Our Story...

Our research indicated that unless human experiences / case studies are really dramatic or downright hilarious then they won't compete with the other media students engage with. Adding personal music or event choices into the mix increases potential switch off points.

There was a risk that using specific case studies would not resonate with consumers if the music choice was different to theirs. It would also require increased time due to production, editing and recording as well as sourcing contributors and filtering through interviews and testimonies.

What the students did want to know however was how to avoid problems. In their words, **advice - but not 'lecturing'**.

The national ticketing environment is evolving.

The beginning of 2017 has seen increase in public interest and political pressure on the issue. There was a risk that new rules and practices could be introduced making interviews and voice over potentially out of date.

We looked to 'future proof' our film by building in graphic sections which could be easily altered if changes to the market do occur.

Using the students' comments and suggestions we began to develop a narrative of getting ready for a night out. This would be shot from the student's perspective. Within each scene one of the key campaign 'warning messages' would be revealed, displayed on a template ticket. A graphic info-slide would accompany each scene setting out tips

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You don't want to be the one missing out because you've been ripped off getting your ticket. That should drive the story.

Jack, former media student,
& business apprentice.

Will your ticket get you in? A guide to buying ticket safely...



A consistent comment from the students was to keep it short. Nothing much more than 2.5 minutes.

Continuing the student led approach we utilised our links with our local University of Derby campus in Buxton to help source filming locations, to bring a students perspective reviewing scripts and providing the voice over.



Working with a young production company with a music video background gave the shoot authenticity.

Mixing graphics and images we have also created a ready-to-go social media campaign.



Next steps...

Resources

We have developed a range of resources within this campaign which can reflect different audience needs and outlets.

Awareness and Advice film: short sequences with advice graphic tiles: Duration: 2m 43 seconds.

Awareness film: short sequence and Consumer helpline number: Duration 1m 46 seconds.

A key objective of the project was to develop resources which could be easily shared and cascaded to a student population. The structure of the promo-film has enabled us to easily create a social media campaign using images from the film and advice graphics.



Distribution

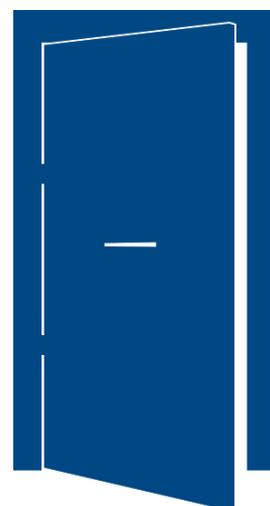
We are working with student services at the University of Derby, Buxton campus to place and distribute the promo-film within the campus community. Discussions are underway with Nottingham Trent University to explore if the film can be embedded into the Student Union's box office website.

We will be looking to enhance this with the roll out of a social media campaign within the student community based on our during National Consumer week 2017.

Strengthening links and engaging new partners

As well as targeting students as our consumer group we developed a peer-to-peer approach to the campaign as a whole. This strengthened our links with this younger client group. It has enabled us to increase awareness of our advice services in general and raise the profile of our advice locations.

As a local charity we are constantly looking to increase volunteer numbers in new and sustainable ways. This Consumer Empower Partnership campaign has enabled us to embed the principles of volunteering and the importance of access to free and independent consumer advice to a new generation. It has also created a new and wider volunteer recruitment pool.



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