

## Executive Summary

For over 15 years, the UK Department for Transport's THINK! campaign has been highly successful in raising awareness and shifting the public's attitudes around important road safety issues.

In the past we've had to prove the effectiveness of our communications in terms of *what didn't happen* i.e. a reduction in the annual numbers of people killed or seriously injured on the roads. But proving an actual, measurable, change in behaviour – *what did happen* as a result of our campaigns – has always been far more difficult.

The success of the *THINK! Country Roads* campaign was achieved through two key breakthroughs.

1. Rigorous research that enabled us to unearth a new insight - helping us identify a small change in behaviour that could have a big benefit to driver safety.
2. Setting up a pioneering, tech-enabled, real world testing methodology that proved drivers had responded to our communications.

This paper proves how the *THINK! Country Roads* campaign got drivers to brake earlier on bendy country roads. And how, through our innovative testing methodology, we can demonstrate 4 lives will be saved on the road this year. This saved the Government £6.8 million pounds at a cost of just £2.15 million. It also shows how the *THINK! Country Roads* campaign has brought a new level of rigour and precision to how the Department for Transport proves the effectiveness of its efforts to change behaviour and save lives.

Consequently, it has proved a crucial breakthrough for the Department in setting future investment priorities and in justifying continued support for road safety campaigns.

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**Country Roads Campaign**



## The issue

The UK Department for Transport's has a simple mission; to help save lives on the roads.

In 2000, the DfT created its THINK! campaign, with the objective of making Brits think harder about their behaviour on the roads - targeting issues such as drink driving and speeding.

But the issue of how proving how effective these campaigns have been in really changing behaviour has always been more difficult to grasp. That's because it is very hard to measure actual behaviour change.

Campaign awareness is a good measure of how well people recall your message, but whether or not a person changes their behaviour based on that message is a different matter.

We regularly survey road users on their attitudes and actions on the road. These are *claimed behaviours*. While these are useful indicators of changes in attitude over time, they too are not a completely robust measure. The nagging question has always been how well these measures correspond with actual changes in behaviour?

And this question has become louder with tightened government budgets and all departments strictly challenged to justify every pound spent in terms of their effect.

So when we sat down with the DfT in December 2013 to talk campaign priorities for the year ahead, our focus was on how we could help save most lives per marketing pound spent, **and** how we could deliver a breakthrough model of measuring the *actual* behaviour change effect of that marketing activity. Specifically, we set ourselves 2 objectives:

1. Target the road issue that can help us save the most lives...
2. ...And whose effect we can measure in terms of actual behaviour change.

## Strategic Approach

Our research process involved statistical analysis, interviews with road safety experts, as well as qualitative research with drivers.

Our start-point was to study the annual statistics that document all the road accidents in the UK in which someone has been killed or seriously injured (KSIs).

By cutting this data geographically we saw that 60% of total road deaths occurred on country roads. So, if we could successfully tackle the problem of country road

accidents we would make a significant contribution to reducing the number of road deaths in the UK.

The challenge remained of what specific behaviour we could aim to change and, crucially, measure among drivers on country roads.

When we interrogated the police reports of traffic accidents, we found our answer.

1. On rural roads, the single biggest contributing factor to accidents is *loss of control*, which is most often the result of driving at inappropriately high speed.
2. The most common manoeuvre where speed contributes to KSIs on rural roads is driving around bends.
3. More deaths occur on left-hand bends than right-hand bends.

**So we knew we had to focus on accidents that occur when drivers are carry too much speed into left hand bends on a country road.**

The result is that they lose control of their car - either going off the road into a tree, or hitting an oncoming vehicle.

And through consulting roads safety experts and academics, we were also able to determine a single, incredibly useful, action that drivers could take to help avoid these accidents.

***Brake before the bend, not on it***

This was a very specific behaviour that we could communicate to drivers in order to help save their lives.

And importantly, it was something we could measure in terms of *actual* behaviour.

### **A pioneering evaluation approach**

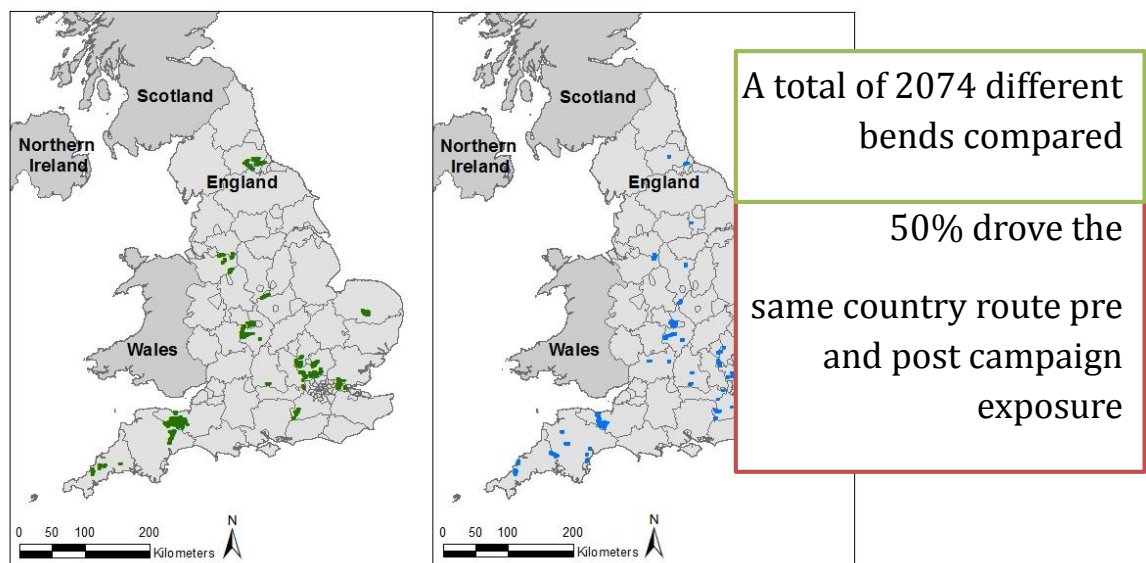
Together with our research partners, TNS BRMB and Eyesquare we devised a first-of-its-kind testing approach that would let us track the actual driving behaviour of our target audience while they were driving on country roads, which alongside campaign metrics such as awareness and salience provides a more holistic evaluation.

Devices that use GPS and an accelerometer to track speed and braking were inserted into the cars of those who drive on country roads regularly, for a period of a week pre and post the campaign.



EyeSquare Driver Behaviour monitoring equipment

Through this methodology, we could determine not only average speeds, but the point around the bend at which our drivers were braking too.



EyeSquare Driver Behaviour Study.

## Proposition

Our research had also told us that there is, deep down, a commonly held fear among driver of the potential hazard (be it an oncoming car, tractor, or even animal in the lane) that you can't see around a bend. We captured this insight in our proposition.

*Unexpected hazards often lurk behind the bends on country roads, so brake before the bend not on it.*

## Creative Approach

We created a series of online films, print and radio ads that brought to life this proposition.

The creative work subverted the idea that country roads are idyllic and fun to drive, by instead making them places full of danger and menace. Our films and print employed an innovative X-ray filming technique to show the viewer that even the most benign looking country bends can conceal killer hazards, such as an oncoming car.



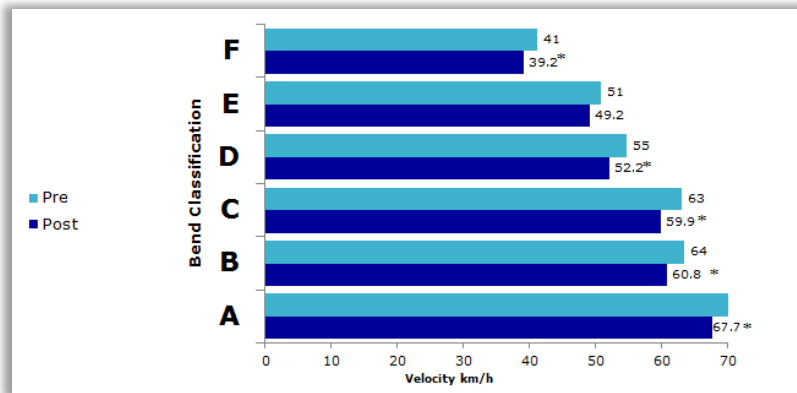
Stills from one of our online films

Our radio dramatized the thought that the hedges lining country roads don't just hide unusual wildlife such as brown long eared bats, but unexpected oncoming hazards behind the bend too.

All of this creative work concluded with our simple tip, *brake before the bend, not on it.*

## Outcome

1. Average speed dropped from 54kmh to 52 kmh



TNS THINK! Rural road presentation showing changes to average speeds across all bend classifications.

(Just two km an hour reduction sounds very small but research shows that for every 1mph reduction, accident incidence is reduced by 2%. (see below).

2. Drivers started decelerating earlier in the Post-launch phase on most types of bends on country roads, particularly the tighter bends where visibility around the bend is most likely to be reduced.
3. Accident data post the campaign is yet to be released.

However, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents concludes that, 'for every kmh reduction in average speed, accident frequency would reduce by about 2% on the higher speed urban roads and rural single carriageway main roads.'

If we were therefore to assume that a reduction of speed of 2kmh would cause a 4% reduction in the number of accidents we can conclude that we would have saved at least six lives with this campaign. This has been deduced by taking the number of accidents caused by 'driving too fast for conditions' on rural roads from a previous year – 4982 accidents (in 2012). 4% of this is 199 accidents. The average 'death to accident' ratio for vehicles traveling at ~50mph is 1 in 49 (found from taking an average across 2011, 2012 and 2013 data). Therefore it is likely that there would have been at least 4 deaths in the presumed 199 accidents.

The cost of preventing one fatality in 2012 was valued by the Department for Transport at £1.7 million. The cost of the campaign, including production, agency fees, media, PR and pre and post research was £2.15M. Therefore, if the campaign has saved 4 lives it will have delivered a return on investment of £2.16 for every £1 spent.

<http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/adviceandinformation/driving/speed/inappropriate-speed.aspx>

## **Key Learning**

The THINK! Country Roads evaluation technique brought a new level of rigour and precision to how the Department of Transport measures its efforts to change behaviour and save lives. It has proved a crucial breakthrough for the Department as it seeks to understand what works, and where to invest for best results.

We believe THINK! Country Roads provides useful instruction for all behaviour change campaigns in both its laser-focused commitment to identifying the specific behaviour we could address and its pioneering application of new evaluation techniques.

**CLICK ON LINK TO VIEW CAMPAIGN:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYQDPgbefkM>