

Reproduced with kind permission of the National Railway Museum and Thompson Brand Partners



RELEVANT STAGES

Analyse: Cost

Report: Measurement

STRENGTHS

Return on investment, Stakeholder engagement, Communication, New and old

PROJECT TITLE

National Railway Museum

CLIENT

Science Museum Group

DESIGN SUPPLIERS

Thompson Brand Partners, Leeds, United Kingdom

LAUNCH DATE

2010/2011

USEFUL LINKS

www.effectivedesign.org.uk

INCREASING MUSEUM VISITOR NUMBERS

SUMMARY

The National Railway Museum has been based at its current site in York, UK since 1975 and is the largest railway museum in the world. However, visitor numbers had been falling since 2006. Rail enthusiasts were making up an increasingly high proportion of visitors with family visits reducing alarmingly. The objective of the project was to rebrand the museum with the aim of driving visitor numbers (both online and physical) and to grow revenue.

INSIGHT

A new identity and clear principles were required to articulate the new essence and values of the museum, helping to improve the consistency of communications and behaviour. The brand essence was defined as “Connecting generations through the wonderful stories of railways and how the shape our world”. The new identity had to appeal specifically to the primary growth audiences, whilst not alienating other audiences.

APPROACH

Finding the right balance between the past and the future was a difficult balance. The new brand was built on two things that are essential to rail travel; movement and speed.. The solution was simple enough for all audiences to feel they could ‘own’ it and was capable of bringing out the new essence of connecting generations. The identity is contemporary but with the ability to be used in the more of a heritage feel in some applications. A broad colour palette and suggestive image style were included to illustrate the flexibility it offers. It was also decided to include the name in full rather than an abbreviation, as a reminder of the museum’s national status and subject matter.

OUTCOME

After 5 years of decreases, visitor numbers were up 14% in 2011/12 to 717300. Family visits now make up 59% of all visits, from 41% before the rebrand. Online visitor numbers are up by 34% to 1.03m and the merchandise license sales for 2 years to June 2013 are up by 397% on the previous 2 years. The design investment has attracted 7.34 visitors for every £1 spent – great value for money.