

Regional Customer Panels Spring 2023

Feedback & Actions

05 May 2023

AVANTI
WEST COAST



Objectives

Avanti West Coast wanted to understand:

- Customer sentiment towards travel and the impact of recent disruption
- Customer awareness and response to a new campaign message about reassurance – what did customers think of the branding/recognisability of the branding and would the messaging encourage them to travel in future?

Methodology

Avanti West Coast worked with research agency Human8 and held 5 focus groups to understand the general sentiment towards travel, rail travel and the impact of recent disruption.

AWC also tested customer's perceptions of the regional messaging campaign which took place across digital and social channels from 20th March 2023. It centred around encouraging customers to travel with Avanti West Coast again, and features a series of regionally targeted and broader messages tailored around the service offered.

Each focus group had participants from a specific area: Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and the Midlands, Wales and Scotland, and the South.

Key Findings and recommendations

- Overall, train travel is something customers look forward to
- Despite recent disruption, **customers still prefer to use the train** to travel from one place to another, especially for long distance journeys. The reasons are that trains are a comfortable and enjoyable way to travel.
- **Regaining trust** is a task which takes time and consistent effort as the vast majority of customers have been impacted by the cancellation of Avanti West Coast trains in the last 6 months. Customers need to be confident that they can travel with little hassle to reduce stress prior to and during travel.
- Despite frustrations in the past, recently Avanti West Coast's **services have improved**. However, this improvement **needs to be sustained** and noticed by customers in order to restore trust.



Key Findings and recommendations

- Recall of the advertisements was low. In a sector where comms recall by customers is generally low, there is scope for Avanti West Coast to learn from the success of their Feel Good Travel campaign.
- **Price messaging** was claimed to be something they would keep in mind and so providing ways for customers to find these cheaper tickets easily at a later date is likely to be well received.
- This advertisement could benefit from being made **more memorable and eye-catching** in a similar vein to Avanti West Coast's previous campaign, Feel Good Travel. The message is not specific enough in what it is offering customers.



Even though the message of the ad is positive and somewhat met with hope, customers need first-hand and tangible evidence of improved service in order to believe it. However, a one-off positive experience will not suffice: **improved service needs to be consistent and repeated over time in order to restore confidence.**"

Thank you

