

ShowCase

THINK!

Topic:

Road safety

Organisation:

Department for Transport

Location:

England

Dates:

2000 to 2010

Budget:

£14 million to £19 million per year

Website:

www.dft.gov.uk/think

Contact:

Head of Marketing

Email:

dftpublicity@dft.gsi.gov.uk



Overview

In 2000 the UK Department for Transport (DfT) developed a marketing and communications programme to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on the roads. This broad suite of campaigns, each with its own specific behaviour change objective, was developed under the unifying 'THINK!' brand, which formed part of the Government's 2000 road safety strategy, *Tomorrow's Roads: Safer for Everyone*. The strategy set targets to reduce the number of people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on UK roads by 50 per cent for children and by 40 per cent overall by 2010, as compared to the 1994 to 1998 average.

To achieve such ambitious targets, the Government pioneered a three-pronged strategy to reduce road casualties: Engineering, Enforcement and Education. THINK! formed part of the Education element, along with other measures such as driver learning and testing.

In 2008, together with the introduction of successful engineering and enforcement measures, THINK! contributed to meeting or exceeding DfT's road safety targets, with a 40 per cent reduction in KSI and a 59 per cent reduction in child KSI. This represents 3,494 people who are alive and uninjured today due to THINK! Moreover, it is estimated that for every £1 spent on THINK! £9.36 of public money was saved.



Road safety has long been a government priority in the UK. Since the 1960s, changes to the design of our roads and vehicles, as well as significant investment in new policy initiatives and communications campaigns, have helped improve the safety of our roads, despite increases in population, vehicles and traffic numbers. Indeed, by 2000, the UK was the safest country internationally in terms of road deaths per 100,000 population.



However, crashes were still at an unacceptable level. In 1999 alone there were over 3,400 deaths and 39,000 serious injuries on UK roads, which was calculated to cost the public around £12 billion total per year in 2000.

National strategy

The government's first road safety strategy (from 1987 to 2000) aimed to reduce total casualties by a third (compared to the 1981 to 1985 average) and succeeded in successfully reducing the number killed by 39 per cent and those seriously injured by 49 per cent. Despite the declining number of Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI), a careful assessment revealed the potential for even greater reductions in numbers of people KSI over a 10-year period.

On the basis of this assessment, in 2000 the Government published its White Paper *Tomorrow's Roads: Safer for Everyone*, which set out specific targets for 2010 (compared with the baseline average for 1994 to 1998):

- 40 per cent reduction in the number of people KSI
- 50 per cent reduction in the number of children KSI
- 10 per cent reduction in the slight casualty rate

The 3Es approach

To achieve these targets, the Department for Transport (DfT) set out an approach that can be summed up as the '3Es': Enforcement, Education and Engineering. This approach was designed to facilitate a more holistic way for all policy initiatives to work together to reduce deaths and serious injuries.



1. Enforcement measures included: Introduction of further legislation and penalties for breaking road safety regulations; greater police road presence; increase in road safety cameras
2. Engineering measures included: Primary safety (i.e. car engineering designed to prevent accidents); secondary safety (i.e. car engineering to reduce the severity of accidents); general road engineering and maintenance
3. Education measures included: A more stringent and multifaceted driving test; road safety officer campaigns; development of a new brand for a broader range of communications



This case study focuses on the behaviour change communications campaign (which became branded 'THINK!') developed as one of the Education measures.

Resourcing

The road safety strategy was allocated a budget of approximately £130 million per year (though this fluctuated year to year), to cover all elements of the 3Es. Engineering tended to receive the majority of the funding, mainly to be spent on local grants for implementing or piloting engineering measures. THINK! tended to receive between £14 and £19 million (changing year to year) – though in 2010, with a change of government and subsequent marketing freeze, its annual budget fell to around £5 million.



Core team for THINK!

The Marketing team at DfT was responsible for leading the development of a new brand for road safety communications. The team consisted of between 12 and 15 people and was divided into a Child Road Safety team and an Adult Road Safety team. Each team was managed by a team head and had various campaign managers, each of whom was assigned a specific road safety topic to project manage.

The Marketing team worked very closely with the Policy team at DfT to ensure their plans were aligned, to achieve maximum impact with their campaigns.



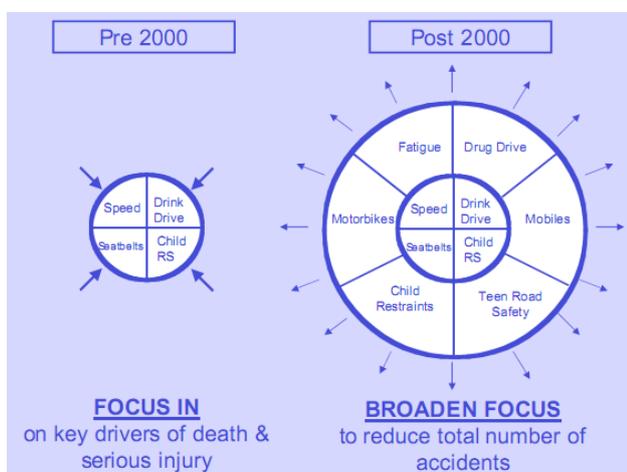
To hit the new targets, DfT realised that it needed to broaden its influence. Making year-on-year reductions in road casualties becomes ever more challenging. Big reductions had been achieved from basic measures like fitting seat belts, but as the strategy matured it had to address more diverse and intransigent problems. Three in particular influenced DfT's approach in 2000:

1. Issue proliferation

In 2000, analysis of the causes of road accidents indicated an increase in the sheer range of contributing factors – there were more distractions on the road, more people, more vehicles and more cyclists.

Historically, four communications campaigns had been funded on the basis that they were responsible for preventing the greatest number of KSIs. However, the number of slight injuries and accidents had started to increase. DfT needed to maintain pressure on key issues to sustain low levels of death and serious injuries,

but whilst slight injuries cost the Government less, the aggregate savings are greater. DfT therefore decided to broaden its scope to include more issues on the road, in the hope that greater gains and a long-term impact on British road culture could be made. The risk, however, is that in addressing a wider variety of factors, the benefits would dissipate as it becomes increasingly difficult to do enough on any particular issue to have an effect. Maintaining the traditional model of high-impact Government campaign would not be able to support all the issues within the budget.



2. Audience fragmentation

DfT is responsible for the road safety for all users. The principle segmentation method that had been applied by DfT was one based on behaviour and form of road use. However, analysis of road casualty statistics indicated that there were key groups who were disproportionately at risk on the road and required targeted attention:

- Children
- Young male drivers
- People who drive for work
- Motorcyclists

For example, young male drivers in particular were significantly over-represented in road casualty statistics. Their mixture of inexperience, youthful exuberance and underdeveloped risk assessment ability made

driving one of their biggest killers. The challenge was to develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that was also capable of influencing all these disparate audiences.



3. Media complexity

An increasingly complex media environment had developed, in which message cut-through had become more and more difficult. Road safety communications had to 'compete' with a greater variety of commercial messages and embrace channel proliferation – including the growth of digital media economy. Many local authorities (LAs) had also been producing their own campaigns. Road users could end up being disoriented by the myriad of messages under a multitude of campaigns.

The opportunity

Achieving the new targets meant considering the potential cumulative impact of a wide range of stakeholders, including:

- Other government departments, such as the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Children, Schools and Families

(replaced by the Department for Education, or DfE, in 2010) and the Home Office

- Highways agencies
- Charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as PACTS and ROADS SAFE
- LA Road Safety Officers (RSOs)
- Road safety partnerships
- Police
- Fire and rescue
- Road user associations and voluntary groups
- Car manufacturers
- Individual road users



There would also need to be a more holistic approach to communications and the numerous issues that cause crashes, building on the previous four issues of focus (speed, seat belts, drink driving and child safety).

This presented a unique opportunity to create something that could unite all the disparate elements of existing interventions to make a sum greater than its parts. However this was easier said than done – DfT needed a new approach that would be cost-efficient, practical, flexible, meaningful, inclusive and simple, and that would have real power to connect with and influence individual behaviour. There were no precedents in government for this kind of aspiration at the time, but the success of the whole strategy depended upon a uniquely effective solution.

Key insights

The main challenge was to root the approach to change in a fundamental understanding of the underlying issues and causes that needed to be tackled. Ultimately this came down to the need to generate self-awareness amongst road users of all ages and backgrounds. Given the everyday nature of road use, the single biggest catch-all danger to drivers and pedestrians is 'autopilot' behaviour in the road environment, which often militates against proper concentration and appropriate response. Available data made it clear that road user behaviour causes far more crashes than can be attributed to factors outside of personal control.

The key insight that informed DfT's marketing and communications campaign was the need to be the voice of the road user's conscience, reminding them of the risk involved in their behaviour at every point in their journey. This voice of conscience needed to be as relevant to primary school children as to Police and RSOs. In short, what was required was for people to think harder about their decisions on the road. It also needed to appeal and be meaningful to all programme stakeholders and partners at a national, local and community level. In addition to activity directed at road users, there was also a need for a call to action and a unifying symbol for the multifaceted programme.



The solution

Rather than launching multiple campaigns, the strategic decision was taken to launch one brand idea that could deliver different messages and be used by other partners. The DfT started thinking like a brand rather than a Government. Just as Tesco's 'Every Little Helps' could promote price or baby changing rooms, and Nike's ethos of 'Just do it' could stretch from women's sport to the Olympics, DfT needed a brand idea to drive efficiency and effectiveness.

The brand ideas would need to be:

- Simple, impactful and flexible enough to cover a wide range of issues
- Speak to diverse target audiences
- Collaborative, so that it could be used by a wide range of stakeholders

Each issue would then be 'launched' as a new product, borrowing learnings from the commercial sector: boosting awareness through integrated campaigns, public relations (PR) and working with partners.



Based on the insights, one word 'THINK!' was selected to create a powerful identity for the entire road safety effort. The idea was to wake up road users physically and emotionally and create a brand idea that would break through apathy and encourage all road users to 'Think!'. A logo was designed, using the lines of the road to inextricably link the brand idea to road safety issues.



This new umbrella brand was designed to work in three ways:

1. Issues: THINK! acted as a relevant mnemonic, linking previously disparate road safety issues and driving greater efficiencies.
2. Stakeholders: THINK! united a wide variety of activities under a single banner. It gave stakeholders a common language and galvanised their efforts by creating a sense that everything they did was contributing towards the single-minded pursuit of better road safety.
3. Individuals: THINK! acted as a prompt to road users to reassess risky road behaviour and consider the consequences of their actions. THINK! also provided strategic and creative flexibility for effectively communicating to an increasingly diverse audience. This facilitated the use of a broad range of channels to deliver individual messages meaningfully.



THINK! aimed to contribute to the 10-year road strategy by:

- Raising public awareness that accidents do not just happen, they are caused

- Encouraging and reinforcing attitudes that lead to safer and more considerate behaviour by all road users
- Promoting behaviour change that encourages safe road use by all road users, be they drivers, cyclists or pedestrians
- Involving a broad spectrum of society in promoting safer roads for everyone
- Creating public acceptance for safety engineering and police enforcement (the other two Es)
- Giving national focus and context for local initiatives aimed at making the roads safer and for third parties to carry road safety messages in the context of their own commercial activities



Long-term strategic planning

The strategy *Tomorrow's Roads* provided a commitment for DfT, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government to be alert to new thinking and fresh ideas. This approach was formalised by a review of progress every three years. Two three-year reviews of the strategy (2003 and 2006) were conducted with an overview and analysis of progress. In 2009, plans for a new road safety strategy were postponed due to an anticipated change of government.

Following each three-year review, a revised strategic plan was proposed for the upcoming three years by the Road Safety Strategy Board to address those target groups, road safety

topics or risky behaviours that were most salient.

Selecting road safety topics

When selecting the topics to feature, two distinct road user groups were considered:

1. Adults: The challenge was to persuade them to reconsider established habits. When selecting the habits to change, the team was guided by what caused the highest number of deaths and injuries. Motorcycles, drink driving and speeding were frequently the three highest, so they featured almost every year, in addition to other topics (like mobile phone use, seat belts, drug driving and driver fatigue) based primarily on the casualty data. Campaigns were also used to announce a change in legislation, for example an increase in the penalty for using a mobile phone when driving
2. Children: The focus was on influencing the development of good road use habits, rather than changing existing bad ones. So DfT aimed to ensure they got the right information and training at each life-stage and supported their influencers (particularly parents and teachers) to train children well



Adults and children were assigned 75 per cent and 25 per cent of the budget respectively. The marketing strategy, which was also prepared on a three-year basis and informed by the three-year reviews, outlined road safety topics to be addressed and was based on

extensive analysis of various relevant data, including:

1. Casualty data
2. Social research
3. Hospital admissions
4. Volume of traffic
5. Car/motorcycle manufacturer and insurance information
6. Anecdotal evidence
7. Coroners information
8. Enforcement data such as breath test rates and speeding fines

Campaign development process

After each marketing strategy was approved by the DfT Policy team, campaign managers followed a bespoke, staged process for each campaign:

1. Social and desk research: To start assessing and understanding how and why behaviour contributes to casualties and how a relevant road user profiles. The team would look at published data and commissioned specific policy research (qualitative and quantitative, including a segmentation study of the people who perform the target behaviour). A semiotics study may also be done to give an alternative insight into the topic. This information would be shared across DfT and its agencies to inform wider road safety initiatives, not just the communications campaigns.
2. 'Ways in' day: To get the views of as broad a spectrum of relevant stakeholders as possible and to brainstorm and start developing strategic areas and proposition statements. For example, drink driving stakeholders would include the police and other enforcement stakeholders, toxicologists, addiction experts, representatives from the alcohol industry and media representatives.
3. Development of message territories: To take all perspectives from the 'ways in' day and build different proposition statements or

communication strategies. Examples for drink driving could be 'Drink driving kills' or 'If you drink drive you will lose your licence'. At this stage there would be many possible strategies, which would enter a funnelling down process.

4. Strategic development research: To test the various communication strategies, primarily through focus groups. Based on the feedback, the team would decide on one strong strategic area.
5. Creative brief and creative development: The team would develop a creative brief and work with a creative agency to develop various creative executions of the strategy.
6. Stakeholder update on research and creative brief: To update all the relevant stakeholders from the 'ways in' day to gain buy-in for a successful campaign.
7. Creative development research: To pretest the various creative executions with focus groups
8. Creative production and final creative testing (if necessary): The creative agency would produce the most successful campaign based on feedback from the focus group pretesting.
9. Stakeholder launch: This would be done just before the national launch to ensure the campaign was embedded at local, regional and national levels.



Media channels

The team worked with media planning agencies to implement their campaigns. The agencies decided where, when and how specific campaign messages would reach their identified target audiences. The marketing mix was categorised into:

- Education: National TV, cinema, radio and print media can be used as a means of broadcast for issues which affect all of society, not just people who are prone to certain behaviours. So by creating social unacceptability of these behaviours DfT strives to change social norms
- Detailed information: Website, posters, targeted media (like information about child seats in parents magazines) for more specific groups and behaviours
- In-situ (ambient): For example, messages about driver fatigue on the backs of lorries, on road signs and on radio (in-vehicle reminders)
- Partnership marketing



In addition to large scale advertising, engagement campaigns were implemented with the most vulnerable and worst offending road users, including young drivers, children and teenagers, motorcyclists and those driving for work.



(See separate case example of how the 'Moment of Doubt' 2007 drink driving campaign was developed and informed by insight.)



In June 2000 THINK! was launched to the public with a generic THINK! road safety television commercial. DfT worked with its stakeholders as brands work with their franchisees. THINK! was launched to RSOs at a conference in May 2000, as well as at a wider stakeholder event in June, to ensure that it lived locally as well as nationally. Initially, a 12-month calendar was provided so that local activity could mirror activity at a national level. Local partners were updated via newsletters until 2004, when a website was launched for partners and materials were produced to order or download, including a brand book.

Individual campaigns were also presented to stakeholders before being launched to the public. To enable efforts to be coordinated and mutually reinforcing, staff working on a local, regional and national level were briefed about national activity. Similarly, sometimes national programme leads were briefed about local initiatives, though this information flow has been quite ad hoc as there are no formal feedback mechanisms in place (so as to provide autonomy for the local areas).

The most successful campaigns were those that were supported by the other two Es. For example, this was the case with speeding, which has reduced significantly since pre-2000. This decrease was achieved by a combination of speed cameras, a penalty for speeding and traffic slowing measures, along with targeted THINK! campaigns to help drivers understand the rationale behind the speed limit.

Conversely, the least successful campaigns were for topics such as fatigue that cannot be legislated against. Similarly driving fast in rural areas is problematic, as often the driver is not over the speed limit but collisions are caused by poor driver judgement.



From censoring to supportive Government
In its early years, THINK! continued to use the imperative voice of Government – ‘Think! Don’t drink and drive’. But as the campaign evolved, it adopted new voices that explain rather than assert – ‘Think! It’s 30 for a reason’ – and messages that bridge division between motorcyclists and drivers – ‘THINK! Look out for each other’.



Strategic flexibility

THINK! involved an iterative process of reviewing road safety statistics, their campaigns and impact and going back to their target audiences to keep the campaigns and approach fresh and effective.



For example, after 25 years of drink driving advertising the government had ‘trained’ viewers what to expect. To cut through, DfT needed to constantly break the rules. Initial THINK! campaigns around drink driving aimed to ignite condemnation and public outrage by depicting crash scenarios and the ‘victim’. But high awareness of THINK! as a road safety brand meant that ads no longer relied on the car crash moment. In 2004 the crash was taken out of the ad and focused on what happens inside the pub, where drinking decisions are made. Then in 2007 the consequences of drink driving were reframed from harming others to harming yourself.

THINK! campaigns also evolved from simply presenting facts to trying to get under the skin of target audiences, by being more overt about the emotional price paid through risky road behaviour. The biggest barrier to changing road safety behaviour is engrained habit. THINK! therefore strived to find an emotional hook to change behaviour and tap into an emotional benefit so that behaviour – and habit – is changed.

For example, earlier THINK! campaigns on speeding focused on the rational reasons for speed limits, by showing how even a few miles-per-hour can make the difference between life and death. Later campaigns showed the emotional consequences (namely guilt and grief) for the speeding driver, creating an emotional context for the 30mph limit.



National Road Safety Delivery Board

In 2004 a National Road Safety Delivery Board was set up to bring together various stakeholders across government to deliver road safety policy and ensure they were on track to meet the targets. Along with police enforcement, THINK! is another of the policy delivery tools for road safety. The Board consists of senior members of the agencies responsible for delivering road safety on the ground, such as the Highways Agency and Driving Standards Agency, as well as devolved administrations for Scotland and Wales. This and other various governance structures within DfT ensure policy objectives are being met.



THINK! campaign KPIs are based on attitudes, knowledge and behaviours that relate directly to the specific campaign message which are tracked pre and post campaign. In addition, an

annual survey is undertaken to track longer term trends in attitudes, social norms and self-reported behaviours. In some areas contemporaneous behaviour-related data such as alcohol breath test results or speeding convictions are available. Casualty data is published in the September following the year end.

Findings

The THINK! brand was very well recognised by the general public (for example, male drivers under 30, who are the core target audience for driving behaviours, reported 95 per cent awareness of THINK!) and more importantly by its target audiences as being trusted, thought-provoking and helpful. The programme was also able to demonstrate significant positive change in attitudes and reported behaviour towards a range of road safety behaviours, including reducing speed, seatbelt wearing, drink driving and mobile phone use.

By 2008, THINK! had contributed to a decline of 40 per cent in those killed or seriously injured, compared to the 1994 to 1998 benchmark. Before THINK!, 10 lives per day were lost; by 2008, this had reduced to 7 lives per day lost.

By 2008, the Government had exceeded all three of its casualty reduction targets. Compared with the baseline average of 1994 to 1998, the Government has seen:

- 40 per cent reduction in KSI, with 19,084 fewer killed or seriously injured
- 59 per cent reduction in child KSI, with 4,053 fewer children reported killed or seriously injured
- 36 per cent reduction in the slight injury rate, with 69,939 fewer slight injuries

Furthermore, there was a projected 8.6 per cent reduction in KSIs that would have occurred if trends continued post-1999, representing an additional 2,682 KSI reduction.

However, one of the common criticisms of big national programmes like THINK! has been the difficulty of proving cause and effect, as improvements can often have more to do with trends than with direct programme impact. In order to separate out the actual impact THINK! has had, the evaluation strategy included the development of a Forecast Model that included an analysis of the impact of various elements of the total road safety effort, such as new legislation and the introduction of more speed cameras.

It would clearly be wrong to argue that THINK! delivered all 19,084 of the KSI decline or that it was responsible for the projected 2,682 additional KSI reduction versus the previous 9 years – although this figure does give an outer indication of THINK!’s possible effect.



Interestingly, there was a forecast 8.2 per cent KSI gap from new road safety initiatives that either did not occur or did not have as pronounced an effect as had been anticipated – this represented a potential 3,912 KSI

reduction. However, this gap was not only redressed, it was accomplished by 2008, two years earlier than predicted. According to the Forecast Model, even a conservative interpretation of the data indicates that THINK! made up for a significant proportion of the 3,912 KSI gap. It can therefore be argued that the biggest single additional change to road safety after 1999 has been the introduction of THINK!.

Value for money

Based on the difference between the number of road deaths in 2008 and the 1994 to 1998 baseline average, 1,040 lives were saved and there were 18,044 fewer serious injuries and 69,939 slight injuries, saving society £6.2 billion, or £5.2 billion if only KSIs were taken into account. Although this represents savings to society from all 3E measures, THINK! only had to account for 1.8 per cent of this saving, or 56 lives, to pay its £94.3 million investment back.

In a world where 71 per cent of crashes are directly attributable to the road user, THINK! bolstered self-awareness on the road by acting as the voice of people’s conscience. It joined up disparate road safety issues for the first time under a single brand umbrella, driving efficiencies, and it galvanised all stakeholders under one cause. In short, it changed the road safety landscape in the UK.



Each campaign was launched and evaluated in its own right. The team kept stakeholders involved in the whole process as much as possible, including a formal launch especially for stakeholders and a post-campaign ‘wash-up’ where feedback and evaluation results were fed back to the initial stakeholders through presentations and emails.

Findings were shared across government where there was a common interest. For example, drink or drug driving insights and learning were shared with the Home Office and DH. Similarly, child road safety work was often shared with DfE.



The THINK! brand as a whole had two brand reviews (in 2006 and 2010). The first review was an analysis of the brand among stakeholders and road users to understand THINK!'s role and how this should be optimised. Two key learning points arose from the 2006 brand review:

1. There were too many versions of the brand and inconsistencies with how the logo was used by other partners. DfT therefore had to be stricter about use of the brand for quality control.
2. There was a big gap between the perceptions of the THINK! brand among road users and among stakeholders. Road users perceived THINK! to have a strong brand identity and voice, while stakeholders viewed it as 'just a badge'. Work needed to be done to close this gap and ensure THINK! was consistent to ensure maximum impact and authority.

Therefore a set of THINK! branding guidelines were developed to ensure stakeholders maximised its communicative power. The guidelines aimed to ensure the brand was used consistently, whilst allowing enough flexibility to meet specific campaign objectives.

The 2010 review intended to revisit these guidelines to ensure they were still 'fit for purpose' for both stakeholders and road users

as THINK! enters its second decade. For this, a variety of road users and other key stakeholders, such as RSOs, LAs, charities, the police and fire services, were consulted regarding:

- The role of THINK!
- How THINK! has evolved
- The tone of THINK!
- Key attributes of THINK!
- Who THINK! speaks to

Findings from the second review were more consistent between the road users and the national stakeholders, though there is still much work to be done with aligning local stakeholders. These findings are being used to define and emphasise the role of THINK! in the next road safety strategy, which is due to be published in Spring 2011.



Lessons learned

THINK! is an example of how to develop a large national programme dealing with a complex issue, with many stakeholders and potential partners. The THINK! brand was used as both a call to action for the public and a way of building a comprehensive programme amongst many stakeholders and partners. It stimulates complementary activity by police, LAs and voluntary and private sector stakeholders, leading to increased media coverage. A rolling programme aims to help

supporters plan their own complementary activities.



Involving those at the direct interface with the target audience was also vital – in this case the RSOs. Involving key stakeholders in the process of strategy development provides many benefits, including shared ownership of the strategy and a rich source of perspectives on the problems being addressed.



What contributed to the success of THINK! and the strategy as a whole was having an integrated holistic approach – not separating communications from policy, but rather both supporting each other. Behaviour change is hard to effect and does not happen overnight. However, with support from the other two Es, THINK! surpassed the ambitious road safety targets from 2000.

The biggest obstacle to changing road safety behaviour is engrained habit. Moreover, road safety issues such as fatigue are particularly challenging, as it cannot be legislated against and cannot really be supported by the other two Es. An increasingly complex road environment and heavier congestion – with more cars, cyclists and motorcycles – also provides a challenging context in which to work.

THINK! demonstrates the need for programmes to be specifically targeted at a range of target audiences and behaviours when dealing with a complex range of issues such as road safety. By tackling more issues under one brand idea, road users are now being made to think about day-to-day road behaviour (such as mobile use and fatigue), as well as the big road taboos. As a result, today's road users are more aware of road safety than ever before.

