Press Release

29 August 2024

Station facilities brought to life in campaign to help people take care on rail journeys

- *Inventive campaign launched to help customers navigate west coast stations safely*
- *Parts of the station given human characteristics in posters and signage to get people's attention*
- *Campaign based on collaboration with behavioural science specialist, Richard Shotton*

Lifts, stairs, and handrails have been brought to life as part of an ingenious campaign by Avanti West Coast to help customers navigate railway stations safely.

Using posters and signage, the intercity operator has personified parts of station buildings through bespoke artwork to highlight how they improve safety.

The designs, which include bespoke wraps on Stafford station's lifts, have been installed at stations across the west coast route to give these unsung features of the station a leading role in Avanti West Coast's new safety campaign – Take care. Get there.

It aims to raise awareness of the building's features often neglected by customers and where they can be found to make it easier for those who may be unfamiliar with the station.

Starring on brightly coloured posters and signage, the station's lifts, platforms, stairs and handrails have become icons of safety as part of the initiative. Each object in the poster has been designed to resemble a face, with two eyes and a mouth. They have also been given a voice to speak directly to customers.

Speech bubbles on the posters reveal handrails longing to be held and lifts feeling empty without customers and their luggage.

This approach has been created with the help of behavioural science specialist, Richard Shotton - whose work focuses on applying findings from psychology and behavioural science to help solve business problems - and is designed to positively influence how people move about railway stations safely.

Drawing on insight that pareidolia (the phenomenon where humans are hardwired to pick out patterns, especially faces from randomness) grabs attention, Richard and Avanti West

Coast used illustrations of elements of the station building that have a similar appearance to eyes and a mouth for a suite of posters and largescale artwork.

They also took onboard research from George Loewenstein (Professor of Economics and Psychology) to use wording that incorporates a sense of positivity and light-heartedness around safety, so key messages are delivered in the most effective manner to customers.

The simple messaging and noticeable artwork have been designed to provoke an immediate reaction and improve visibility of safety features at Stafford – with Carlisle and Penrith set to welcome similar installations soon.

Mike Greenup, Marketing Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "We really wanted to create a safety campaign that will be noticed by our customers going through the station, so we have used valuable insights from behavioural science to create something we think is distinctive and memorable."

With 84 percent of rail users admitting they take their luggage when using the stairs[1], the Take care. Get there. campaign hopes to raise awareness of the lifts and their location so more people choose the step-free route when carrying bags and suitcases.

Dave Whitehouse, Director of Safety, Security and Environment at Avanti West Coast, said: "With the safety of our customers our top priority, we want to help them on their journey by drawing attention to the ordinary things that are available to assist them when travelling, and our Take care. Get there. campaign is designed to do just that.

"We recognise stations across our network are different and people may not be familiar with the environment around them, while others may sometimes become distracted. This campaign aims to get customers to take notice and make it easier to navigate their way.

"By bringing to life the unsung safety features of our stations, we hope it will encourage our customers to take care of themselves, so they can get where they need to safely."

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[1] Avanti West Coast surveyed 500 rail users in the UK about their behaviour in railway stations.

Speaking about the Take care. Get there. campaign, Richard Shotton said: "Much safety messaging is ignored. These posters harness insights from behavioural science to avoid that fate. The touch of humour and the use of face-like images ensures that people notice and read the communications rather than turning away".

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About Richard Shotton

Richard Shotton specialises in applying behavioural science to marketing. He has worked in marketing for 24 years and helps brands such as Google, Mondelez and Sky with their challenges. He is the author of The Choice Factory, a best-selling book available in 15 languages, which explains how behavioural science can solve business challenges. His latest book, The Illusion of Choice, came out in March 2023. In 2021 he became an associate of the Moller Institute, Churchill College, Cambridge University.

https://www.astroten.co.uk/

About Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast, operator of intercity rail services on the West Coast Main Line, is a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia, delivering a cleaner, greener railway that drives the West Coast forward.

We're on a mission to revolutionise train travel. Our refurbed Pendolinos have returned to the rails with a £117m investment that's delivering the best in class comfort. Known as the UK's hardest working fleet, the programme is transforming all 56 of these iconic trains boasting better seats, improved lighting, new interior carpets, customer-friendly passenger information screens, additional luggage space, power points at every seat and refurbished toilets.

Our new Evero fleet was introduced in June 2024 and will replace our Voyagers. Built by Hitachi, the 23-strong fleet, consisting of 10 seven-carriage electric trains and 13 five-carriage bi-modes, will serve routes from London to the Midlands, Chester, North Wales and the North West, leading to a substantial cut in carbon emissions with an increase in seats, and offering improved comfort. Quieter and roomier, with more reliable Wi-Fi, wireless charging for electrical devices and a real-time customer information system, these new trains are the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel.

We're tackling climate change wherever we can, from reducing energy and water use to training drivers in eco-driving techniques and sourcing food and drink from local suppliers. Our goal is to be net zero carbon by 2031. We're on track.

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