Fasten Up Your Future ™

Case study

Nicola Wass | CEO | So-Mo

Holly Hope | Head Behavioural Scientist | So-Mo

Lelde Krumina | Behavioural Scientist | So-Mo

15.11.23

Foreword

So-Mo influence choice and behaviour at scale.

Our purpose is to bridge the gap between the more 'academic' side of behavioural science and the need for real-world impact at pace.

Our team of behavioural scientists, data scientists, ethnographers and creatives bring unparalleled understanding of the science of decision-making, making us uniquely positioned to help our clients navigate the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing world.

We are grateful to the Road Safety Trust for supporting this innovative project and for their commitment to supporting research and interventions that drive innovation and new thinking in Road Safety.

We would also like to thank Transport for West Midlands, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Fire Service, Concord Youth Centre and of course, all the young people who brought such passion and insight to this project. It was a privilege to work with each and every one of them.

Nicola Wass
CEO So-Mo

nicola@so-mo.co.uk   07958766809   Registered in England: 9104338.

2

Fasten Up Your Future™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

The challenge

East Birmingham was experiencing very high casualty figures. Birmingham City Council (BCC) thought that young men speeding in high performance cars, were the root cause.

Behavioural Analysis

When we interrogated collision data, alongside evidence from community interviews, we discovered that; whilst young men driving high performance cars were visible and annoying to residents, the actual number of casualties attributable to them was very small.

The real reason this area had higher deaths and injuries was explained by a very large number of passenger casualties. This suggested that passengers were not wearing seatbelts.

To test this, we observed seatbelt use at casualty hotspots. An observation of 507 vehicles uncovered a startling disparity.

Nationally, the rate of non seatbelt wearing is around`6% (all occupants DfT 2021).

In East Birmingham, the rate of non wearing rose to 38%, a staggering 6 times higher.

Our hypothesis was correct.

Sociodemographic analysis uncovered that most of these casualties were experienced by people of South Asian origin peaking at ages 16-24. BCC asked us to focus on this age group.

We undertook a review of prior national campaigns to try to understand reasons for the disparity. This revealed two things, first, every prior campaign had used 'emotion' as the primary device or 'lever' to promote seatbelt wearing. Second, the campaign actors were overwhelmingly white.

Fasten Up Your Future ™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

Behavioural Analysis (continued)

Heightened emotion aids engagement, memorability and recall of message – but only when the viewer is able to identify with the person in the campaign. Had a failure to reflect the lives and aspirations of South Asian people inadvertently resulted in 'message-not-received'?

"People are more likely to empathise and feel an emotional response when they identify with the campaign 'actor' and its content" (Noar et al., 2007)

Behavioural Opportunity

If we could increase use of seatbelts, we would see a reduction in passenger casualties. Any intervention to increase seatbelt use would need to be targeted and tailored to a South Asian population.

Behavioural Deep Dive

We engaged 20 young people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage in an online, ethnographic community, where we were able to conduct a Behavioural Deep Dive.

Alongside information needed for tailoring, we uncovered a powerful behavioural lever 'anticipated regret'. The young people we tested this on showed high susceptibility.
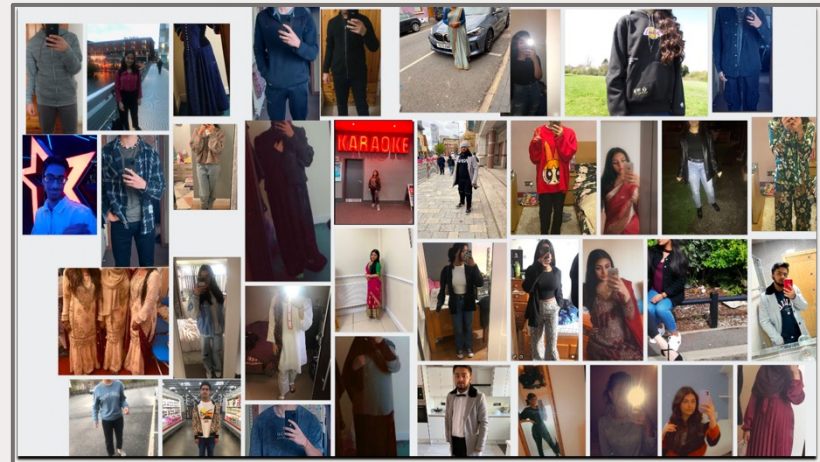
Over several weeks, 20 young people shared their lives, hopes, observations and experiences with us.

Codesign with South Asian Teenagers

From explorative prototyping to testable assets

Anticipated regret is the feeling experienced right now, of the regret we would feel in the future, about decisions we are currently considering making.

Anticipated Regret, from prototyping to development of behaviourally optimised messaging

Fasten Up Your Future ™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

Pre-testing Insights and levers of change

We developed two, behaviourally optimised, tailored campaign assets. These were tested using a **randomised survey**, completed by **400** Birmingham residents aged 16–22.

We split respondents into those who identified as **South Asian (185)** and those from **other ethnic groups (215)**. Each respondent was shown only 1 of 5 possible campaign assets:

- A tailored, behaviourally optimised campaign (1 of 2)
- A recent national seatbelt campaign aimed at young people
- The most recent regional campaign
- A So-Mo created decoy- information only campaign.

A regression analysis revealed that the **codesigned campaigns outperformed national, regional and decoy comparators on every behavioural metric.** This told us that the insights we'd uncovered were relevant to the experience of being young more generally.

However, there was one significant difference. Those who identified as South-Asian showed a 35% increase in levels of emotion, when viewing a behaviourally optimised, tailored campaign. This supports the proposition that people are more likely to empathise and feel an emotional response when they identify with the campaign actor and its context.

This was an important finding.

Those who identified as South-Asian showed a 35% increase in levels of emotion, when viewing a behaviourally optimised, tailored campaign.

This demonstrates that the insights we uncovered, and the psychological mechanisms embedded in campaign, were highly effective.
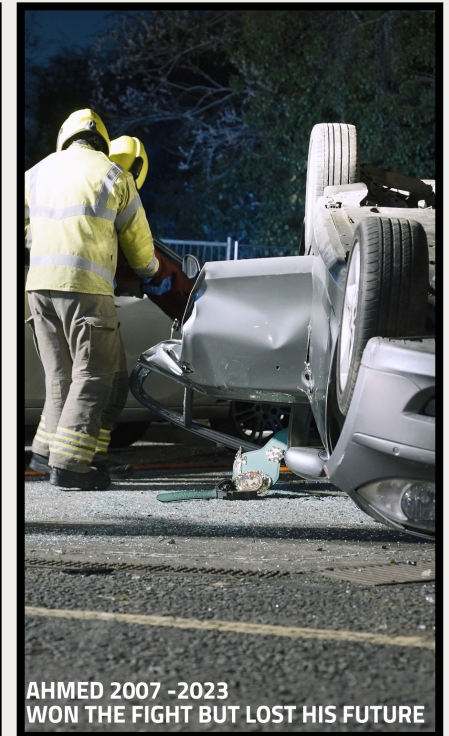
Fasten up your Future ™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

Despite impressive test results we knew that achieving engagement with a road safety message on social platforms was going to be a challenge.

Competition for attention on social media is tougher than ever. We not only needed to capture attention and engagement, in a context of 'infinite scrolling', we needed create campaign messages that were understood and memorable.

Short-form, behaviourally optimised videos that explored anticipated regret across themes such as 'life goals', boxing, car culture and family were codesigned and then shared on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube over a period of 6 weeks.

A paid advertising strategy targeted 16-24 age group living in the West Midlands. We targeted according to interest as well as age and locality.

AHMED 2007 -2023
WON THE FIGHT BUT LOST HIS FUTURE

Social media campaign. Stills from Boxing video placed on the feeds of our target audience.

Fasten Up Your Future™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

Our goal was to release a real-life Social Media campaign and determine whether **Social Media channels can be used to effectively convey a public health message to young people.**

The campaign was evaluated in two ways. We utilised Social Media analytics to assess the campaign's reach and content performance. To learn more about the campaign's memorability and emotional impact, we undertook an online survey with a smaller sample of 218 of young people. Survey respondents were aged between 16 and 24 and a resident of the West Midlands.

Social Media Analytics

We measured a range of metrics, key standouts include:

- **470,697** young people (72.5% of available population) reached (these are people who would have had the campaign displayed on one or more of their SM feeds).

- **Short form videos** (less than 30 seconds) performed overall **better** than long form videos (1 minute) in terms of **retaining viewers' attention until the end.** This underscores the importance of customising video length to align with platform-specific requirements, typically ranging from 10 to 15 seconds.
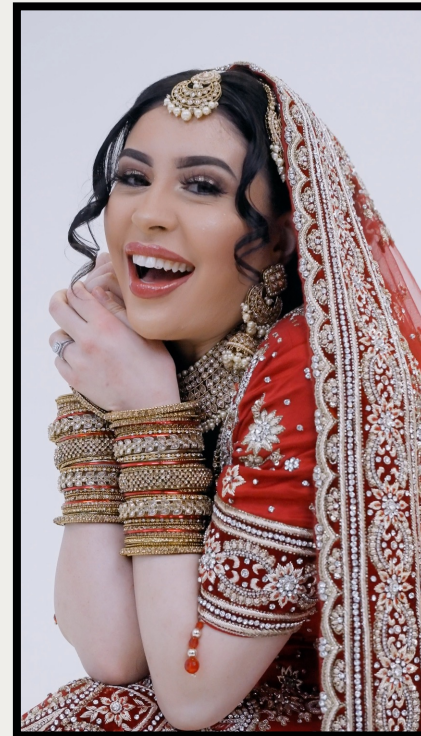
Social media campaign. Stills from Life Goals video placed on the feeds of our target audience.
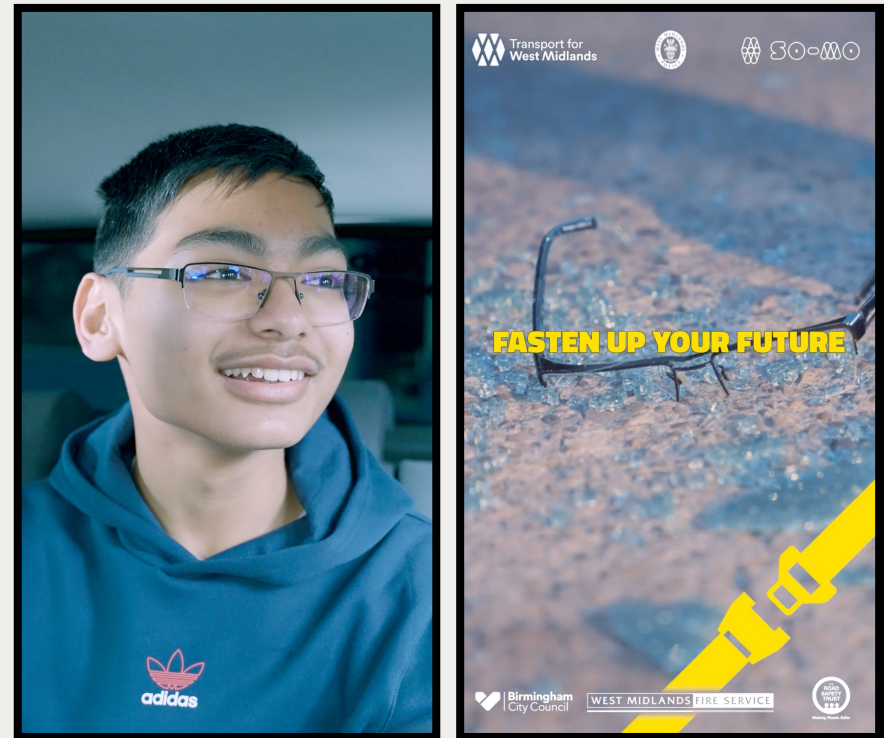
Fasten Up Your Future ™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

Survey (218 individuals)

Our key insights were:

- Only **47.3%** (62) reported that they always wear their seatbelt and **51%** (65) might not be wearing their seatbelts regularly or at all. This shows that our targeting strategy was correct as were were reaching the right people.

- **82%** (53) of the people who might not be wearing their seatbelt regularly or at all, reported wearing their seatbelt more after viewing the campaign implying behavioural change had occured.

- **73%** (96) of people who had seen the campaign were able to accurately recall the story and the key message "wear your seatbelt" four to eight weeks after viewing the campaign. This highlights the campaign's emotional resonance and its potential to leave a lasting impact. Recall is an important predictor of sustained behavioural change.

- Extrapolating these numbers to the YP population who saw the campaign on Instagram. Potentially, the campaign message to was remembered by 343,608 people and up to 190,632 changed their behaviour after viewing the campaign.

Social media campaign. Stills from Car video placed on the feeds of our target audience.

Fasten Up Your Future ™

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and the Road Safety Trust

Why the recall statistic is so important.

This campaign completely defied what we would expect to see in terms of recall.

German Psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus, a researcher from the 1880s, still influences how we understand memory today. His idea is that we forget a lot of new information quickly, especially within one day. In 2015, researchers confirmed his findings, showing his methods remain valid today.

So, when we look at the Fasten up your Future campaign, it's impressive that most young people can remember the message and story 4 to 8 weeks later.

Ebbinghaus was also able to demonstrate a number of determinants that increased memory, one of which was 'meaning'. Heightened emotion has also been linked to the act of remembering.
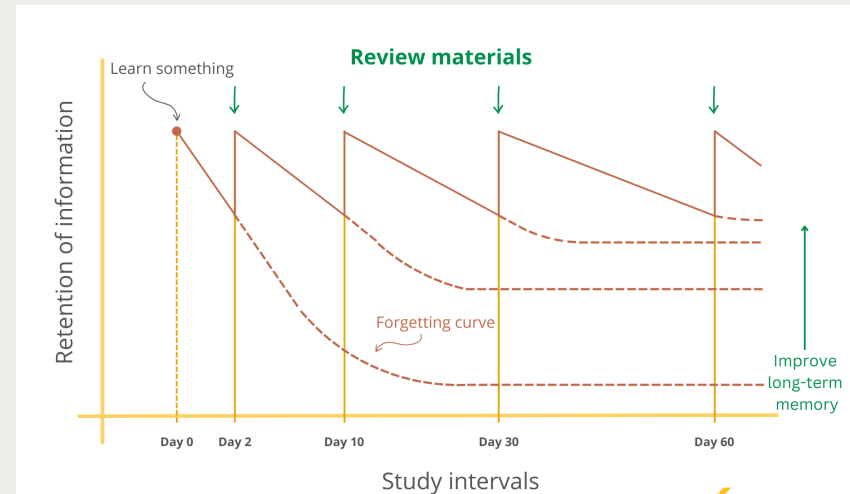
Ebbinghaus's forgetting curve illustrates how information is rapidly forgotten over time if it's not actively reviewed or reinforced. The curve is steepest right after learning something new and then gradually levels off. Repeated opportunities to learn levels the curve further.

Fasten Up Your Future ®

Why the recall statistic is so important.

By tailoring these campaigns to create empathy we ensured content was meaningful. By heightening levels of emotion linked to feelings of regret, we not only achieved behavioural change in the real-world but had created a campaign with lasting effect. This improvement was achieved by maintaining a commitment to user research and codesign at every stage of the journey.

Crucially, these results validated our approach and provided Birmingham City Council & Transport for West Midlands with the foundations on which to build. For a shift in norms to be achieved, it will be necessary to periodically repeat the campaign or a modified version of it. This repetition is essential for sustainable change.

Below is an overview of the stages used, these are transferrable across a wide range of behavioural change opportunities.

Accurate diagnosis of problem	Create a logic model of change	Behavioural analysis to uncover the why	Identify the correct behavioural strategy	Empirically test messaging in a randomised trial	Translate this into a real-world intervention	Evaluate impact
High casualty rates due to Low seatbelt use	Increase seatbelt use to reduce casualties	Prior campaigns lacked cultural tailoring	Anticipated regret + tailoring	New assets outperform existing campaigns	Social media campaign	Evidence of behaviour change in the real world

So-Mo's diagnostic approach is designed to intentionally and verifiably change behaviour in the real world.