

GWR: The Return of the Great Western Railway

Challenge

First Great Western operates one of the most complex and heavily used networks in Britain.

In the face of some negative publicity and public pressure, FGW (owned by FirstGroup), was challenged to win a highly competitive and very valuable new franchise bid for the region.

The franchise was won earlier this year (2015) and the journey forward to Great Western Railway, renewing the name and spirit of one of Britain's iconic transport names, was begun. Through ambitious brand direction and the transformation of an entire railway driven by passion, pride and purpose.

Mr. Taylor's Brand Emporium has been at the heart of that process, working before, during and after the bid, providing sole Brand Counsel to the 70-strong franchise team and subsequently to the key functions of the Exec. Board at First Great Western, spearheaded by Sales & Marketing Director Diane Burke.



Thinking

The Emporium was responsible for working collaboratively with senior managers and colleagues at every level of the railway to re-define its essence and ambition.

At the core of that brand strategy and the railway's direction, was our simple insight: GWR is a source of much needed pride in railway both for people working on the railway and the wider British public, thirsty for a decent network once more, with front-footed confidence and ambition.

New, innovative consumer research, internal employee workshops across the network, ethnographic observation, video diaries from passengers, insight from travelling the leading rail networks of Europe and a full semiotic analysis were blended to provide a raft of core insights and ideas that formed the basis and justification for the new GWR.



This Emporium strategic thinking defined the GWR brand in terms of a purpose in which its people and the public could be proud:

To re-value rail in the hearts & minds of the Great British public

And a brand idea with heroicism was forged:

The Renaissance of Rail



A 'live' set of active values were re-discovered, emerging from the cultural reality and aspiration of the entire network.

The Emporium led a pitch for creative services to support the new brand strategy through design, eventually leading to the appointment of John Rushworth's design team at Pentagram, one of the world's leading independent design studios.

A full internal employee engagement program to gain hearts & minds was designed by the Emporium, working with HR and all key department leaders across the railway. A detailed company-alignment strategy was also written to ensure that every word and deed, station and train, person and communication becomes 'living & breathing testament & truth' to what GWR stands for.

The result was designed to deliver a truly distinctive & immersive passenger experience from end-to-end, Paddington to Penzance, in which people from across the region can once again take pride.



Impact

- Clarity of brand meaning and cohesion of railway identity & culture
- A super-charged sense of renewed pride amongst employees for the railway
 - A consistent, cohesive & immersive customer experience defined
- On-brand transformation of GWR essential services through the Emporium's *stimulus, strategy & ideas*
 - Ongoing delivery of much improved NPS evaluation metrics
 - Rising internal staff engagement scores
- Winning a very valuable franchise extension, at a critical time

Key services delivered

Brand naming, brand definition, qualitative 'search', internal employee engagement strategy, internal business-brand alignment, customer journey planning & experience design, business creativity, creative pitching

