

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors
From: Mark Childs, *Chief Marketing & Communications Officer*
Date: June 25, 2020
Re: Marketing & Communications Quarterly Update

Recommendation

That this report be received for information.

Updates: Communications

COVID-19 required a major shift in communications platforms and the activation of our crisis communications plan. The media team responded to more than 900 media calls, Metrolinx News delivered unprecedented audience, social media engagement exceeded projections by 40 per cent in March alone, and sentiment is positive to neutral on the response to COVID, fueled by our transparent, authentic approach.

Our community relations and stakeholder relations teams pivoted to hold community engagements, virtually. Some numbers: 22 public meetings, 200 stakeholder briefings, 1,881 interactions related to GO Expansion & Rapid Transit projects, 22,683 e-blasts, 256,521 direct-to-home communications, and 89 blog posts that reached 161,000 visitors. This is all key in keeping the community informed.

Customer Experience & Insights

Fiscal year ridership through the end of February up 5.5%, but in March softened to +0.4%, due to the pandemic. In April 2020, the first month of the fiscal year, ridership was down 97.3% (174K in April 2020, compared to 6.4M in April 2019). The team is actively monitoring ridership patterns and modelling ridership recovery forecasts.

Brand, Digital and Product Marketing

At the outset of the pandemic the team responded quickly to support the Incident Command Team with quick to market paid media on social channels to ensure customers received timely announcements. The team are re-imagining promotional partnerships, PRESTO Perks, GO Trip Purpose and UP acquisition plans. The 'Safety Never Stops' campaign platform was produced in record time to help reassure our customers as they return to our services, and includes over 180 touchpoints.

Non-Fare Sales and Account Management

With COVID-19 significantly affecting ridership, non-fare revenues have declined in the first quarter. The team pivoted to support the Province's COVID-19 health messaging campaign on our billboard and station digital signage. We're focused on

developing assets that are ridership resilient and deliver value-in-kind partnerships to support our operation.

A public solicitation was released for retail opportunities for USBT and UP Express Lounge as well as for billboards across various locations within our network. Work continues on selecting the top proponent in both cases.

The teams are fully committed to continuing our relentless focus on building reputation and customer ridership recovery. We will continue to reassure our customers not only that they are safe, but they can feel safe. Customer marketing and partnership plans will be moving quickly to meet changing needs informed by recovery research insights, ridership analytics, customer satisfaction and reputation tracking and action planning.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Childs
Chief Marketing & Communications Officer