

LONDON MIDLAND CLIENT CASE STUDY

Social Media Strategy



Summary



Over the few months prior to this project, several functions within London Midland had been developing a Social Media presence. Some of these had been very successful – London Midland was recognised by the industry as being the ‘most social TOC’ and had won an award for its twitter feed.

However, the demands of the channel had quickly grown too big for the key individuals running it to sustain, let alone to develop it further.

At the same time, the Board of Directors was very aware of the potential risks and threats posed by Social Media, which had not been fully thought through and planned for.

CCL’s role was therefore to work with London Midland to pull together a single, cohesive and company wide strategy to ensure their use of Social Media could be effectively managed and developed, to capitalise on the opportunities it offers whilst minimising the reputational and commercial risks.



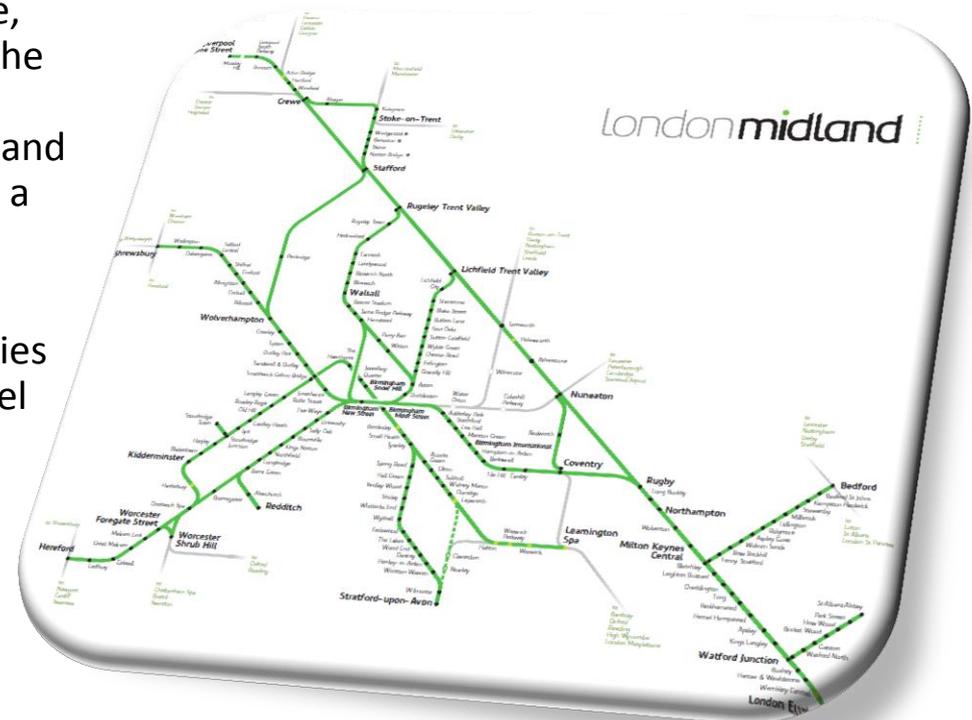
Scope



Given the very new and rapidly changing nature of the Social Media world, as well as the timeframe remaining within the London Midland franchise, the strategy was intended as a next stage, for the short and medium term (2012 – 2014). Whilst longer term opportunities were also identified and sketched out, the focus of the work was within a two year timeframe.

In terms of functional scope, all key opportunities to use Social Media as a communication channel were considered within the project, including:

- Internal colleague engagement
- Customer engagement
- Marketing
- Sales and passenger information.



What We Did



The project involved two key elements:

1. **Education** – we brought in one of the recognised ‘gurus’ of Social Media (a long-time Associate of CCL) to hold a series of one-to-one sessions and a board workshop, to develop the directors’ understanding of the new Social Media world.
2. **Planning** – working with each of the main company functions, we identified the key opportunities that Social Media offered London Midland, and prioritised the core business requirements that it should support.

For each of the priority areas we defined the communication aims and set objectives and outcomes for the short and medium term (2012, 2013, 2014).

The project also highlighted the key organisational and cultural challenges that would need to be faced for Social Media to not only succeed, but to support real staff and customer engagement and start to break through some of the hierarchical and functional barriers to outstanding performance.

The combined London Midland/CCL team then worked through how Social Media communication – both proactive and responsive, internal and external – could be resourced and the most suitable organisation structure to ensure a single voice and avoid the pitfalls of silo-based activity.

Results



Following our strategy definition work, the new structure was implemented, with a small team as the primary focus for external Social Media communication. With the support of a CCL interim manager, the twitter feed and other Social Media tools used are now operating in a sustainable and scalable way, whilst maintaining the award-winning quality of communication.

The practical challenge of ensuring coherent, realistic and enforceable principles and policies for the use of Social Media will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis, as will the response plan to mitigate potential threats.

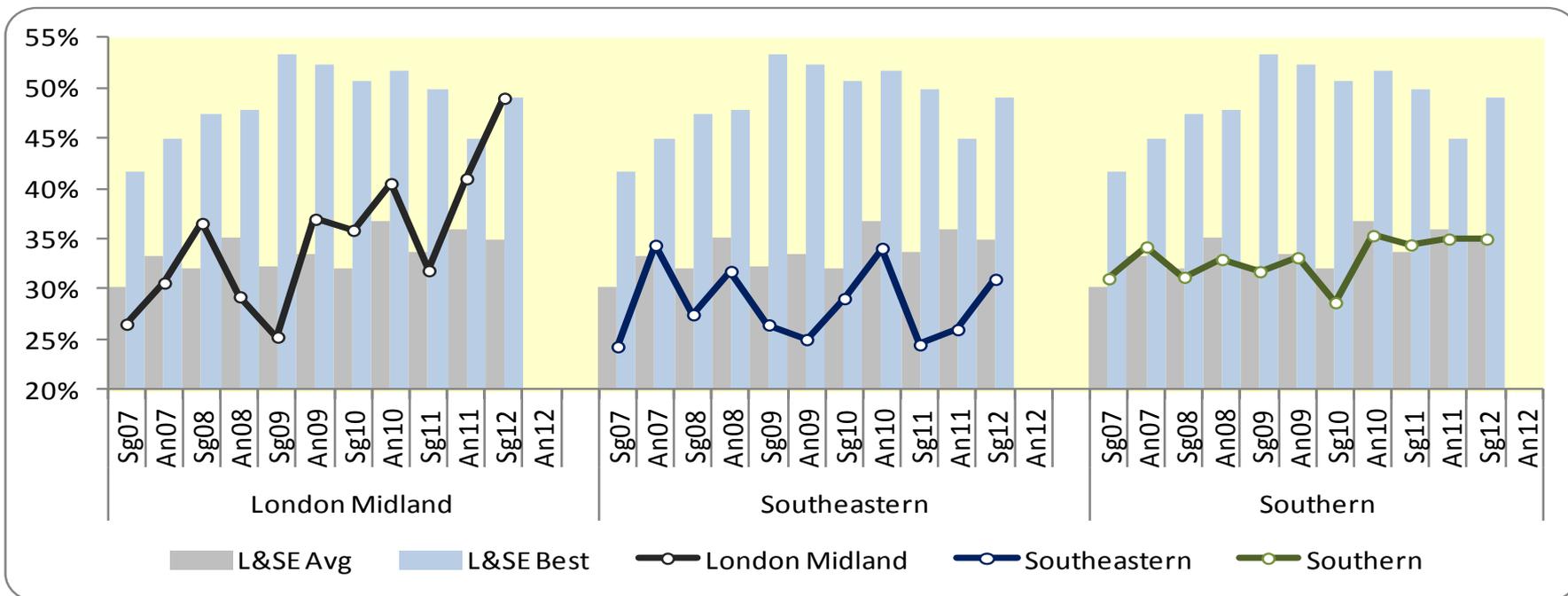
With the particular challenges of a very disparate work-force (station staff spread across the country, on-train staff only physically 'touching base' for very brief periods) a wider group-level discussion is underway to establish a platform for Social Media as the primary internal communication tool to fully engage staff both with each other and with customers.

The use of Social Media for passenger information during delays has been particularly successful, and will be a key element of planning for the next franchise period. Overleaf is a graph showing how London Midland's NPS scores have improved with the implementation of this service.

Results (cont'd)



Management of Delay



Southern remains steadily in line with the L&SE average while Southeastern has seen further improvement though is still below this mark. LM has seen a huge 17 percentage point increase since the spring 11 survey and is now *best* in sector for this measure. A key driver for this has been their successful use of social media and in particular Twitter.