



O HIRED TO ROLL OUT NEXUS SMART TRAVEL INITIATIVE

NEWCASTLE PR firm O Communications has successfully helped Nexus to launch the biggest smartcard initiative outside of London.

The PR campaign that has accelerated from the end of January initially targeted under 16s; the first audience to receive the new travel smartcard, followed by a launch event yesterday unveiling the name of the product – the Pop card.

Nexus is investing £15m from Government funds in smart ticketing, all part of the *Metro: all change* modernisation programme,. This will include the replacement of 225 Metro ticket machines and the introduction of gates at key stations and validators across the system to accompany the smartcard technology.

Over the next year a phased rollout will allow more and more people to travel with the Pop card, whose functionality will develop into a full 'pay as you ride' option with stored cash balance on cards by early 2012.

O Communications' campaign launched with an under 16s 'get street smart' dance roadshow in early February, followed by a "Pop the Question" brand launch on Valentine's Day which unveiled the Pop card on the side of a Metro train.

This will be followed by a regional Pop Artist school design competition throughout February and March to reinforce the new smartcard brand.

The Pop launch campaign has included a mix of on-street events, competitions, media relations and social media activity.

Huw Lewis, Head of Communications for Nexus, said: "This account is crucial to our future plans. We ran a competitive pitch process with several agencies and O Communications came through with its enthusiasm and understanding of the concept and our aims.

"Since then we have been impressed with the creativity and thoroughness of development the agency has shown. The launch of Pop has had a big impact in our region, which is exactly what we wanted."

www.popcard.org.uk

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