Rail Safety Month

Best Marketing & Communications Educational Initiative (Non-Covid), Social Media

**Target Audience:**

* Hispanic Males, ages 35-54 years old
* General public in Southern California
* Social media users who have previously interacted with Metrolink content

**Situation/Challenge:**Southern California continues to lead in the number of railroad trespassing casualties in the nation according to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Three of the 10 top counties were within the Metrolink service area: Los Angeles County was number one, San Bernardino ranked third and Riverside came in seventh. In the past three years, due to increased safety awareness efforts, Metrolink has seen a decrease in pedestrian, trespasser and vehicular strikes. In 2018 there were 81 total strikes, 2019 had 69 strikes and 2020 showed 53 strikes reporting 3 consecutive years of railroad strike reductions.

**Strategy/Objective:**The objective for the 2020 Metrolink Rail Safety social media campaign was to generate rail safety awareness in Southern California to further reduce trespasser, pedestrian and vehicular strikes. Our strategy used paid and organic social media to promote safe behaviors when walking or driving near the tracks to save lives. Key messaging targeted the most vulnerable audiences based on the number of fatalities – Hispanic males, 35-54 years old. Ads were optimized for engagement with a second audience segmented to cast a wider net for the public at large and those who have previously interacted with Metrolink’s social media content.

**Results/Impact:**The campaign’s targeted audience ad reached 87,236 individuals (41% of the campaign total) with an engagement rate of 8.24%. The more general audience ad reached 132,516 individuals with an engagement rate of 20.28% and a cost per engagement of less than a dime. The average cost per engagement for the entire campaign was $0.15. Overall, the demographic we intended to engage with the content was the top demographic – at the same time, our second ad managed to educate others outside of that at-risk group. On an operational level, trespasser strikes for 2020 were down 32.5% from 2019, and pedestrian strikes for 2020 were down 26.7% from 2019.

**Why Submit:**At Metrolink safety is our foundational value. We conduct an annual safety campaign to educate the public about safe behavior around the tracks. The results have shown a three-year decline in trespasser, grade crossing and vehicular strikes for all Southern California railroads. For Rail Safety Month, we reached out to the key demographics based on historical data most prone to possible trespassers, grade crossing or vehicular crossing incidents. Our campaign primarily focused on that target group, but we made sure to create a second segment to be inclusive of other groups – everyone can benefit from rail safety knowledge! And lastly, our #MetrolinkSAFE Kids Instagram Story tied together the demographic (likely fathers) with our current fare promotion (Kids Ride Free on Weekends).