**Effectiveness Statement**

Entry Title: GO Transit – Safety Never Stops

**Member Type/Size:** *Group 3 - Greater than 20 million annual passenger trips*

**AdWheel Category:** *#1: Best Marketing and Communications on the COVID-19 Pandemic*

**Subcategory:** *Comprehensive Campaign*

**Organization:** *Metrolinx (GO Transit)*

1. **Who was the target audience for this entry?**

In 2019, GO Transit offered service across the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) to 250,000+ daily riders. However, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership dropped by approximately 95%, with only 5% of customers in the region continuing to ride for essential reasons (i.e. frontline workers). Our audience for this program was the full 250,000+ riders: giving assurance to the 5% continuing to ride throughout the pandemic, as well as conditioning those 95% to feel safe whenever they’re ready to come back to GO.

Furthermore, understanding that we service one of the most diverse populations in the world[[1]](#endnote-1), we aimed to reach our riders like we never have before: In their native languages.

1. **What was the situation/challenge that necessitated creating this entry?**

Early research at the onset of the pandemic suggested that many of our customers were very wary of returning to GO Transit, and particularly concerned with the safety of our largest transit hub in Toronto (Union Station). Many were considering driving to work instead of using transit when they return.

The safety of Ontarians has always been a core priority for GO. But at a time when the entire world is touting what makes their service ‘safe’, we needed to do something noteworthy to communicate our obsession with safety. We transformed our network in the face of this challenge, from going cashless, to enhanced cleaning, to navigating our stations and vehicles safely, with the protection of our essential workers and those seeking the confidence to ride with us in the future in mind.

1. **What was the strategy/objective of this entry?**

Our objective was to give assurance to riders by bringing awareness to our 40+ new and enhanced safety measures, and to our completely transformed network, in an engaging way.

Knowing safety is not necessarily the most invigorating topic, we required a big platform idea to capture attention without compromising the trust we’ve built in GO. We’d use our clever, charming brand tone (and a familiar face in our GO Bear mascot) to deliver a serious topic with a smile.

From this, the Safety Never Stops platform was born, playfully demonstrating our obsession with rider safety. It comprised social media, online videos, radio ads, web content, in-station digital and print ads, and bus wraps. We then transcribed assets into a variety of languages representative of our multicultural community.

1. **What results/impact did this entry have? (e.g. increased ridership, higher sales, greater public awareness, etc.)**

Scores in “Safety Perception” and “Communication”, which fell drastically due to COVID-19, have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in November to 88% and 84% respectively (vs. 69% and 70% in August). Satisfaction with increased network safety and cleanliness measures has increased to 83% in November (vs. 67% in August). We’ve also had over 204 mil. Impressions, our “Rant” video is GO’s most viewed video ever on YouTube at 2.8 mil., and we’ve had 1.1 mil. unique visits to our dedicated COVID-19 webpage. This is indicative of growing public awareness and that customers are more engaged and satisfied with our communications.

To date, Metrolinx has delivered 90% in trust and confidence levels (+3pts), and ‘safe’ ranks as the key brand attribute, giving people the confidence to get back onboard.[[2]](#endnote-2)

1. **Please tell the judges why this entry was submitted and why it should win an AdWheel Award.**

We launched this campaign within weeks of concept ideation and nurtured its growth from within: Employees signed off emails with “Safety Never Stops”, and it became a rally cry that reverberated within our network and transcended the pandemic to support our community’s safety initiatives.

The campaign was effective, and it got noticed, too. Local elected officials toured our network and further augmented the message to constituents. The launch of our bus wraps was covered in 21 media outlets and promoted live on CP24 News. Further, this was also GO’s first time transcreating a large-scale campaign for multiple ethnic communities.

We are so proud of the hustle our entire team demonstrated to launch Safety Never Stops, amidst compressed timelines, remote working, and a challenging pandemic.

**Appendix:**

**Safety Never Stops Creative Examples sizzle reel:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8BaJPG-VrM>

**English GO landing page**: <https://www.gotransit.com/en/travelling-with-us/safety-and-security/go-transit-covid-safety>

**Traditional Chinese GO landing page**: <https://chinese.gotransit.com/zh-hant/safetyneverstops/>

**Simplified Chinese GO landing page**: <https://chinese.gotransit.com/zh-hans/safetyneverstops/>

**Local MPP Tour:** <https://www.facebook.com/1421865877895264/videos/205825560825418>

**Media pickup examples:**

-<https://www.blogto.com/city/2020/06/toronto-union-station-makeover-promote-social-distancing/>

-<https://the-message.ca/2020/08/12/go-transit-delivers-its-safety-message-with-a-smile/>

-<https://www.weeklyvoice.com/its-safe-to-say-safety-never-stops-on-board-go-transit-and-up-express/>

-<https://the-message.ca/2020/11/10/metrolinx-introduces-see-through-buses-in-the-gta/>

-<https://www.cp24.com/news/we-are-cleaning-our-buses-so-often-they-are-becoming-see-through-metrolinx-launches-new-marketing-campaign-1.5180856>

-<https://strategyonline.ca/2020/10/20/how-metrolinx-is-getting-people-to-relax-on-the-rails/>

1. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/census-visible-minorities-1.4371018> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Metrolinx Brand Tracking Study, August 2020 vs. January 2020 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)