7. London’s Visitor Experience

Increasing the Quality of the Offer

• **Transport** – public transport as well as gateway airports

• **Accommodation** – upgrading 4 / 5*, many more 3* particularly in Southbank, Canary Wharf, East End, Stratford

• **Attractions** – free admission to national museums, blockbuster exhibitions at museums, improving West End theatres, new visitor quarters – Shoreditch, Southbank...
7. London’s Visitor Experience

Increasing the Quality of the Offer

• **Events** — RideLondon, Thames Festival, Summer Streets in West End, NFL in London, Pride Festival in West End, Football including new stadia and of course the 2012 Games

• **Conferences** — establishing a world class exhibition centre for London at ExCeL — at the expense of the tired Ear’s Court and Olympia, as well as upgrading a range of other large hotels and event locations

• **Promotion** — very active international promotion by Visit London and Visit Britain abroad in key markets and focussed on extensive in market research
8. London’s Transport Experience

The 1980’s and 90’s

- The transport system in the 1980’s and 1990’s was particularly chaotic, while the airports were becoming congested and tired.

- A transformation was desperately required. Not just for visitors, but for residents as well.
8. London’s Transport Experience

The 1980’s and 90’s

- One of the outcomes was that the visitor experience on London’s public transport system was deemed very expensive, dirty and unreliable.

- Public transport was something for the visitor to try, but not relied upon.

- This, in turn, tended to concentrate visitor activity in the West End.
The establishment of the Mayor of London, Visit London and Transport for London created pressure to do better.
8. London’s Transport Experience

A Renewed Start

- Products like online journey planners were being built that could make transport easier
- “National” Government funding to the public transport system has over 30 years increased and then decreased in every annual budget cycle
- Long term system maintenance, let alone investment, wasn’t occurring
- The future of central London as a business destination was unclear
- The new Mayor focussed on a long term funding solution for rebuilding the Tube
8. London’s Transport Experience

An Renewed Start

• After a number of years, this was agreed with National Government. The transformation of the Underground began. £ Billions spent on trains, stations, new lines, etc

• This was reinforced by funding for the 2012 Games

• The system and use of the system is now hardly recognizable from 20 years ago. Demand has soared!
8. London’s Transport Experience

Public Transport Ticketing

• As Oyster cards were rolled out from the early 2000’s they became a way of offering lower prices to Londoners

• But, the Oyster card was not designed for visitors

• Visitors were paying much more for travel than “locals”

• London was deemed to losing business to other cities due to transport
8. London’s Transport Experience

An Engagement Strategy for the Visitor Industry

- After a very difficult period with the visitor industry – A multi-year Visitor Strategy was agreed. This included:
  
  - Better explanation of TfL’s plans and policies;
  
  - Explicit recognition of the needs of the visitor industry and engagement with the industry;
  
  - Promotion of solutions to improve pre-planning of journeys, particularly for major visitor events and engineering works;
8. London’s Transport Experience

An Engagement Strategy for the Visitor Industry

- Improved and dedicated visitor information (leaflets, online and via staff);
- Dedicated Oyster card products and a particular push to encourage pre-purchase of Oyster cards before arrival in London. (nationally and internationally);
- Deployment of contactless bank cards which would do away with much of the need to have Oyster cards;
8. London’s Transport Experience

An Engagement Strategy for the Visitor Industry

• Close working relationship with London & Partners, TfL, Mayor’s Office and visitor industry on London’s future events.

• Directly embracing the innovation community in looking for new transport products – including through use of open data.
How does this story compare to your city or country?

Why do these differences exist?

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8. London’s Transport Experience

Summary

• London is a very successful as a global visitor destination. The visitor market is, however, very competitive globally.

• London had historically allowed it’s visitor and transport offer to become very poor and uncompetitive.

• A renewed focus since 2000 has revolutionised the London visitor economy.

• A wide ranging strategy is in place with close working across a range of agencies.

• But, the future is about even more innovation and what is the next opportunity?