



Amtrak West and WSDOT came to DDB Seattle with the hopes of turning around its West Coast products that were losing money every year. Several important steps were undertaken prior to creating an advertising campaign that aided in the success of this effort.

First, an internal brand discovery workshop was conducted with both Washington's Department of Transportation and Amtrak West staff (20+ people) to investigate issues driving the strategy and create alignment across all parties. Creative techniques were used to elicit brand personality perceptions, target user profiles and define success for the business and the brand. The variances of answers was a key turning point for the team in identifying differences that hadn't previously been worked through, but hindered the creative and strategic process.

Another key driver from this workshop was a re-framing of the intended target. Success was not an increase in ridership, rather an increase in revenue. So instead of the traditional focus of short-haul travel being compared to other modes of transportation (SEA-PDX), long-haul passengers were targeted (BC-LA.) Investigation of this market happened 'on train' where we sought to understand the drivers of long-haul train travel. The brief was summarized as "give yourself your undivided attention."

The resulting campaign highlighted the train as a vacation as opposed to a mode of transportation. Sell-in of this campaign was relatively painless. YTD numbers revealed a 13% increase in ridership -- but most importantly, a 31% increase in revenue.