

## Communications

### DVBIA's Theft-From-Auto Awareness Campaign

November 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019 With the knowledge that theft-from-autos (TFAs) increase over the holiday months, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association set out to create a campaign that would help raise awareness of the traditional seasonal uptick in theft-from-autos, and to promote behaviours that would help reduce the likelihood of a TFA from occurring.

"Community safety and crime prevention continue to rate highly as a top priority for downtown businesses. In three separate member surveys deployed in 2017, 2018, and 2019, safety emerged as the top concern facing our business members. The Downtown Safety Ambassadors serve as a visible street presence within the DVBIA area and strive to identify and report environmental or safety hazards, vandalism and graffiti, crime-related incidents, illegal behaviour and business concerns.

Our members are at the heart of all of DVBIA's programming. Understanding that our members would be the primary stakeholder for this campaign, it was essential to us to demonstrate the value of and rationale for running this campaign. A perception of safety in the downtown core helps attract tourists and local visitors to the downtown core, and assists our members in attracting clients and customers. An ancillary benefit of an increased perception of safety is that also improves their staff recruitment and retention efforts, which can be challenging for downtown businesses.

We have learned from previous years that the month of December typically sees a significant increase in property crime, specifically theft-from-autos (TFAs). With this knowledge, we set out to create an awareness campaign that would help promote user behaviours that deter the risk of TFAs."

"When planning this campaign, our primary challenge was to walk the fine line between creating awareness of the seasonally-impacted increased property crime, while simultaneously maintaining the perception of downtown Vancouver as a safe place to spend time. While theft-from-autos are more prevalent during the holiday months, Vancouver's downtown core is still objectively considered to be safe, which is essential in helping our member businesses attract clients, customers, and employees. Our messaging was crafted to focus solely on ways that shoppers could help to keep the belongings in their car safe from property crime, and all visual creative supported this messaging. This was intentionally done to avoid creating the perception that the downtown core was generally unsafe, and to inform the public that there were ways to help prevent this specific type of property crime.

#### GOALS:

- To create a high degree of awareness among downtown shoppers of the risks associated with leaving valuables or other visible items in parked cars
- To engage important partners such as local police to establish buy-in for our messaging and tactics and leverage these partnerships in order to amplify messaging

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Achieve a 15% decrease in citywide theft-from-autos year-over-year in the month of December
2. Pilot an elevator advertisement campaign and have ads viewed by at least 100,000 people (measured through facial recognition metrics) by Dec. 30, 2019
3. Establish early buy-in in the form of cooperation and/or partnership with local policing bodies
4. Programmatic display ad achieve or exceed industry-standard click-through rate of 0.1%
5. Reach 75,000 impressions through geo-targeted Facebook ads campaign by Dec. 30, 2019
6. Have 5000 “real life” interactions with people in the downtown core by handing out candy canes that shared campaign messaging by Dec. 15, 2019" "Although the DV BIA is a member-based association, the primary audience for this is particular campaign was not our membership. We first targeted this campaign towards individuals shopping in the downtown core. Rather than age or gender demographics, we focused on specific geographic locations that were considered “high risk” for theft-from-autos, then deployed tactics like geo-targeted programmatic display ads to individuals in those areas. We also focused on a select group of residential and commercial buildings, placing digital elevator advertisements in buildings where people would be most likely to park before, after, and during their holiday shopping.

While our membership was not considered to be our primary audience, they were considered to be our primary stakeholder, as they would receive direct economic benefits as a result of a decrease in theft-from-auto property crime occurring in the surrounding area. Our association members consist of building owners and property managers, as well as approximately 8000 individuals who work for or own/operate a business within our 90-block business district." "When planning this campaign, our primary challenge was to walk the fine line between creating awareness of the seasonally-impacted increased property crime, while simultaneously maintaining the perception of downtown Vancouver as a safe place to spend time. While theft-from-autos are more prevalent during the holiday months, Vancouver’s downtown core is still objectively considered to be safe, which is essential in helping our member businesses attract clients, customers, and employees. Our messaging was crafted to focus solely on ways that shoppers could help to keep the belongings in their car safe from property crime, and all visual creative supported this messaging. This was intentionally done to avoid creating the perception that the downtown core was generally unsafe, and to inform the public that there were ways to help prevent this specific type of property crime.

Using a multi-tactical approach, we shared key messaging with our primary audience using digital and in-person initiatives. Programmatic display ads were used to drive traffic to a full-length article that gave more details into tactics that can be used to deter theft-from-autos, and the display ads themselves were designed to convey a similar, albeit shorter, message using just a few words and an image. Although the ultimate goal with the programmatic display ads was to secure a click-through, the primary message of the campaign would have been captured by a user simply viewing the image.

We also engaged local police forces such as the Vancouver Police Department and several downtown Community Policing Centres early in the campaign in order to secure their buy-in for this project and leverage their own digital and in-person networks.

In order to keep our member stakeholders informed about this seasonal initiative, we placed a news article in two of our monthly newsletters (based on the fact that 88% of survey respondents indicated that newsletter content was their preferred method of receiving communications from the DV BIA). We knew that property crime and community safety were the highest-rated priorities for our membership, as a 2018 survey informed us that 86% of members would support an increase in safety resources and initiatives by the DV BIA.

We called our target demographic “downtown shoppers”, which included a geo-targeted group of individuals who drove, shopped, and parked in certain areas of the downtown core. In order to reach this target demographic, as well as engage our member stakeholders, we employed tactics including: digital elevator advertisements, monthly newsletter stories, regular partner/stakeholder meetings, advertorials in “Vancouver is Awesome” and “Business in Vancouver” magazine, programmatic display ads, paid and organic social media advertisements, and deployment of our Downtown Safety Ambassador team in high-risk areas.” Overall, we saw a year-over-year decrease in theft-from-autos both in the downtown core as well as citywide; in fact, December 2019 was the second-lowest month for theft-from-autos during the year, despite the winter months traditionally seeing a spike in TFAs due to an increase in tourism, holiday shoppers and generally increased footfall downtown. While 2019 in its entirety saw a citywide TFA increase of 13 per cent, the month of December experienced a citywide TFA decrease of 22 per cent year-over-year. Our specific catchment area of the downtown core also saw a decrease of seven per cent year-over-year. With the knowledge that theft-from-autos (TFAs) increase over the holiday months, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association set out to create a campaign that would help raise awareness of the traditional seasonal uptick in theft-from-autos, and to promote behaviours that would help reduce the likelihood of a TFA from occurring.