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Transport for West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands – Implementing a citizen segmentation to support the development of a more sustainable travel system

The challenge

TfWM (Transport for West Midlands), is the transport arm of the West Midlands Combined Authority . TfWM is responsible for formulating transport strategy, policy and project delivery - incorporating highways, freight, rail, bus and tram.

With growing congestion on UK roads, the way we collectively travel is no longer sustainable, which is why the government launched a consultation to make journeys easier, smarter, and greener through new technologies. In October 2018, the West Midlands was chosen as UK's first Future Transport Zone Area (FTZ) - A FTZ enables testing of new transport technologies, to accelerate future mobility solutions.

The appointment required TfWM to quickly understand the population of the West Midlands and their attitudes and behaviours towards travel, before being able to develop new transport services to generate modal shift and transport decarbonisation. TfWM needed to consider environmental and social needs, usability, and accessibility alongside obvious financial constraints, to ensure that the new mobility services were targeted towards those who would use them and need them most.

To support the FTZ, TfWM commissioned the production of a bespoke segmentation model with Experian, which would allow them to understand citizens' propensity to uptake new services and technologies to change travel behaviours – with the goal of improving the mobility of all residents.

This enabled TfWM to partner with companies to trial and demonstrate new modes of transport, services and technologies, like mobility as a service, car sharing, electric bikes and using data to improve congestion on roads.

Armed with this information, TfWM were able to help identify how these new services could be best marketed, using the segmentation to inform and activate their communication strategies.
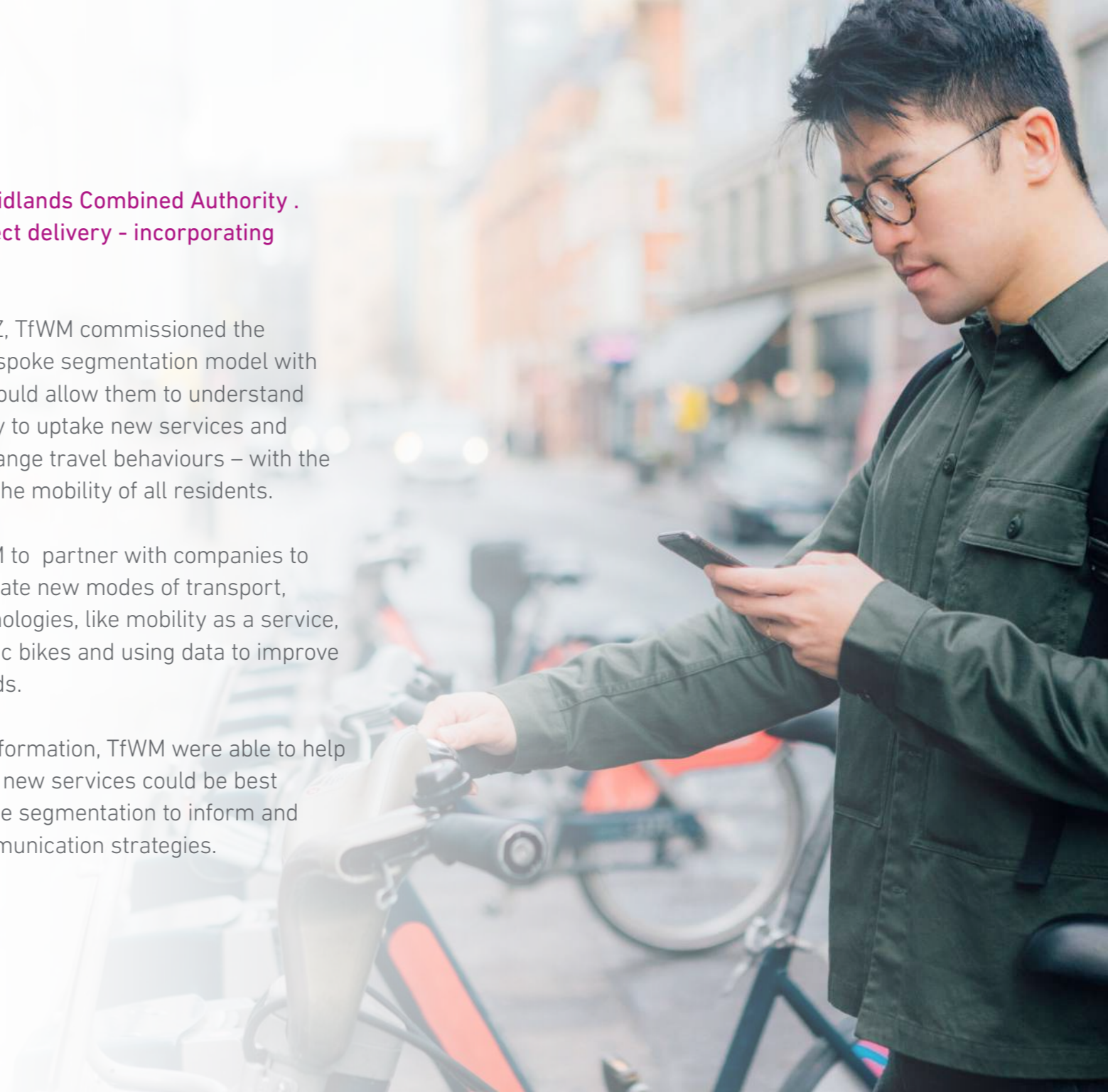
The approach

Initial conversations with TfWM established the key insights required and the success metrics that mattered. A review of all available data sources from all parties allowed an understanding of what could be utilised and what 'gaps' in insight needed to be filled.

The first practical phase of the project was to create an analytical data-mart. This is a single view of each citizen at a behavioural, demographic and attitudinal level, created by linking all available data sources. It was essential that citizen matches, and linkage points were maximised to create a robust view of the entire TfWM network.

To ensure the final segmentation could be linked to any individual, household or postcode, Experian's proprietary Mosaic Type classification was utilised as a common denominator – allowing all citizens within the West Midlands to be assigned a specific segment, no matter the source of the data. Data sources included: TfWM smart ticket data (SWIFT), Experian demographic data and bespoke YouGov survey data.

The YouGov survey was commissioned to uncover attitudinal and behavioural insights covering topics such as transport ownership, travel behaviours, journey planning and attitudes to technology/environment.

Experian executed 27 trials to shape the segmentation down to two final segmentation solutions. The two final solutions were presented to TfWM to ensure a thorough understanding of the differences, which allowed a confident decision to be made on the chosen solution, which was an eight-segment classification.

1 Understand and plan
Define key success criteria, the required operational uses, the data sources available to use and considerations on adoption

2 Develop an analytical datamart
Creating a single view of each customer/citizen using Experian data, research panel data and data such as bus/rail/scooter usage.

3 Bespoke research
A bespoke YouGov survey was commissioned to bolster wider understanding of resident attitudes and behaviours to shifts in transport

4 Segmentation definition
All data is pinned at Mosaic type level, we built multiple classification options which were presented prior to final decision on scheme

5 Segmentation socialisation
Our consultants worked hand in hand with TfWM to run stakeholder workshops to ensure understanding and initial action plans developed

6 Visualisation dashboard
Segments are profiled, described and visualised to make them tangible. We also built a Tableau visualisation dashboard to aid understanding/adoption

The solution

Building depth of understanding

After the eight-segment solution was agreed and the data sources and variables weighted accordingly, a visualisation of the segmentation was required to enable everyone at TfWM to fully understand and take action from the rich insights within.

A series of training and dissemination sessions took place to embed the segmentation into the business. Experian developed a Postcode Profiling Tool and a bespoke Educational Suite, whilst an independent qualitative study conducted by Trinity McQueen, developed a suite of 'real life' personas to bring the segmentation fully to life.

Building on the Segments – meet our 14 traveller personas

1 Traditional Ways	2 Striving to Get Ahead	3 Pressured Families	4 Comfort in My Community	5 Progressive Families	6 Mature Family Freedom	7 Smart and Secure	8 Carefree Affluence
Elderly singles living in council provided accommodation reliant on public transport	Lower affluence younger individuals, living in urban rented properties using public transport to get around the city	Young to middle aged families with children, living on stretched budgets	Retired or near retirement home owners, making use of public transport to reduce travel costs	Tech savvy, middle income families living in affordable, three bedroom properties	Ageing homeowners, enjoying their later years - likely to be using public transport less post pandemic and using their cars to access work, leisure and retail	Affluent families living in desirable suburbs, only really using public transport when it is the most convenient option	Very affluent older families or retired couples living in upmarket rural valued community settings wedded to their high end motor car

The visualisation portal was built via Tableau and had the following features:

- Overview and detailed pen portrait of each Segment
- Segment comparison tool
- Full breakdown of all insights used
- Detailed map tool
- Postcode lookup tool
- Financial resilience scores

The huge quantity of insights within the portal offered TfWM a holistic view of their citizens demographics, attitudes towards travel and technology
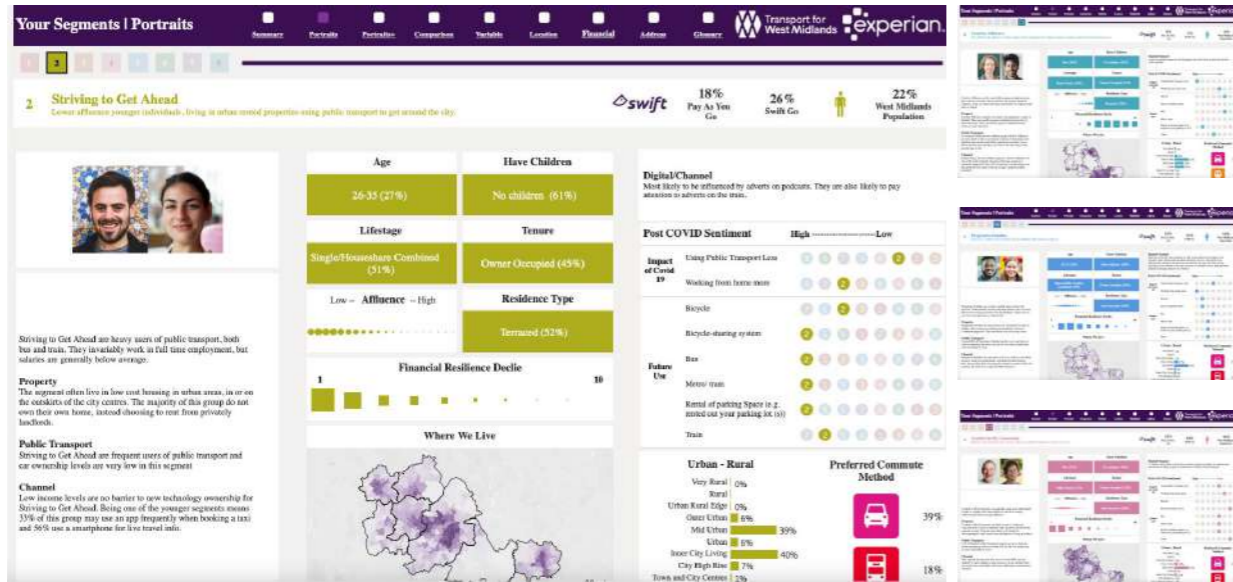

Utilisation

The citizen segmentation has been adopted in:

- Human-centred design
- Behaviour change
- Co-creation
- Statistical modelling and planning

For execution in:
- Comms and marketing
- Modelling and planning tools

The following use cases detail examples of how the user segmentation has been applied in:

1. Human-centred design
2. Informing modelling tools
3. Behavioural change
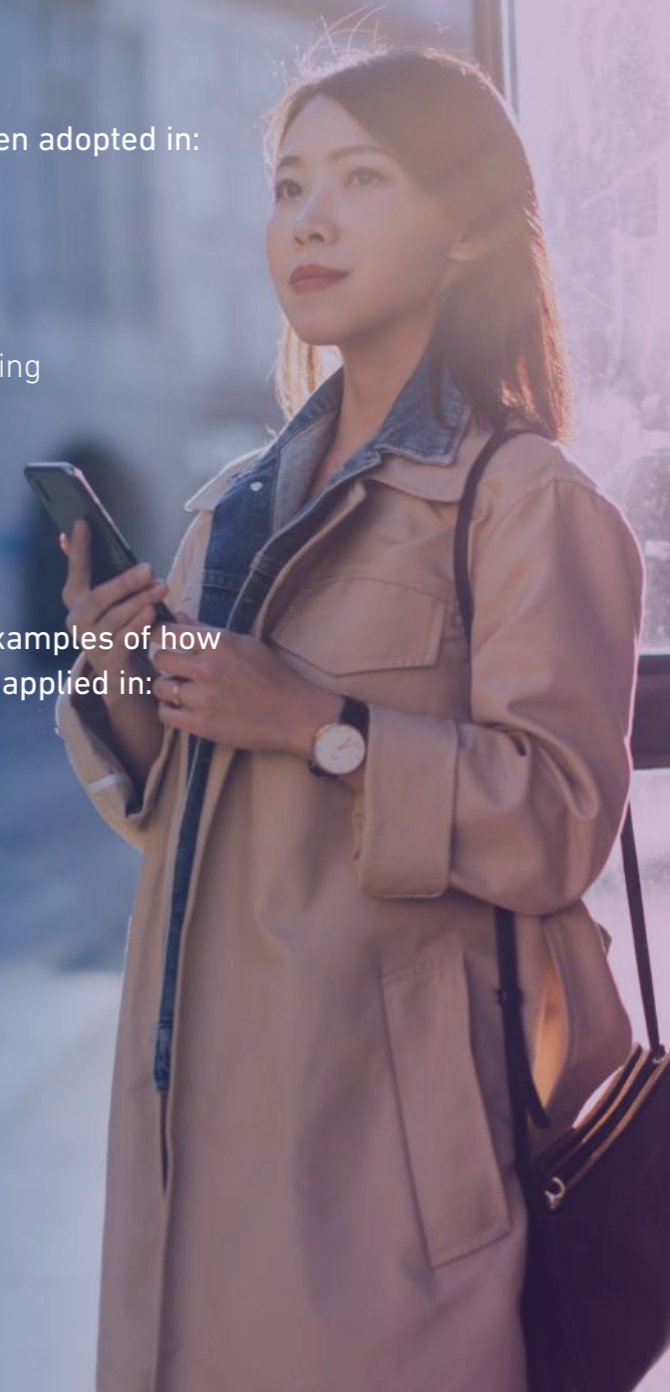
1. Human centred design – Increasing understanding of citizen needs

Example: Promoting existing and future services and products

The insights provided by the bespoke Segmentation have been extensively adopted by a range of departments at TfWM/the wider West Midlands Combined Authority and service partners. The insight has allowed an understanding of citizens attitudes towards travel and adoption of new 'conventional' services at a level which was previously impossible.

Example – Current and Planned West Midlands Metro Stops
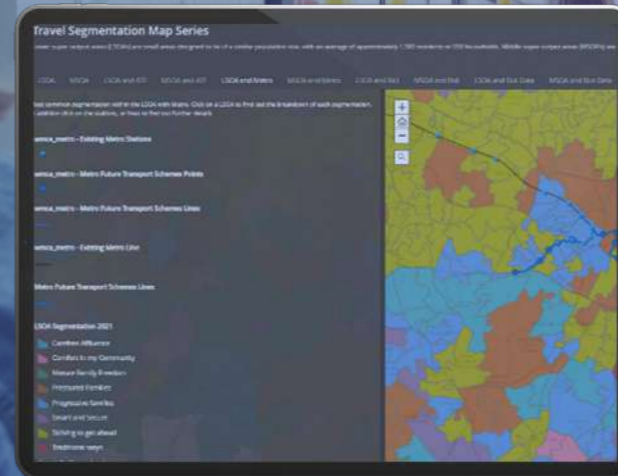
Example - Bus Route Network
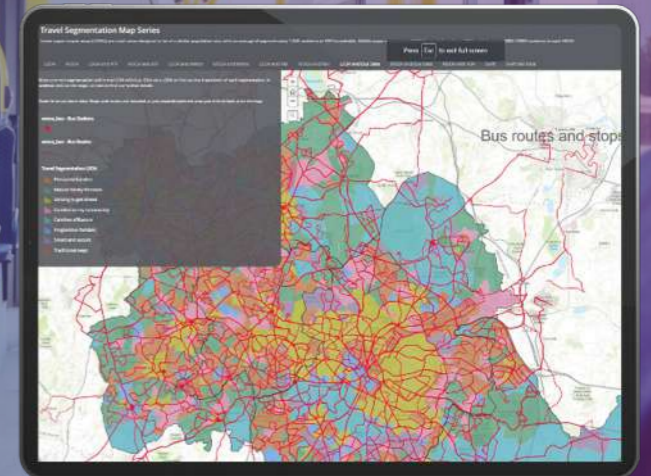
As the bespoke segments are allocated to the YouGov research panel alongside TfWM's bus pass data, TfWM have been able to run pulse updates on behaviours and travel attitudes to inform their strategies, ensuring longevity of the bespoke segment solution.

# 2. Informing modelling tools – increasing understanding of future travel demand

PRISM - Responding to changes from the COVID-19 pandemic

The original segmentation was developed in 2019, at a time where no-one could have anticipated the vast amount of changes the next two years would bring. As a result, digital adoption in older groups has accelerated, the eco/green agenda has advanced, plus citizen attitudes and requirements for public transport will be different based on trends like work-from-home and risk levels people are willing to adopt.

As Experian's bespoke segmentations are both flexible and easily updated – this allowed TfWM to enhance the original segments with additional research to provide an updated view on attitudinal changes through the pandemic.

As the segments are linked to individuals, TfWM could also understand changes in their smart ticket utilisation, enabling an increased understanding of the segments over time and allowed additional research insights to be easily integrated.

Since the pandemic, the segmentation has been embedded within the public transport and highways planning system model (PRISM), used for future modelling and demand forecasting. This ensures that the segments are considered in terms of future transport decision making, for example, how are post-pandemic travel requirements likely to develop, not only at a macro level.
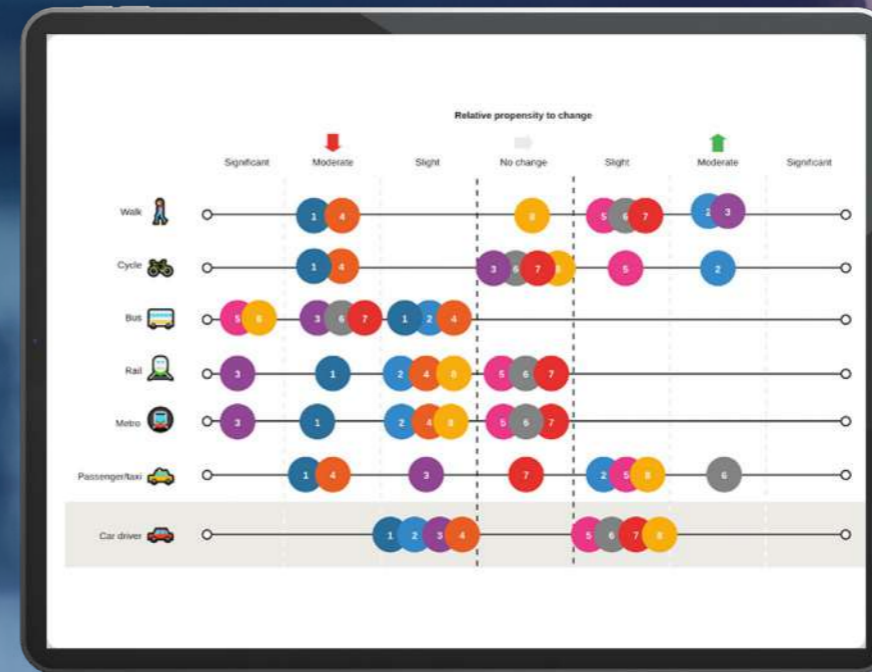
3. Behaviour change campaigns

Co-creation and developing new mobility solutions

Fundamental to the segmentation is that it identifies groups that are more likely to take up new services and technologies such as account-based ticketing, micro and shared mobility solutions, mobility hubs, mobility as a service and so on.

Example: Neighbourhood mobility hubs
Mobility hubs have been designed to expand the range of modes people can use for short distance trips and to access the public transport network. This may be through providing e-scooters, cycle chargers, cycle-stands and the resources people need to choose and stick with active travel in the long term. The segmentation tool was used along other data sets to identify the first tranche of 4 sites to be funded through City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

The All Traveller Segmentation developed by Experian has illuminated our understanding about WM residents travel behaviour, choices, motivations and attitudes. The segmentation has helped us 'size', 'locate' and 'understand' better the interaction between transport and lifestyle and where consumer behaviour can be used to improve transport offerings, both to the product itself and the marketing/communication of the offer. A most powerful tool!

Sarah Bayliss
Human Intelligence Manager
TfWM

Interested in how segmentation can support your organisation:
Experian has many years of experience building and deploying truly actionable consumer segmentation models across a wide range of sectors.

- Blending third and first party data alongside bespoke research using a range of proven methodologies dependent on an organisations objectives.

- Innovative visualisation approaches to enable insight socialisation and adoption within the organisation

- Developing models and segmentations which can be deployed at an individual level to support personalisation across your customer base.

- Leveraging our extensive consumer insight and audience activation capabilities ensures that target groups can be better understood, sized and also deployed across acquisition channels such as premium display, programmatic display, social media, addressable TV and Digital out of home.

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