

## Highlights:

- Advertising in hotels, hostels and travel magazines is a great way to market public transit as a sightseeing adventure.
- Having a promotion that offers free rides will encourage future use among potential riders.
- Maintaining a high level of awareness for disadvantaged groups and families includes working with employers, schools, government and social service agencies.

## News:

Dr. Amy Gregory has recently joined the Majic team as Manager of Reporting & Analysis. She holds an MA and a PhD from the University of Texas at Austin in Hispanic Linguistics. Amy will lead the Hispanic Outreach and Marketing Division. Feel free to call her with your marketing needs.



## Five Ways to Encourage Non-Peak Ridership by Mary Duran

During peak hours of the early morning commute, buses and trains are often full to, or beyond capacity. However, during the rest of the day, buses make their runs with few and sometimes no passengers. Here are five things you can do to encourage mid-day and weekend ridership.

### Make it Useful.

Do you have a route that goes to the airport, train station, mall or college? Create an ad campaign about the benefits of leaving your car at home and taking a shuttle bus or train to one of these destinations instead of driving. Taking public transit is a great alternative –and offers incredible savings. Emphasize saving money by avoiding parking fees and expensive gas prices.

### Make it Trendy.

Promote trying the bus because it helps protect our environment – this is not only useful public

service, but also takes advantage of the current popularity of ‘going green’. Offer free rides the first week new buses are introduced. The Orange Line ‘Metro Liner’, LA Metro’s light rail system, has accordion-style buses with appealing grey and orange colors, making its look ultramodern. Some transit systems have acquired new hybrid buses, which adopt a more sophisticated appearance as well. An unusual bus wrap can also be used to make the bus look more enjoyable to ride. If buses and trains look this stylish, more folks may want to ride them. And, by offering free rides, it encourages future use among potential riders.



*The NCTD Breeze in North San Diego County utilized a surfer theme with this appealing bus wrap.*

### Make it Educational.

Encourage riding transit to discover culture/art. Create a mini tour guide/map to entice riders to experience local treasures on the route. In many metro train stations and shelters, there are sculptures and artwork exhibited by local artisans. Promoting a day trip to unearth these and other local treasures can be interesting and a good way to explore the beaten path. It’s one of the nice little surprises that public transportation has to offer, particularly for the inquisitive explorer. It also makes riding transit easy and fun. Once you create your mini map, advertise it in hotels, hostels, travel brochures and magazines. Many young people from other countries visit the U.S. each year and are already familiar with riding public transit. Advertising in these channels is one way to grab the attention of visitors in your area. Traveling to hot spots by bus, train or shuttle is an economical and exciting way for visitors to explore things in your community.

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## Encourage Non-Peak Ridership (*continued*)

For example, riding a cable car is a must-do in San Francisco, and it's a national landmark. The Deuce, a double-decker bus, is a convenient way to get around and tour Las Vegas. Show your market that sightseeing by transit can prevent problems like parking issues and getting lost!

**Make it Entertaining.**

Partner with special events vendors – particularly on routes that are already served. Taking transit to and from events avoids traffic hassles. Have a cross-promotion that offers free transit rides with a ticket stub to a special event. This can greatly enhance weekend service. Sporting events, concerts or other attractions are typically difficult places to find

parking spots nearby and what is available can be expensive. Later, when the event is finished, it's especially stressful trying to leave when everyone else is doing the same thing. For many people, it can sometimes be a challenge to remember where they parked their cars! Point out that taking a bus or train to an event would make the ride not only worry-free,



***The Deuce runs 24 hours daily and offers amazing views of Las Vegas.***

but would also save time, money and the traffic hassles of arriving to and leaving the parking lot.

**Make it Essential.**

Promote your message to disadvantaged groups and families. Many non-peak riders fall into these

categories. They may take public transportation to buy groceries, go to doctor's appointments, school and run other errands. They are primarily transit-dependent, but those who are only semi-dependent can be encouraged to take transit by choice. These riders are an important market segment. Offering summer youth passes can free parents up during the day and provide independence for their children. Seniors are another market to tap into, since freedom and independence are also key motivators for taking the bus. Maintaining a high level of awareness for these groups will include working with employers, schools, government and social service agencies.

It's not always easy to lure non-peak riders. If your service is useful, trendy, educational, entertaining or essential to potential riders, it will motivate them to try transit.

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