



Highlights:

The three generations of senior citizens living in the United States have become an attractive demographic to transit marketers:

- The typical age of grandparents traveling with their grandkids in the United States is 46.
- Those aged 60 to 75 spend more per person on food staples, homes, and transportation than those in their 20s - 40s.
- Reputable brands provide greater security to older generations and senior citizens will become loyal customers of these companies, than un-established services.

Majic Consulting Group:

Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation through improved marketing, planning and management.

Seven Ways to Increase Senior Citizen Ridership

Why increase promotions towards senior citizens? Not only are they a growing demographic, they are also *traveling and spending more than ever before.*

According to the 2007 U.S. Census Bureau, there are 37.8 million individuals who are 65 and older. This age group accounted for 12.5 percent of the total population.

1. The Concept of Grand-Travel

It is estimated that about one-third of American adults are grandparents. Adults taking trips with their grandkids accounted for one in every five trips taken with children in 2000. With parents stressed with greater responsibilities and spending more time at work (not to mention the commute!), this trend is increasing in popularity. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, tour promoters have dubbed the new wave as "Grand-Travel." Transit

agencies can take advantage of this trend by increasing attention to stops near Metrolink stations and airports. Grand-Travel promotions to celebration locations and holiday dates can also attract these riders during off peak times. This will help increase ridership to locations that can be enjoyed by both children and their grandparents.

2. Target the G.I. Generation (1901-1925)

Members of the G.I. Generation desire marketing materials they can sit down and read, on their own time. This demographic prefers mail promotions since customer assistance *"doesn't really exist these days."* As many have trouble with transportation, direct mail promoting is the most effective strategy. Make special efforts so that these riders regularly receive updated newsletters and schedule changes to guarantee continued ridership and help prevent loss of confidence and loyalty from G.I. generation riders. The key to winning this demographic over is

ensuring that they feel like valued customers.



3. Target the Silent Generation (1926-1942)

While this generation has been money-wise in the past, they are now ready to indulge in stress-free outings they had postponed in the past. Thus, these riders are more likely to participate in the use of public transit to reach recreational locations. This population will be more likely to purchase annual and seasonal passes, while in the process becoming loyal riders rather than one time riders.

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Increasing Senior Citizen Ridership *(continued)*

4. Targeting the Baby Boomers (1944-1960)

This demographic is known as the multi-tasker generation and desires easier or more convenient methods of traveling. They don't have time to read lengthy schedules and wait in bus lines. These riders will only use transit systems that operate efficiently, with regularly scheduled arrivals and departures. Baby Boomers will respond vigorously to promotions based on a transit service's punctual performance and productivity levels. This age bracket will also have a higher turnover rate from one time riders to regular riders.

5. A Part of History

Older generations respond well to marketing campaigns based on time-honored values. Reputable brands provide greater security to this demographic and

therefore, it is important to emphasize your transit service's history, and its positive impact on the community in your marketing.

5. Respect Your Older Riders!

Older citizens are realistic about their transportation limitations and their reliance on public transit; however they don't want to be seen as "over the hill." Enlarging texts on ride-guides and marketing materials is suitable, but don't overdo it. If you purposely create materials emphasizing frailties related with aging populations you will offend older, loyal riders by isolating them.

7. The Ingenuity of the Early Bird Special

If you want to truly impact the senior demographic, you have to market to them as *individuals at the peak of their adult lives*. Think of restaurants creating the "early bird special" rather than a "senior citizen hour" to cater towards older,

health-conscious consumers who eat dinner earlier to prevent unwanted weight gain. By creating transit routes and programs that hit locations such as gyms and adult activity centers, you can empower older citizens to take advantage of public transit to maintain themselves. Try implementing a "50 and over riders peak hour" or a "adult fitness/activity peak hour" and provide special discounts to seniors who participate in such programs.



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