

Peer Roundtable: Marketing

Virtual

March 8, 2023

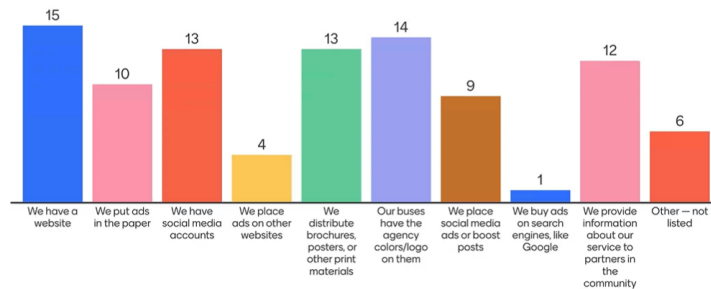
Attendees:

1. Beth Heinrich, Morris Transit
2. Stacy Struck, Prairie Lakes Transit
3. Nick Leske, UCAP
4. Stacy Finlon, Scott and Carver County/Smartlink
5. Jennifer Torrez, Prairie Five RIDES
6. Paul Coyour, Prairie Five RIDES
7. Lisa Sabyan, St. Cloud Metro Bus
8. Mindy Fields, Rolling Hills Transit
9. Pat LaCourse, Brown County Heartland and Hermann Express
10. Christine Nistler (sp?), Brown County Heartland and Hermann Express
11. Gary Ludwig, Trailblazer Transit
12. Kirk Kuchera, SMART
13. Melinda Estey
14. Taaren Haak, MAT Bus
15. Shelly Rockman, SMART
16. Nate Ramacher, St. Cloud Metro Bus
17. Joanne Brackey, SMART
18. Ted Nelson, Prairie Five RIDES

Meeting Roles:

- Process Observer – Lisa Sabyan
- Timekeeper — Paul Coyour
- Parking Lot Attendant — Pat LaCourse

What kinds of marketing does your agency currently do?



Challenges:

- Finding time to spend on marketing
- Budget for marketing
- Finding the right marketing tactic at the right time
- Making sure that marketing doesn't negatively impact the agency's reputation
- Keeping the marketing fresh
- Not over-doing the marketing and not being able to fulfill the demand from the marketing
- Getting buy-in from internal decision-makers.
- Marketing for recruiting drivers.
- Understanding what a good investment for marketing is (what cost is worth it)
- What to do when you don't have a staff person dedicated to marketing
- Keeping consistent marketing topics.

Solutions:

General marketing suggestions

- Ads in the city newsletter, half-page
- Billboards, digital and print
- Benches
- Bathroom ads (city and county)
- Placemats at Veteran's organizations, if you have a policy for it, you can advertise "free rides for Vets"
- Ad boards in entryways of restaurants or shops that have them
- Logo and phone number in marching band calendar
- Sponsoring county fairs, can include banners hung at the fair, name on the website, etc.
- In-kind/trade agreements for media: trading bus wrap advertising for advertising your transit system.
- Local radio mentions during games and broadcasts
- Radio and Spotify ads (Mindy works with Townsquare Media to do these)

- [Teddy bear bus](#) in Le Sueur
- Putting ads in a seasonal newspaper for tourists and residents.
- Placing ads on the city map of the chamber of commerce.
- Metro Bus uses Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) tracking on all ads so they can track where they come from.
- Canva is a useful tool for designing and printing marketing materials
- Post to Facebook daily, weather-related posts are well-received. Targeting Facebook posts to specific cities (through boosted posts) can be effective.
- Insulated bags to give out with a QR code with the most current route.
- Post to Nextdoor, good reach and no cost
- MailChimp is useful for email marketing and includes many email templates
- [National RTAP's Marketing Toolkit](#) has free resources for creating marketing content
- NADTC has a free [image library](#) of transit images
- March 18th is "Transit Driver Appreciation Day", which is a great opportunity to create social media content focusing on how great the job is and link to your hiring pages. Also — encourage your staff to focus on 'transit workers' in your appreciation not just drivers, so as not to diminish the great work everyone in your agency does.
- Transit Workforce Center has great free recruitment resources
<https://www.transitworkforce.org/>
- Marketing assistance may be possible through the [transit planning assistance program](#) through MnDOT
- Consider working together with other agencies on marketing campaigns and procurements

Driver Recruitment Marketing Solutions

- 30 second videos are effective for recruitment marketing. They did a half-day shoot with a local videographer. [Link to the Metro Bus recruitment videos.](#)
- Your Turn to Drive: Drive the bus marketing campaign in Duluth, where they cordoned off a parking lot and had people drive the bus.
- Word of mouth from other drivers, including giving your drivers a marketing postcard or business card to give out.
- Make sure buses look great – no rust, nice wheel rim – paint them! No one wants to drive dirty buses. Make them attractive.
- Host thank a transit professional day to build the value of the position in your community.
- Collect and share compliments for your staff with them.

Process Observer Report:

- The Mentimeter survey at the start of session was effective
- Raising hands in meeting was effective to collaborate

What should be the next roundtable topic?

