c. Does personalization modify the time equation for responding?
d. How can personalized matching be effectively introduced at the worksite?

Client Identification and Servicing

1. What are the screening parameters to determine clients most apt to become successful riders? What are the optimum pool driver and rider profiles? Do they differ in a carpool, vanpool, and buspool situation?
   a. What kinds of collateral material are most successful at attracting applicants and explaining services?
   b. What elements should the initial follow-up contract consist of?
   c. Should everyone receive a matchlist?
   d. What level and type of information should be provided on the phone, through the mail, or in person?
2. Is face-to-face matching really productive and logistically possible in many situations?
3. Should standards for carpool, vanpool, and buspool formation be developed?
4. Should productivity measures and standards be established for client services functions? If so, in what areas?

GENERAL OPERATIONS

1. Which pieces of management information are essential for a ridesharing (small versus large, areawide versus local) operation?
   a. Tracking inquiries, file age, gathering and analyzing statistics?
   b. Financial maintenance?
   c. Pool administration?
   d. Recordkeeping?
2. Can pool longevity be extended? If so, how?
3. Are any tools and techniques applicable to all modes? If so, which ones? If not, why?
4. What criteria does a ridesharing broker use in matching suppliers to users? In other words, how does one avoid being accused of favoring one over another?
5. What techniques are appropriate for updating client information by market?
6. How often should applicant files be updated?
7. What is the effect of outdated client information on user response and agency credibility?
8. Should we use emergency interest as a technique to build an applicant file?
9. What are the issues surrounding payment of vanpool or buspool fares on a monthly or weekly basis or by payrool deduction?
10. When should carpools be upgraded to vanpools, if ever?

VANPOOL OPERATIONS

1. Given the different forms of ridesharing operations, what are the impacts (on staffing and program costs) of contracting out fleet management and maintenance?
2. How does in-house versus contracted fleet management and maintenance impact program accounting and user costs?
3. Does promotion of the owner-operator concept provide a viable alternative to third-party lease program and extensive fleet maintenance and management responsibilities?
4. Is ridesharing fleet management-maintenance using state-of-the-art techniques?
5. How can we overcome the problems that occur when contracting for fleet maintenance or management?
6. What is the appropriate depreciation period in residual value relative to acquisition of vanpool vehicles?
7. How do we deal with availability problems in obtaining ridesharing vehicles? Is vehicle availability a real problem? How can we best manage it?
8. Should we attempt to provide back-up vans to vanpoolers? If so, what mechanism should we use?
   a. What number of vans should we have in relation to the number of vehicles in an operating fleet?
   b. How should back-up vans be financed?
9. Is there a market for luxury or customized commute vans? If so, should we pursue it?
10. What are the pros and cons related to the dry vanpool fare?
11. Do radial tires for vanpools make good economic sense?
12. What are the trade-offs in using 15- versus 12-passenger vans?
13. What are the best bookkeeping and accounting methods for keeping track of vanpool operations (manual versus computerized)?

BUSPOOL OPERATIONS

1. Should buspool operations be subsidized? If so, at what level or under what circumstances?
2. How should private charter bus operations be integrated with public bus operations?
3. When should groups of vanpools be upgraded to buspools?
4. What are the costs associated with buspool operation?
5. What is the most appropriate approach for a public ridesharing agency to take in promoting buspool operations?

Private-Sector Ridesharing Operations

James Lowe

Ridesharing in the private sector has had a long history. It includes carpooling, vanpooling, and subscription buses. No matter which of the methods used or promoted by a private employer, their success depends on management commitment to follow through. This paper discusses why the operators of private-employer ridesharing programs need to reflect the management "style" of the sponsoring firm and poses several questions regarding operating scenarios.

BASIS FOR INVOLVEMENT

It has been a practice in industry that it is the employee's responsibility to get to work. This principle has been supported by Internal Revenue Service rulings and has been an integral part of commutation over the years. Unresolved issues have limited private-employer involvement in ridesharing. For example, Must the employer advocating ridesharing pay overtime for the commute trip? Is the employer responsible for travel accident insurance and worker's compensation during commutation? or What is the company's liability if employees of more than one company rideshare together? Many of these questions have been addressed by the Model State Law to Remove Legal Impediments to Ridesharing Arrangements, which was developed by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances. The model law has the support of the National Conference of State Legislatures, but unless it is enacted by all of the states, many of these barriers will remain for the private employer.

Even without employer involvement, many informal carpools have always existed. In fact, it is traditionally believed that between 15 and 20 percent of employees rideshare without employer incentive or promotional activity. This is confirmed by the experience at IBM that shows, prior to its nationwide carpool campaign in 1979, that slightly more than 20 percent of the employee population was participating in some form of ridesharing (carpooling, subscription buses, public transportation, or vanpools).

COMMITMENT OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

It is interesting to note that when there is a business reason for the employer to get involved with ridesharing, many social and institutional barriers can and are eliminated. Basically a business reason is anything that will affect production, expansion, or the cost of doing business and results in a profit or loss to the bottom line of a corporate financial statement. A few examples of company involvement in ridesharing follow.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Reader's Digest was just starting in a suburb about 50 miles north of New York City that was served by very limited public transportation. In order to attract employees, the company found it necessary to start a charter bus service throughout the surrounding communities. It did this by chartering buses in the communities at a cost of 20 cents/ride to the employee. Although the ridesharing program began with chartered buses (and the program is still costing only 20 cents per employee per ride), it has expanded its program to include carpooling and vanpooling.

Land use also becomes a key factor in employers' involvement in ridesharing. In the 1970s, both Hallmark Cards and the 3M Company found that providing parking for their employees was causing employee inconvenience, increasing congestion, and limiting the company's ability to expand on site. Through ridesharing, both were able to reduce the parking space required, reduce congestion, and make more effective use of land for facility expansion.

Unlike Reader's Digest, which started its headquarters operations in the suburbs, many corporations today are moving from major metropolitan areas, like New York City, to less-congested rural areas. In doing this, they are creating several problems. First, they are moving away from major transit systems. Second, they are moving away from population centers that may have the type of skills needed to meet their requirements. Third, there may be several employees who are valuable members of the company who may not wish to relocate. Again, ridesharing becomes a major tool that management turns to in order to solve some of these problems. This may be in the form of carpooling, vanpooling, or subscription buses.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Getting management support to fund ridesharing in the private sector can be a major task. Most companies are interested in activities that will help improve the bottom line, increase sales, or increase productivity. Funds that will help meet these types of objectives are obtained through an analysis that shows the dollar return or quantifiable benefits to the corporation for each dollar expended. It may be difficult to always find hard dollars to support ridesharing in today's business environment.

The next step then is to look at other less tangible areas that benefit the corporation--for example, getting people to and from work when you have moved to the suburbs, preventing a congesting problem, reducing tardiness and absenteeism, improving employee morale, and encouraging conservation. The degree to which each of these reasons is important to top management will determine the success, the resources, the incentives, and the power that the ridesharing organization has. Strong commitment and interest lead to strong programs. Conversely, marginal interest leads to marginal returns. There are numerous examples of what can be done to resolve business and transportation problems when management commitment exists such as in the case of Reader's Digest. At IBM, a sense of social responsibility was the primary motivation for creating a nationwide carpool campaign. Often, however, there will be a combination of reasons, as in the Hallmark Cards and 3M programs where social responsibility, conservation, parking, and land use were involved.

The employer that gets into ridesharing has to come to grips with many of the areas outlined here. These employers might use the checklist that follows:

1. Do we have a parking or land use problem? Yes or no? If yes, how serious is that parking problem and what is the cost of the business' decision to get into or deepen commitments to ridesharing?
2. Do we have a problem attracting quality people to our facility because of lack of public transportation or of moving from a major metropolitan area to a rural area? (The problem may also be getting people from a rural area to the metropolitan area.) If yes, consider the pros and cons of what a ridesharing program can do to help solve the problem.
3. Does the corporation have a responsibility to promote the conservation of energy within the organization by communciating to employees energy saving tips to be used at home, in the office, on business trips, and in commutation? The simple task of turning off lights at home or in the office, reducing the temperature, or sharing a ride during a business trip or while commuting will produce a savings for the corporation and the employee. If yes, begin to develop a ridesharing strategy. If no, start at the beginning. You must have overlooked something!

MATCHING PROGRAM OPERATIONS TO COMPANY STYLE AND NEEDS

In answering yes to any one or a combination of the above, you are ready to begin looking at ridesharing program alternatives or combinations of alternatives. Each of the ridesharing approaches--carpooling, vanpooling, and subscription buses--has characteristics that will appeal to a wide range of corporate needs.

Carpooling provides a company with the ability to make a contribution to conservation without involvement in vehicle purchase and with the knowledge that a majority of the employees can participate. Vanpooling appeals to a smaller base of the population, but it can have considerable impact where land use is a concern. Subscription busing provides a means of pooling more carpools and vanpools together in a bus.

An area that has not been discussed but that is also an important part of ridesharing is mass transit. Employers can work closely with mass transit in developing schedules and routes through the identification of where the employee population lives and the facility's start and stop times.

Design of the ridesharing program mix must also be in accordance with overall company policies. These can be determined by asking the following questions:

1. How firmly do you believe in the principle that it is the employees responsibility to get to work?
2. Do you feel the corporation should subsidize the commutation effort?
3. To what extent and in what form should the subsidy be, if any?
4. Does worker's compensation apply to a company-promoted or company-sponsored ridesharing program? To what forms of ridesharing does it apply?
5. How much insurance should be carried? and by whom, the corporation or the employee?
6. Do overtime wages apply?

In answering these questions, a great deal of the corporation's policies and experience will come into play. For example, a company that has a long-standing practice of providing company-owned vehicles to its employees or of providing customer service or marketing has no doubt developed expertise in negotiating fleet contracts and in establishing its own maintenance organization to service the fleet. The decision concerning the type of ridesharing program it implements might be completely different from that of an organization with no experience in fleet management.

Equity is also a major concern for many employers. Should the corporation provide assistance to a group of employees that is not available to all employees? In the ridesharing environment the question is, Should vanpools be subsidized or should discount mass transit passes be given when these services cannot be used equally by all employees? If equity does not pose a problem, then the ridesharing program established may be different from that of the organization that considers equity an issue.

The time and management commitment involved in making a ridesharing decision and matching operating policies with the organization are considerable and should not be taken lightly. For example, IBM has achieved a level of almost 40 percent participation in a ridesharing program that has at its core a strong nationwide carpool program and a ridesharing coordinator at every location. This is complemented by active administrative assistance from management and the location coordinators who assist employees interested in vanpooling and subscription busing. Location coordinators have also worked closely with local agencies to provide improved transit service.

The three basic elements of IBM's program are

1. An organization that has management support to implement a program, market and service a wide range of employees, and get them interested in ridesharing;
2. Resources to make this happen--manpower for coordinators, budget dollars for promotion, programming, and computer time for matching; and
3. Incentives--perhaps preferential parking, staggered work hours, or letting it be known that meetings are not going to start before normal work start time or run beyond stop time.

Ridesharing services are dependent on the reasons and commitment of the employer to provide the resources necessary to meet the corporate and ridesharing ojectives they have set.

The future of finalized ridesharing programs will be based on the increased use of ridesharing to solve business problems or exploit business opportunities. Expansion will continue to accompany business growth and as expansion uses land normally devoted to parking, it will make further demands on business to get into ridesharing.

In addition, as the need for attracting both skilled and unskilled employees increases and as employers move to areas where mass transit does not exist or is limited, the private employer will need to increase nontraditional means of site access. As fuel becomes more expensive and its availability less certain, employees will look to companies to provide them with some type of assistance to conserve, while employers will seek to insulate themselves from work disruptions.

PUBLIC ACTIONS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC OPERATIONS

The most obvious public involvement in private ridesharing programs is in the area of legislative and regulatory changes. This can be accomplished in several ways, including the granting of both tax and regulatory incentives to assist business in meeting its ridesharing objectives. For example, many employers are still concerned with worker's compensation, payment of overtime, and public utility regulations relating to intrastate travel where fees are paid such as in a vanpool or subscription busing. Passing legislation or revising regulations to deal with these areas would be quite helpful. Some of the regulatory changes might also expand the number and services of the private ridesharing entrepreneur. Other actions the public sector can take to expand service, such as matching, providing vans, and helping to relieve business of what it perceives to be liability exposures, will have a positive effect on the success of future ridesharing endeavors.

This is only a brief synopsis of ridesharing. The examples given could have been expanded on, but they are representative of the status of ridesharing in the private sector. This background merely gives a basis for establishing research questions that should be instrumental in helping to increase interest and concerns for ridesharing. Some still not fully answered questions follow:

1. Are there other tangible or intangible reasons that would interest an employer in getting involved in ridesharing that are as persuasive as bottom-line objectives?
2. What are the advantages of a company providing its own in-house ridesharing service rather than having it run by an outside organization?
3. Do these advantages outweigh the benefits of having an outside organization run the ridesharing service?
4. What service can be provided by an outside public organization to assist the private sector?
5. What are the employee-relations concerns of a private-sector organization that wants to get involved with ridesharing?
6. Does ridesharing come under National Labor

Relations Board regulation of wages, hours, and working conditions?

7. Is ridesharing a fringe benefit? Should it be? Is it taxable income?

8. Is there a point at which it is no longer the employee's responsibility to get to work but management's?

9. Where an employer's support for vanpooling may include employees from another organization, what are the multiple-employer implications of such an arrangement? Are these concerns, if any, minimized by having a public or nonprofit organization administer the program?

10. Does the ridesharing decision process change depending on the size of the organization? If so, how?

11. Are ridesharing programs cost-effective in terms of budget, ridership, longevity, and should this be the sole rationale for success?

12. What makes a successful carpool? vanpool? subscription bus service? Is it neighbors riding together? Is it being employed by a common employer? Is it the practices and incentives that the employer provides?

13. Why are some pools more successful than others? Why have some informal pools lasted more than 20 years? Why, after a crisis and ridesharing promotion, does there seem to be a decline in ridesharing participation? Once there is some promotional activity, either before or after a crisis, which of the forms of ridesharing has the most permanent effect--carpooling, vanpooling, or subscription buses? Is ridesharing success dependent on matching techniques, such as person-to-person, using a coordinator, providing a listing and having employees make their own contacts, or providing incentives?

14. What is the most successful technique to measure ridesharing success at company work sites and how does that show the effectiveness of a ridesharing system?

Ridesharing Evaluation

Lawrence Jesse Glazer

For most ridesharing agencies (RSAs), evaluation is an afterthought. Most RSAs are established in response to a clearly perceived problem (e.g., a gasoline shortage), and ridesharing is an "obvious" solution. This solution is so obvious that expectations are often wildly optimistic and program evaluation seems unnecessary. Only after the RSA has been in operation for a year or more, and it is seen that the optimistic initial goals will not be met, does evaluation become relevant.

While the roots of organized, large-scale ridesharing promotion can be traced back to World War II, little can be learned from experiences of that era because those efforts were viewed as emergency measures. Consequently, little evaluative work was done at that time.

The oil embargo of 1973-1974 was the primary impetus for the current round of ridesharing efforts, although a few programs were started before the embargo. Many large urban areas and a few small urban areas across the country initiated an areawide ridesharing program (then called carpool programs), and many of these programs persist today. Thus, while some of the programs have undergone substantial changes, most large urban areas have had an areawide ridesharing program in place since the mid-1970s. We will refer to these as the "old-guard" RSAs. The late 1970s, especially 1979, saw the establishment of a "new wave" of RSAs. This new wave is made up largely of RSAs located in small urban or rural areas. The gasoline shortage of 1979 was a contributing factor, but probably a larger impetus to the formation of these new RSAs was the recognition that the energy shortage and its adverse economic impacts represent a real and long-term phenomenon.

Since there were no precedents, many of the old-guard RSAs were created with wildly optimistic goals; for example, "place 25 percent of all commuters into carpools". Although subsequent market research has found that a more realistic first-year goal might be 1 percent or less, most new-wave RSAs do not seem to have access to these research findings, so they too are usually saddled with unrealistic expectations. In most cases, these goals are not explicitly stated, so each player on the local scene carries around a notion of what this goal should be. This lack of a common set of expectations eventually leads to disagreements, because nobody has defined "success" at the outset.

These approaching problems are usually not seen by the new RSA, whose major concern is to get organized and produce some visible results quickly. Whether old-guard or new-wave, the development process of an RSA is similar. It starts with one or several people and then grows in size as required. Most old-guard RSA staffs now number from 8 to 20 people, while most new-wave RSAs will never grow beyond their initial size of one or two persons.

While RSA staffs are new and small, there is often not much specialization of function and rarely will a new RSA explicitly assign one person the responsibility for evaluation work. Compounding the problem, the new-wave staff is coming from increasingly diverse backgrounds (e.g., teaching, sales, administration, etc.), as opposed to the original old-guard staff, most of whom came from transportation planning or engineering backgrounds. These new people generally lack the analytical training and experience needed to foresee and manage the evaluation requirements.

For this variety of reasons, evaluation needs are generally ignored during the first year or so of operation. Evaluation and reporting procedures during the first year generally amount to tracking the growth of the data base. But then the honeymoon abruptly ends, and critics (or supporters) begin to ask, Where are these miracles we have been expecting?, Why has there been no noticeable change in our transportation problems? Such questions will usually be asked by funders during budget-preparation time. This gives rise to the first real evaluation effort at that RSA. The objective of this effort will be to measure past performance in a way that justifies continued funding.