Parkrose Targeted Marketing Campaign Pass Incentive Program

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In September 1986, the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (Tri-Met) opened a light rail line through the northeast area of Portland to downtown. At the same time, several bus routes were altered to provide feeder service to the light rail. A direct-mail campaign offering a free 2-week pass was sent to 15,700 residents in the Parkrose neighborhood of Portland. The purpose of the packet was to increase ridership on the feeder bus routes by 10 to 20 percent. A mail-back survey to determine the effectiveness of the promotion was sent to persons who responded to the free-pass offer. Ridership counts were conducted before, during, and after the promotion to verify the promotion's actual impact. The study showed the following results: (a) The greatest response to the packet came from existing riders, with only 2.7 percent of all packets mailed resulting in a response from a nonrider; (b) ridership counts show that the promotion did not significantly increase ridership on feeder routes to the light rail line; however, ridership on light rail may have increased as a result of the promotion because survey results show that 92 percent of those who obtained a 2-week pass used it to ride light rail; (c) there is a higher proportion of senior citizens in the Parkrose area than in the rest of the transit district, so a campaign promoting shopping trips might have been more effective than one promoting commute trips to downtown Portland; and (d) a method for tracking new riders over several months needs to be developed to establish the attrition rate of new riders captured by the promotion.

The Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (Tri-Met) operates within the boundaries of three contiguous counties in the northeast corner of the state. These counties are urban, suburban, and rural in nature. Until 1979, Tri-Met's service design policy was to provide no-transfer radial bus routes from surrounding and outlying areas to the downtown Portland core area.

In 1979 Tri-Met began a gradual expansion and reorientation of service in order to tap nondowntown market segments, as well as the downtown segments. Since then, Tri-Met has established and built upon a suburban timed-transfer focal-point system in the low-density areas of the region and an urban-grid system in the more highly developed east side and northwest areas of Portland.

As part of this new service design, in September of 1986, Tri-Met opened a new light rail line, the Metropolitan Area Express (MAX), to provide rapid transportation from the east side of Portland to the downtown area along the congested Banfield corridor.

The Tri-Met fare structure at the time the promotion was conducted was based on five geographic zones spreading out in roughly concentric circles from the downtown core area. The cash fare to travel in one or two zones was $0.85; to travel in three zones was $1.10. The cash fare to travel anywhere in the service district was $1.35. Travel within the downtown core area is free. Tri-Met passengers have three payment methods available to them: cash, discount tickets, or monthly passes. All fares are valid on both buses and MAX trains.

Tri-Met now carries more than 120,000 passengers each weekday throughout the system. This number accounts for 4 percent of all trips taken in the region each day and 43 percent of all rush-hour work trips to downtown Portland. Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of the residents in the region use Tri-Met at least once per month.

DIRECT MAIL PROMOTION BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

With the opening of MAX, several bus routes were altered to feed the light rail line. This new service, in addition to providing access to MAX for trips to downtown Portland, was intended to improve service to the nondowntown market on Portland's east side by creating more cross-town routes. Also, MAX's quick travel time offered an opportunity to increase patronage between east Multnomah County and the Central City area.

Although the bus route changes were instituted at the same time MAX opened, all promotional activities were centered around the MAX train. Initially, no efforts were made to inform area residents of the improved bus service. In January 1987 Tri-Met's marketing department began work on a direct-mail campaign to promote ridership on these cross-town MAX feeder lines in the Parkrose area of Portland. The campaign, directed at drive-alone commuters, offered a 2-week free pass to residents living in the target market area.

More than 15,700 informational packets were sent by carrier route to households in the target area. The packets contained an advertising piece advocating transit for commuters, a map of transit routes serving the area, a peak-hour schedule for MAX and the local feeder bus route, and a form to complete and redeem for a free "Special Pass" that was valid the last 2 weeks in April. The mailing containing the Special Pass

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was followed by a letter offering a May pass for half price when the recipient subscribed to the Pass-by-Mail program.

The following evaluation tools were used to help determine the success of the promotion:

- Ridership was measured on the feeder bus line before, during, and after the promotion to assess the actual effect of the promotion on ridership.
- The number of residents who requested a Special Pass in April and the number who purchased a discounted May pass by joining the Pass-by-Mail program were recorded.
- A follow-up survey with residents who requested the Special Pass was conducted. The purpose of the survey was to judge how effective the marketing strategy of using a pass incentive was in persuading commuters to use transit.

It was hoped that the promotion would increase ridership on the feeder bus lines by 10 to 20 percent. Specific targets for the level of response to the pass offers or the number of new riders captured were not developed. This paper discusses the results of the promotion in light of the evaluation tools.

RIDERSHIP COUNTS ON FEEDER BUSES

Before mailing the informational packets, the total number of boardings and alightings were counted on four cross-town feeder routes (Lines 22, 23, 24, and 71) where they connect with the MAX line. The purpose of these ridership counts was to provide a baseline against which to measure ridership during and immediately following the promotion.

Ridership counts on feeder bus routes were taken before the promotion began, the last 2 weeks of April (when the Special Pass was valid), at the beginning of May (passes offered at one-half price), at the end of May, and after the promotion ended. As Figure 1 shows, the promotion did not appear to have a significant impact on ridership.

Ridership counts on Line 71 are divided into northbound and southbound rides because the bus leaves the MAX station in both directions. For Lines 22, 23, and 24, the Gateway Station (where these lines connect with MAX) serves as the line terminus.

Ridership counts were not taken on MAX, so the actual impact of the promotion on MAX ridership cannot be measured. However, the follow-up survey indicates that most people who took advantage of the promotion rode MAX. These respondents usually chose transportation methods other than the bus to reach MAX, often driving. The stations where the feeder buses meet the MAX trains each have a park-and-ride lot.

RESPONSE TO PASS OFFERS

The direct-mail packets sent in March included an offer for a free Special Pass that would be valid the last 2 weeks in

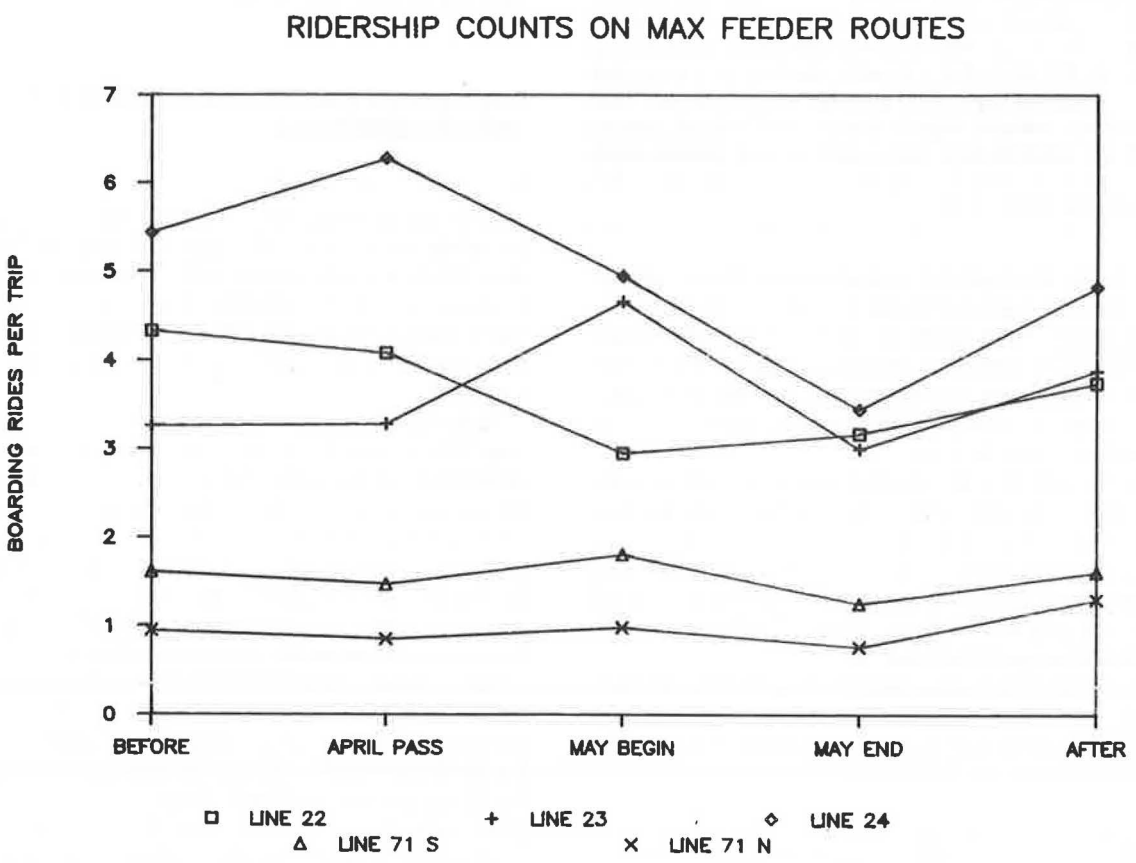

FIGURE 1 Ridership counts on MAX feeder routes.

April, in addition to several informational pieces about bus routes, peak-hour schedules, and how the buses connect with MAX to go downtown. To obtain the pass, a respondent simply had to check a box and write his or her name on a postage-paid response card. Only one Special Pass was offered per household.

More than 4,300 households responded to the offer for a Special Pass—a 27 percent response rate. The passes were mailed on April 13, 1987, with a letter that affirmed the respondents' decision to try Tri-Met, instructed respondents in how to use the pass, and directed them to centers where they could get more information if needed.

A second letter was sent to those who requested the Special Pass offering respondents a 50 percent discount on a May pass if they joined the Pass-by-Mail program. The Pass by Mail program allows respondents to purchase a pass through the mail. Passes must be paid for by the tenth of the month preceding the month for which the pass is valid. Payment can be made by check or automatically charged to a major credit card. A flyer containing a description of the Pass-by-Mail program and an order form was included in this mailing. A total of 528 persons took advantage of the discount offer for a May pass and joined Pass-by-Mail, representing 12 percent of the persons who requested the Special Pass for April.

A computerized method for tracking respondents who joined Pass-by-Mail as a result of the promotion was not established. A hand tally showed that only 153 of the respondents who joined Pass-by-Mail purchased a pass or tickets in June. This number suggests that 71 percent of the persons who joined Pass-by-Mail did so only to take advantage of the May pass discount and did not intend to continue in the program.

SURVEY RESULTS

Methodology

A mail-back questionnaire was sent to the 4,315 persons who requested the April Special Pass. Tri-Met received 1,028 completed questionnaires—a response rate of 24 percent.

Virtually all respondents who joined the Pass-by-Mail program also completed a questionnaire, representing 51 percent of the survey sample. Empirical data from actual Pass-by-Mail applications showed that only 12 percent of the target population joined Pass-by-Mail. Therefore, a weighting factor has been employed to expand and more closely align survey results with characteristics found in the targeted survey population of 4,315.

After correcting for response bias, a sample of this size has a maximum margin of error of ± 3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. That is, if the survey were replicated 100 times, in 95 cases the results would not differ from the original study by more than 3 percent.

Packet Contents

Virtually all (95 percent) of the survey respondents found the information packet to be helpful, including 65 percent who said it was very helpful. When asked what additional information they would have liked to have included, 29 percent said more information was unnecessary, 15 percent requested schedule information for other than peak hours, 7 percent asked for fare information, and 6 percent asked for maps or route information. Nearly 1 respondent in 10 (9 percent) said he or she already knew the system.

Use of Special Pass

Three-quarters of the survey respondents used the Special Pass personally, 2 percent gave the pass to someone else, and 23 percent did not use the pass, even though they requested it from Tri-Met. Respondents who did not use the pass personally said they were too busy to use the pass (44 percent) or that using a car was easier (11 percent). One-third of respondents cited other reasons for not using the pass, such as illness or being out of town.

This finding differs from results of other surveys that show that the most often mentioned reason for not using a pass is that a car is easier or more convenient. One reason for this difference may be because respondents had to actively request a pass from Tri-Met rather than simply receive a free pass in the mail. This required action on the part of Parkrose area residents may have served to reduce the number of respondents who were likely to use a car despite receiving a free pass.

Of the survey respondents who used the pass personally, 90 percent were Tri-Met riders before the promotion began, including 37 percent who regularly commuted to work on Tri-Met. Figure 2 displays the type of trips made using the Special Pass by everyone who used it—new riders and persons who were riders before the promotion.

A surprising finding was that work trips ranked third among trip purposes, behind recreation. The high percentage of recreation trips may reflect persons taking advantage of the pass to "joy ride" on the new light rail line. When MAX opened, Tri-Met ridership increased dramatically as people flocked to try the train. Given that the promotion was designed to encourage residents to ride MAX by providing information about how to reach the light rail, it seems likely that respondents used the information and the free pass to take an experimental ride on the train.

In fact, almost all (92 percent) of the respondents who used the pass personally took at least one trip on MAX. However, most found ways other than the bus to reach the light rail. Overall, only 20 percent reached MAX by bus. Of the remainder, 43 percent drove to a park-and-ride lot at a MAX station, 26 percent walked, 6 percent were dropped off by car, and 4 percent mentioned other means of transportation. Persons who were riders before the promotion were more likely to ride the bus or walk to the MAX station than new riders. In terms of travel mode used by Special Pass holders, more than one-third (37 percent) rode the bus and MAX either separately or in combination, 9 percent rode the bus only, and 54 percent rode MAX only.

Although ridership counts show that the promotion did not significantly increase ridership on the feeder routes during the promotional period, survey results indicate it succeeded in convincing 30 percent of the new riders to try the bus (2 percent bus only, 28 percent bus and MAX combination). Ridership counts on MAX during the promotional period are not available.

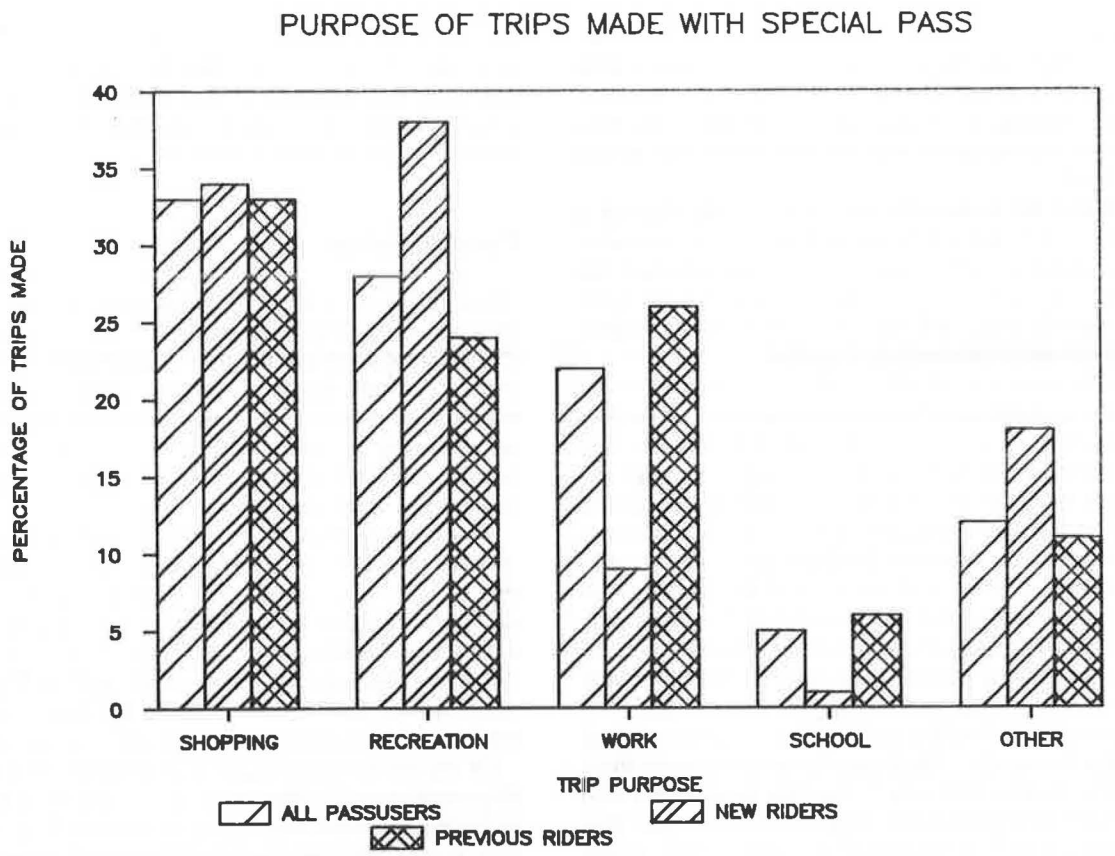

FIGURE 2 Purpose of trips made with special pass.

May Pass Offer

Only 11 percent of the survey respondents took advantage of the half price offer for a May pass through the Pass-by-Mail program. Of these respondents, 2 percent were new Tri-Met riders. The remaining 9 percent rode Tri-Met before the promotion.

It appears that the Pass-by-Mail program had a very low retention rate of persons who joined in response to the promotion. As mentioned earlier, a hand tally in June indicated that 71 percent of those who joined Pass-by-Mail dropped out immediately after obtaining the discounted pass.

Survey results corroborate this finding. Before the promotion, 21 percent of the respondents who purchased a May pass were monthly pass users, 33 percent used discount tickets, and 42 percent paid with cash. When asked how they planned to pay their fare in June, respondents who paid cash before the promotion reverted to their earlier behavior. Overall, 41 percent of the May pass users said they would pay with cash in June, 31 percent would use a pass, and 28 percent planned to buy discount tickets.

Even persons who used passes before the promotion, purchased a pass in May, and intended to purchase a pass in June were reluctant to remain in the Pass-by-Mail program. It may be that these individuals compute from month to month whether they will benefit from purchasing a pass. Another reason might be that respondents are resistant to the prepayment plan inherent in the Pass-by-Mail program and want to control when, or if, they make such a payment.

Prepromotion Ridership Characteristics

Nearly half (48 percent) of the survey population do not commute to work, 8 percent commute between 1 and 3 days per week, and 44 percent commute 4 or more days per week. It is not known how many of these respondents work in downtown Portland.

Before the promotion, 31 percent of the survey respondents who commute travelled to work on Tri-Met, 53 percent drove alone, and 10 percent drove or rode with others. The percentage of survey respondents who commute on Tri-Met is much higher than the percentage of transit commuters among the overall population of Parkrose. A 1986 study conducted by Tri-Met showed that in the general Parkrose population, 77 percent of commuters drove alone, 15 percent drove or rode with others, and 4 percent commuted on transit.

As might be expected, persons who rode Tri-Met before the promotion are more likely to commute on transit than persons who were nonriders. Cash was the most popular method of paying fares regardless of whether one regularly commutes on Tri-Met. More than half (60 percent) of the survey respondents reported paying their fare with cash before the promotion, 26 percent used tickets, and 9 percent used a

monthly pass. Although this percentage of pass users is lower than average for the region (average is 22 percent), it is comparable with pass usage among Parkrose residents.

The use of tickets and passes was more prevalent on MAX than on buses alone or for trips involving a combination of bus and MAX. Forty-three percent (43 percent) of respondents who commute on MAX reported paying their fares with discount tickets. By comparison, 23 percent who rode the bus and 29 percent who rode both the bus and MAX paid their fares with discount tickets.

One reason for this difference in payment methods could be because ticket machines are located at all MAX stations. Passengers are required to have a valid proof of payment (transfer, ticket, or pass) before boarding the train. The machines sell tickets in books of 10 at a discounted rate or individually at the regular cash price. Some respondents may have confused the single ticket with the discounted ticket, thus overreporting the number of "discount tickets" used on MAX. Another possibility is that the increased convenience and availability of discount tickets encourages ticket use on MAX.

Propensity for Continued Ridership

Virtually all respondents (99 percent) planned to make two or more trips on Tri-Met in June. Riding frequency increased substantially when comparing the number of trips respondents planned to make in June with the number of trips they made in the month before the promotion. This comparison is shown in Figure 3.

Not surprisingly, two-thirds (66 percent) of the respondents who said they would definitely ride in June were Tri-Met riders before the promotion began. The remaining 34 percent were new riders enticed by the promotion to try Tri-Met.

When asked how they intended to pay their fares in June, more than half of all survey respondents said they planned to purchase a pass, 27 percent planned to buy discount tickets, and 16 percent said they would pay cash. This projected behavior represents a major shift from how respondents paid their fares before the promotion. Before the promotion, 60 percent paid cash, 26 percent used discount tickets, and 9 percent used a monthly pass.

While the convenience of a pass is a great advantage, it seems unlikely that survey respondents actually purchased the number of passes or tickets projected in the survey results. As shown in Figure 3, 72 percent of the survey respondents plan fewer than 29 trips in June. With the exception of honored citizens, respondents making fewer than 29 trips each month would actually pay more per ride using a pass than if they paid with cash. Among respondents who planned more than 29 transit trips, 20 percent said they would purchase a pass, 36 percent said they would use discount tickets, and 44 percent intended to pay cash.

Survey research experience has shown that intended behavior is rarely matched in actuality. Even though respondents

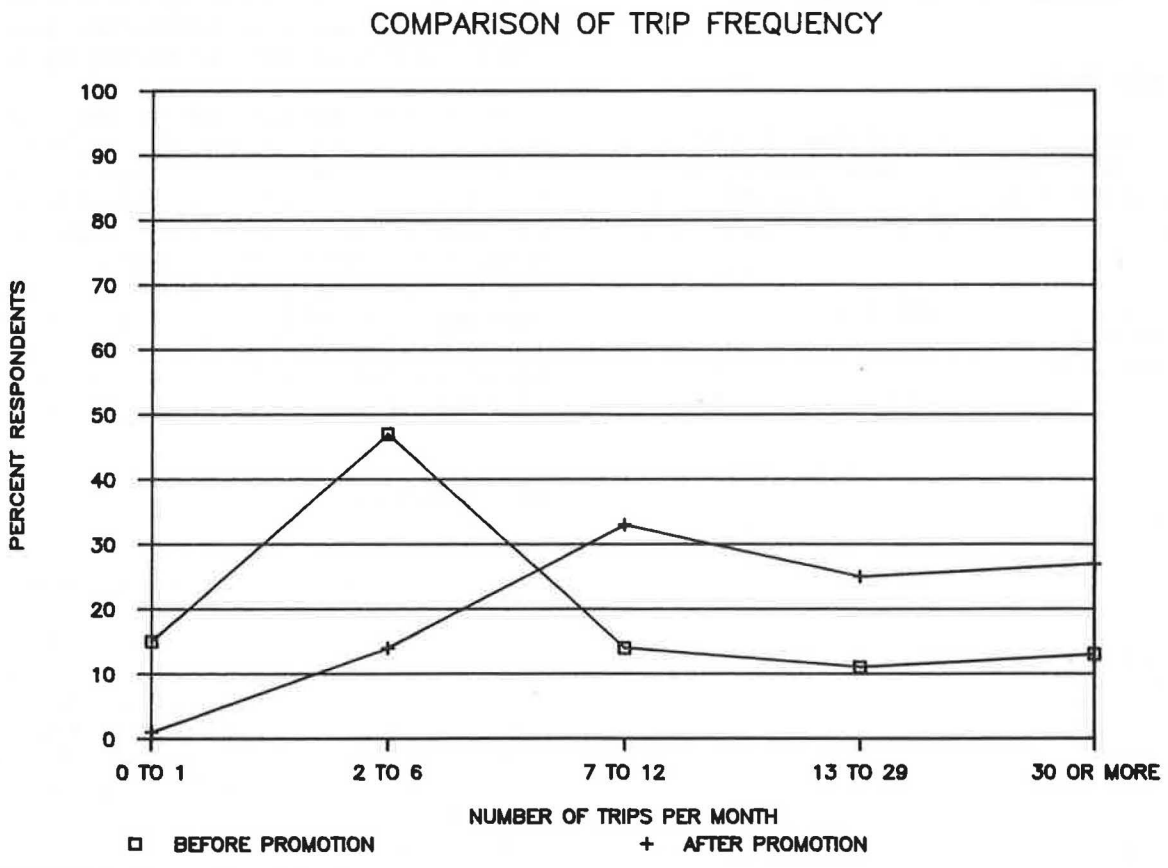

FIGURE 3 Comparison of trip frequency.

intend to ride more often or purchase a monthly pass, many may not follow through for one reason or another. As noted earlier, most respondents were not sufficiently committed to purchasing a June pass to remain in the Pass-by-Mail program.

Satisfaction with Tri-Met Service

Respondents are pleased with the service Tri-Met provides whether or not they ride. More than half (57 percent) of the survey respondents said they were very satisfied with the service Tri-Met provides. An additional 31 percent said they were somewhat satisfied.

While the proportion of new riders who expressed satisfaction with Tri-Met's service is comparable to the number of respondents who rode Tri-Met before the promotion, opinions of new riders tended to be more positive. Two-thirds of the new riders said they were very satisfied with the agency's service and 18 percent said they were somewhat satisfied. Among the established riders, 56 percent said they were very satisfied with Tri-Met service and 35 percent said they were somewhat satisfied.

When asked why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with Tri-Met's service, over half the reasons mentioned were positive, including 33 percent praising MAX. The reasons most often mentioned were that MAX is reliable, frequent, and fast. Only 7 percent of all comments dealt with negative aspects of MAX including 5 percent who were displeased with the heating and air conditioning. No other reasons garnered more than 3 percent of the total comments made.

Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of survey respondents, in comparison with those of the general Parkrose population, are shown in Table 1. The age distribution among respondents who did not ride Tri-Met before the promotion, but took advantage of the Special Pass, differs from that of the total survey population. In general, there were more persons aged 55 to 64 who responded to the promotion (30 percent of the new riders were in this category) and more persons who were ages 35 to 44. Slightly more new riders were female and income levels were similar to those of the overall survey population.

TABLE 1 COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics	Survey Respondents (%)	1986 Parkrose Population (%)
Age		
Under 24	10	20
25 to 34	17	17
35 to 44	17	18
45 to 54	13	14
55 to 64	24	11
65 and older	19	20
Income		
Less than $15,000	27	28
$15,000 to $24,999	27	31
$25,000 to $34,999	21	24
$35,000 to $49,999	15	10
$50,000 or more	10	7
Gender		
Male	31	48
Female	69	52
Rider status before promotion		
Non-rider	15	89
Rider	85	11

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

To evaluate the overall success of the promotion, results were measured against three criteria:

- Did the promotion increase ridership on feeder lines to MAX?
- Did the promotion help capture new transit riders?
- Did the promotion influence existing Tri-Met riders to ride more often?

Ridership on Feeder Routes

Ridership counts and survey results indicate the promotion had limited success in attracting more riders to the feeder routes. According to the survey, 2 percent more respondents rode the bus to MAX using their Special Pass than rode the bus to MAX before the promotion. Because the survey did not ask which bus respondents rode, it is not possible to ascertain if respondents who made trips by bus only rode a feeder bus or another bus in the system. It is possible the number of respondents who rode feeder buses is higher than 2 percent if respondents who made bus-only trips were to be included.

Of the nonriders who requested a free pass (10 percent of the total sample), 31 percent rode either the bus alone, or a combination of bus and MAX, during the promotional period. In addition, as a result of the campaign, 5 percent of the persons who rode only MAX before the promotion tried riding the bus to or from the light rail station.

Survey results show the promotion was very successful in attracting riders to MAX. Overall, 92 percent of the survey respondents who used the pass personally took at least one trip on MAX. However, rather than riding a feeder bus, most found alternate means of reaching the light rail.

New Riders Captured

Overall, only 2.7 percent of all packets mailed evoked a response from a nonrider. The remainder were from persons who rode Tri-Met before the promotion. One reason for this response bias may be that, as in mail-back surveys, respondents self-select. That is to say, persons with a particular interest in the product or service being promoted are more likely to respond than persons who are not predisposed toward the product or service. In this case, persons who already used Tri-Met were more likely to request a Special Pass than persons who did not use Tri-Met.

Overall, 48 percent of those who were nonriders before the promotion were enticed to try transit. A high percentage of these respondents intended to keep riding. Eighteen percent

said they would definitely ride in June, whereas 33 percent said they would probably ride in June.

Increased Riding Frequency

The final question dealt with whether the promotion encouraged persons who rode Tri-Met before April to ride more often. Survey results show a potential overall increase in riding frequency on the part of respondents who rode Tri-Met before the promotion began. Before the promotion, only 44 percent of survey respondents who were transit riders made trips on the bus or MAX more than six times per month. According to survey results, the promotion has increased the intention of respondents to ride. Eighty-six percent of these respondents planned at least 7 trips in June, including 29 percent who planned 30 or more trips.

Although the promotion appears to have had a positive impact on riding frequency among respondents who rode Tri-Met before the promotion, these results must be viewed with caution. Historically, market research shows that actual behavior changes occur less frequently than intended, hence the impact may not be as strong as survey results indicate.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Direct-Mail Packet Was Well Received

Survey results show the packet itself was well received and considered very useful by those who responded to the promotion. It appears the packet contents were not a major reason for the low number of riders attracted.

Recommendation. Include similar information in direct-mail packets for future promotions of this type.

Promotion Design Produced High-Level Response From Existing Tri-Met Riders

Ninety percent of the responses to the initial mailing came from Tri-Met riders. The direct-mail promotion was good for Tri-Met's public image, rewarding passengers with 2 weeks of free rides and a discounted May pass, thus reaffirming their decision to ride.

Although survey results are not definitive, it seems unlikely that the increased riding frequency among existing riders was sufficient to offset revenue losses from the free or reduced passes. This supposition is reinforced by the survey results indicating how few respondents were enticed to join and continue membership in the Pass-by-Mail program.

Recommendations.

- Ask respondents to indicate on the response card in the direct-mail packet the number of transit trips they make per month.
- Send a book of discount tickets to existing riders (thus preserving the public image benefit) and a 2-week pass with the offer of a discounted pass the following month to nonriders.

New Riders Were Good Prospects for Conversion to Transit

Only 10 percent of all responses to the promotion were from nonriders. Although this is a fairly low response for nonriders, those who did respond demonstrated significant interest in converting to transit. Nearly half (48 percent) of the nonriders who responded to the direct-mail packet used their Special Pass to make at least one trip on transit. Having nonriders actively request passes narrows the target market so follow-up offers are concentrated in the market segment with the highest potential.

Recommendation. Send discount tickets and passes, as described previously.

Promotion Objectives Were Not Specific Enough To Facilitate Good Research

The stated objective of increasing ridership on feeder routes by 10 to 20 percent was difficult to measure. Moreover, it was the only stated objective. Although ridership counts are indicative of the promotion's effectiveness, concrete conclusion cannot be drawn from this information alone. Ridership increases could have resulted from any number of factors including the promotion.

A more clearly defined overall objective or specific, measurable subobjectives would aid greatly in designing and analyzing the promotion. For example, was the promotion supposed to entice nonriders to use feeder buses and MAX, or simply to increase overall system ridership?

Even if a marketing promotion fails to meet its overall objective, it may achieve other secondary goals. For instance, although this promotion seems to have had a limited effect on increasing feeder route ridership or attracting new riders, there is some indication that it may have boosted MAX ridership.

The design of the packet materials was inconsistent with the stated overall objective of increasing ridership on feeder routes. Rather than promoting all types of trips, the packet materials were specifically designed to promote work trips.

Recommendations.

- Clearly delineate all major and subobjectives at the beginning of a promotion.
- Develop promotional materials and research design to facilitate measuring the success of the promotion in meeting its stated objectives.

Characteristics and Needs of Target Market Were Not Defined

The promotional materials were designed for Parkrose area residents who commute to work in downtown Portland. It is unclear from the stated objective whether the target audience was all Parkrose area residents, all commuters from that area to downtown, or only commuters to downtown who did not ride Tri-Met.

In any case, materials in the direct-mail packet did not take into account the demographic characteristics of the Parkrose area. Demographic data show that a high proportion of area residents are over age 65 and are, therefore, unlikely to be commuters. Within Parkrose, 20 percent of the residents are over age 65 compared with 12 percent in the entire Tri-Met district.

Survey results showed that even though the promotion was designed to promote work trips to downtown, only 9 percent of the new riders used the pass for work purposes. Shopping and recreational trips were more prevalent. One reason for this finding (in addition to demographics) may be that new riders are unsure how to use transit and are unwilling to risk being late to work on a trial run. Shopping and recreation trips are often more leisurely, so there is less risk in trying transit. Another reason for the low number of commute trips may be that transit has already captured most of its commuter market potential.

Recommendations.

- Identify target market and research demographic characteristics.
- Design promotion with needs of target market in mind. For example, in this promotion, materials emphasizing nonwork trips, such as shopping or recreation, may have been more successful at attracting new riders.

Questionnaire Design Could be Improved

Although it yielded a lot of useful information, the survey could have been more effective if designed more carefully. Similar questions concerning ridership frequency and trip purpose need to be directly comparable. For example, respondents were asked at the beginning of the survey how many trips they had made in the last *month* and then asked how many trips per *week* they planned to make in June.

A second example is that respondents were asked how they usually got to work. Later they were asked how many trips they had taken on Tri-Met during the promotion. Respondents who rode MAX were asked how they reached the light rail station. Because respondents were not asked how they reached MAX before the promotion and were not asked about nonwork trips before the promotion, it was not possible to use the survey to quantify increases in riding frequency on the MAX.

Finally, although the promotion materials were geared specifically for respondents who were making work trips to downtown, the survey did not ascertain how many respondents actually make this type of trip.

Clearly stated subobjectives and a detailed description of the target market will help alleviate these problems.

Recommendations.

- Design the survey to accurately measure specific objectives set out at the beginning of the promotion.
- Pay close attention when wording questions to ensure that results will be directly comparable.

Effective Method for Tracking New Riders is Needed

A method for tracking riders captured as a result of the promotion needs to be developed to ascertain how long they remain transit users and with what frequency. This information would aid in determining the cost-effectiveness of a given promotion over time. Some tracking could occur in the Pass-by-Mail program. However, tracking only Pass-by-Mail members would be insufficient.

Although many persons joined the Pass-by-Mail program, most dropped out in the following month. This may be due in part because ridership behavior varies from month to month and respondents calculate each month whether purchasing a pass would be cost-effective. In addition, it may be unrealistic to expect new riders to go from zero trips to more than 29 trips per month on a regular basis.

Recommendations.

- Place a flag in the Pass-by-Mail computer file to identify persons who joined in response to a particular promotion and then track them throughout the subsequent months.
- Conduct research 4 to 6 months after the promotion to determine whether new riders continued to ride transit and if not, why not.

Publication of this paper sponsored by Committee on Public Transportation Marketing and Fare Policy.