

- Integrate transportation planning with the planning done by other entities, especially as public resources become more scarce and the public becomes more concerned about duplications, waste, and wise use of public funds.
- Build better bridges with other industries and within the transportation industry itself.
- Improve the ways transportation communicates its vision to the public and to policy makers. The vision needs to be benefits driven. The benefits need to be crystal clear and have long term value to critical audiences, especially taxpayers.
- Carry the transportation message more effectively to the public. Look at what anti-smoking advocates were able to do in 30 years. What must it accomplish in 3, 5, 10 years, in order to realize its potential in 30?
- Expand beyond the traditional set of allies. Consider how transit can build stronger, more effective coalitions with others, including unions.

Transportation needs to become more like a business, using business terms and tools, without losing its commitment to the transit dependent:

- Look at other industries and borrow strategies for increasing and retaining ridership.
- The airlines use frequent flyer programs. How might that work with bus or rail programs?
- The hotels use joint marketing with airlines. How might that work with local businesses or people who carpool?
- The financial industry has been very aggressive in identifying and direct mailing to their current and potential customers. Can we effectively direct mail to customers?
- Critically review, update and improve the benchmarks used to assess improvement and progress.
- Increase the transit farebox recovery rate beyond what is required; it is clear that operating subsidies will be reduced in the future.

- Publish benchmarks and progress throughout the company so employees have a report card and can understand what they can do to help.
- Go to school on marketing, market research, and product development.
- Start with current riders. What do they need? What do they want? What are they unhappy about? Make sure you retain riders by providing the service — routes, stops, and schedules — that they need.
- Ask past customers why they left transit and what can be done to bring them back.
- Define and clearly understand what influences the market's education, entertainment, and work choices; and then what influences their transportation choices.

MANAGEMENT — CONVERTING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

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The task of these sessions was to debate the management aspects in public transportation and to identify the issues, barriers, and solutions to consider relative to the changing environment that we've been discussing at this workshop.

Issues and Barriers

- Transit agencies lack focus and direction.
- Transit agencies often lack a customer focus.
- Transit agencies do not have clearly defined expectations for the organization.
- Boards or policy bodies often fail to provide a clear policy statement or direction to transit agency staff.
- Traditional performance measures, such as passengers per hour or cost per hour, are inappropriate for guiding many management decisions.

- Transit systems are not being evaluated equitably, and are not getting a fair share of recognition for their contribution to mobility issues.
 - Cultural and environmental barriers impede management decisions.
 - Transit systems tend to be very rules-driven organizations.
 - Bargaining unit employees are treated differently than the salaried employees.
 - Transit agencies are risk-averse; there are seldom rewards for doing well. Fear of litigation also plays a part. Moreover, there is a lack of good examples of cultural/organizational change in the transit industry.
 - Transit systems generally have a persecution complex. They never really get recognition for the mobility contributions they make.
 - Governing boards fail to provide adequate leadership.
 - Boards often serve different constituencies or different customers than the customers or constituencies of the transit agency. For instance, boards might be more concerned about development or land-use related issues than mobility related issues.
 - Boards have a tendency to establish conflicting policies in terms of their expectations and the expectations of transit managers.
 - Some boards have a propensity to micromanage both the policy side and the operating side of what is actually management's responsibility.
 - Management lacks leadership skills and/or management skills.
 - Managers often don't really know where they're headed or how they're going to get there or how they're going to guide their organizations to accomplish whatever change that needs to take place.
 - Managers tend to have an inward focus, which causes resistance and fear of change. They lack openness and do not encourage cross-functional communication and team building.
 - The structure and skills of the employee work force can cause management difficulties.
 - Diminished language skills and communications skills hinder communications with passengers and routine training.
 - The spatial distribution of transit agency divisions and the distribution of employees' shifts make it difficult to schedule and hold training sessions.
 - Bargaining units represent all union employees, and, as such, they must represent problem employees as vigorously as any other employee. This puts most union employees in an uncomfortable position from time to time, and strains relations with even a cooperative management.
- Solutions**
- Build transit organizations that are value driven and customer oriented:*
- Forge ahead in the absence of a national and, in most cases, statewide transportation policies.
 - Build an environment and culture of trust that encourage risk taking.
 - Performance should be awarded and positive behavior reinforced.
 - Develop performance measures to reflect the real value of transit.
 - Emphasize the success of transit in supplying mobility to society.
- Improve hiring, training, communications, professional development, and cross-functional problem-solving:*
- Resist the tendency to cut training programs in times of budgetary need.
 - Educate board members, media, and external partners to make sure that they understand the organization's objectives.
 - This may or may not help transit get a larger portion of the resource pie, but an informed board

and public will actively and intelligently resist any efforts to cut funding.

- Build better labor/management cooperation and identify shared interests.
- Acknowledge the fact that management and labor both benefit by cooperation.
- Understand that changes in resources will impact both parties, and the need to reduce service will not necessarily spare either group.
- Improve leadership training.
- Develop a "buddy system" so that transit managers have a structured way to learn about initiatives occurring at other systems.
- Provide and use information industrywide.
- Better utilize the Internet to give and receive information on transit agencies activities. This might include "chat rooms" for multi-party, interactive communication.

FUNDING — RESPONDING TO THE NEW ENVIRONMENT: ISTEAD AND BEYOND

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These sessions discussed the funding perspective of transit and transit management.

Issues and Barriers

- The loss in federal and state support is apparent to all.
- The federal government has a huge deficit, as do many states. The outlook for transit or for any type of public funding is not hopeful.
- "Legislative fiats" by legislatures, such as the State of California and Orange County, California, are raiding the funding sources upon which transit has traditionally relied.
- There are conflicting calls for transit to both be business-like and yet still meet many regulations and requirements.

- The "reinventing government" campaign is strong and growing stronger, but transit still must meet process restrictions that fail to provide value to the customer.
- The culture shift throughout the country limits transit's options.
- The public upswell which elected a very conservative Congress resists new taxes, new fees, and any other additional government requirements.
- There is also a reluctance to support income transfers from various economic groups to others. This makes it difficult for transit to respond to its changing market.
- Similarly, the political environment challenges transit.
- Cutting service is, in many cases, politically impossible, even when declining ridership warrants it.
- Calls for greater security and a combat against vandalism drain dollars that are also expected to fund greater service.
- Finally, there are the "real world" challenges of getting the buses out on the street. They've got to be on time, they've got to be clean every day.

Solutions

Transit must provide value commensurate with its revenues and public funding:

- Make transit more credible.
- Transit needs to be perceived in the public eye as efficient, maximizing revenues, providing quality service and being responsive to the public's needs.
- The objective should be to foster a positive, energetic attitude among the public.
- Develop and use appropriate performance measures.
- These should include measurements of the community economic benefit provided to the community as a whole.