



# HOW TO

**Start a Vanpool  
Program**

**Regularly Win  
Rodeos**

**Create a PAC**

**Engage Your  
Employees**

**Prepare for an  
Audit or Review**

**Figure Out  
Technology**

**Access CTAA's  
Partnership with Toyota**

**Transform Your  
Communications**

**Recruit & Retrain  
Drivers**

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# Helping You with Practical Tools



*Click anywhere on the above image to view Editor Rich Sampson's overview of this edition of DigitalCT.*



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## TECHNOLOGIES FOR



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# Taking a Walk on the Practical Side



By Scott Bogren

At our recent Community Transportation EXPO, we couldn't help but notice an emerging theme from the various training workshop evaluations — that attendees really enjoyed the more practical, how-to sessions that offered them skills and practices they could deploy as soon as they got back to their agencies. With that fresh in our minds, we decided to focus this edition of *Digital CT Magazine* on just these types of stories.

This collection of how-to articles launches a new regular department in *DigitalCT*, that regardless of the topic of a typical edition we will devote at least one article to the practical side of community and public transportation. From recruiting and retaining drivers, to transforming your communications to using all of CTAA's many and varied membership benefits, services and products, this edition signals a new commitment from CTAA and its flagship publication.

Your input is important to this commitment. Our readership represents an amazing cross-section of community and public transit expertise — experts who, everyday, are evolving successful new approaches to the common challenges everyone in the business of moving people faces. Perhaps you've figured out a great way to use your board members or a new way to motivate employees to provide safe services — please share these with us and we'll bring them to your colleagues around the nation.

There is so much innovation and fresh thinking in the community and public transportation field, emerging from systems of all sizes serving communities large and small. Networking among your peers is one of the most valuable aspects of conferences like the CTAA EXPO or your state transit association meetings. With this edition of *DigitalCT*, we're inaugurating a virtual networking section of every magazine we publish, a place where we capture this type of networking and bring it to all corners of the industry.

# How to Create a Vanpool Program:

## Versatile Services Adapt to Meet Commuter Needs

By Pamela Friedman

Vanpooling exists in communities of every size and geography throughout the nation, benefitting commuters and businesses alike. Certain communities – such as those where employment centers are not well-served by transit – or communities where job centers are geographically dispersed lend themselves well to the implementation of vanpools. Vanpools offer flexibility, can reduce employee time spent on the road, make employees' commute to work less stressful and save them money relative to the cost of driving alone.

Vanpools also offer an opportunity to enhance existing transit system services. A vanpool program can:

- be put into place faster than a new bus route and at a much lower cost;
- include flexible routes, extending agency hours of operation;
- provide access to areas not easily served by fixed route transit.

Vanpools not only expand access to jobs outside of city limits, they also provide reverse commute options for workers traveling from rural locations to jobs in metropolitan areas.

### Program Administration

Versatility is a key component of vanpooling, regardless of how they are administered. Vanpools can be created as needed. Transit providers, employers or riders themselves can opt to lease or purchase vehicles, and neither employers nor riders are obligated to long-term participation in vanpools. Transportation agencies can choose to manage all aspects of their vanpool programs themselves, or partner with companies like [Enterprise Rideshare](#) to start or expand their program. CTAA offers membership benefits for vanpooling through its [Vanpool Works](#) program, including its partnership with Enterprise Rideshare. This article spotlights vanpooling in three distinct communities, focusing on how each provider has adapted and administered its program to meet the specific commute needs of workers.

### Employees Encourage Call Center to Implement a Vanpool

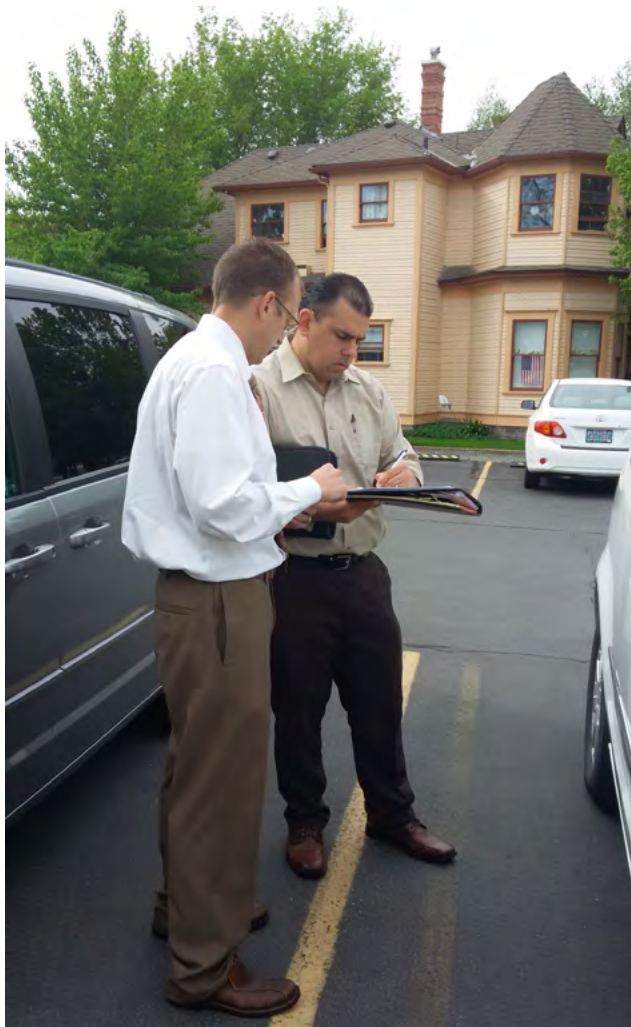
[Community Connections of Northeast Oregon](#) (CCNO) is a non-profit organization serving residents in rural Union, Baker and Wallowa counties, encompassing both mountainous and desert communities. In ad-



dition to providing various support services to seniors and veterans, CCNO operates limited fixed-route, medical and paratransit services. Its fixed-route service operates only within the city limits of La Grande (in Union County). Two daily runs, operating five days a week, however, do not meet the commuting needs of residents living beyond the city limits. In this rural community, many workers routinely travel up to 45 miles each way to their jobs, crossing county lines to reach their places of employment.

CNNO's newly-hired Transportation Options Coordinator Jodi Tool is tasked with sharing information about commute options – including vanpooling – with colleagues at area Workforce Development agencies. Among the options she promotes are van-





pools administered by Enterprise, which she describes as, “a well-established, proven program that fits well into this rural community.”

Through her outreach efforts, Jodi learned that a long-time area employer, [Chaves Consulting](#), was opening a new IT call center in Baker County. Much of the work was shift



CCNO's Kelly Jenkins and Chaves Consulting's Sam Garcia (photo left) discuss details of the vanpool program. Above, CCNO's Jodi Tool (kneeling at center) joins Jenkins, Garcia and the program's group of initial passengers.

work, occurring during hours when public transportation was unavailable. Unlike other call centers operated by Chaves, this year-long pilot project required bi-lingual staff, necessitating outreach beyond Baker County to identify qualified workers residing in Union County. Commute distances between Union and Baker County can be in excess of 40 miles one-way. After learning about the Enterprise Vanpool program from Jodi, Union County Workforce Development Agency staff encouraged potential Chaves employees to consider vanpooling as a way to defray the costs of a long commute. Once hired, these workers approached Chaves, asking the company to help implement a vanpool.

Chaves officials agreed to give the idea a

try, hoping to use the experience to “educate other employers about the business benefits of vanpooling.” Jodi worked with Enterprise and Chaves to begin a vanpool, comprised of six riders. The vanpool even garnered support from county commissioners, who offered to subsidize the cost of a seat for a two month period.

Unfortunately, sometimes the best plans do not succeed. Both Tool and Chaves found that getting buy-in to a new concept proved to be a challenge. Though it was the riders who initially proposed the vanpool, some did not fully comprehend the costs of participating. Although they qualified for and received the [Commuter Choice tax benefit](#), participants felt the \$130 monthly fee cost them more than commuting on their own.



## How to Create a Vanpool Program

Some chose to drop out of the program and the vanpool disbanded after a few months. In the future, Tool plans to reach out directly to employers, educating them about the benefits of vanpooling and including them in presentations to potential vanpool participants. Future marketing efforts will emphasize the actual financial benefits of participating by focusing on costs beyond the obvious, such as wear and tear on personal vehicles. The experience has not discouraged Chaves. If the pilot becomes a permanent project, the company will most likely consider providing vanpools again.

### Lessons Learned:

- Do not be discouraged if your first attempt does not work out; and
- Regroup, revise the strategy and try again

### Improving Reverse Commute Options in Arizona

The [Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Transportation Authority](#) (NAIPTA) serves as the transportation authority for the Flagstaff area. NAIPTA operates Mountain Line, Mountain Lift and Mountain Link in Flagstaff, providing mostly fixed-route and paratransit services. Coconino County – the second-largest county in the U.S. by geography – is among the communities served by NAIPTA. CEO and General Manager Jeff Meilbeck describes NAIPTA as, “committed



to providing quality transportation solutions for the hundreds of employees that commute this vast region.”

NAIPTA recently partnered with [vRide](#) (before its [purchase by Enterprise](#)) to implement its vanpool program. The program is supported by Coconino County and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). Currently there are seven pools in operation. About half of the groups are comprised of individuals, while employers sponsor the others. Expectations are to expand to 15 vanpools within a year.

### Coordination in Action

The program got off the ground in 2015, initially serving the [Winslow Indian Health Center](#). Jennifer O'Brien, a Winslow employee – who until recently carpooled to the facility for seven years – prefers the vanpool, noting, “its biggest benefits are saving wear and tear on personal vehicles and helping the environment.” Her vanpool, which makes the 55-mile trip twice daily, travels to two locations on the Winslow Center campus,



NAIPTA's Kate Morely (left) hands off the keys to vanpool rider Jennifer O'Brien.

dropping off and picking up riders who work at the administrative office and the physical therapy center.

Another vanpool, led by the [Flagstaff Area National Monuments Green Team](#) transports staff working at Sunset Crater National Monument and other sites. Two additional vanpools that began operating earlier this year provide reverse commute support for employees of North County Health Care traveling from Flagstaff to communities located in Ash Fork and Winslow.

vRide and NAIPTA share community and employer outreach and marketing, while vRide oversees all administrative and customer service functions and provides the capital (vehicles) and maintenance for the program. Kate Morley, Mobility Planner with NAIPTA, describes working with vRide as a “great experience.” Not having to incur



NAIPTA's vanpool fleet includes both minivans and larger capacity vehicles (above)

investments in vehicles or hiring additional staff to administer the program allowed for experimentation with the first iteration of its vanpool program.

Monthly fees for individual riders are based on the size of the vanpool and the number of miles traveled. All scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, 24-hour roadside assistance, a loaner vehicle (if needed), insurance and a guaranteed ride home are included. Bike racks and snow racks are provided during winter months. Vanpool participants also qualify for the federal Commuter Choice benefit.

The agency contributes \$400 per vanpool and will continue to do so until the fleet grows to 15, or as long as grant funding (5311) continues. Morley notes that after a couple of months, vanpool riders, “truly realize how much participating in a vanpool is saving them.” The success of these vanpools

has encouraged other rurally-based employers to consider vanpools as an option to meet the reverse commute needs of their employees. Goodwill and other Flagstaff based employers have also expressed interest in establishing pools.

### Everything Old is New Again

[Valley Regional Transit](#) (VRT) provides and coordinates mobility options in Southwestern Idaho's Ada and Canyon counties, an area known as the Treasure Valley. Although the communities served include large urban areas, transit access in rural areas is much more limited. Multiple vanpools routinely transport workers from Ada and Canyon counties to jobs in a seven-county area. Ada County's [Commuteride](#) – the oldest in the country – is operated by the Ada County Highway District and has been earning accolades for 40 years. It is unique in that it transported passengers to communities where multiple destinations could be served. Today, about 800 people in 83 vans share the commute to work. Recently, the program implemented six mini-van routes serving routes where standard sized vans were not realistic. Canyon's program is just getting off the ground.

In these communities, where commutes can average up to 20 miles round trip and where large numbers of households are considered to be working poor, participating in vanpools saves families significant commuter

expenses. This is especially true for families with adults working multiple jobs, many of whom do not own personal vehicles.

“Improving people's access to work and having a back-up driver on hand insures daily access to jobs”, says Kelli Fairless, VRT Executive Director.

### CTAA Helps Members Start and Expand Transportation Services

Canyon County's vanpool program is provided in partnership with Enterprise Rideshare, a CTAA membership benefit. Partnerships such as the one between CTAA and Enterprise Rideshare allow transit agencies to consider flexible and innovative program configurations that respond to specific community needs.

The partnership is a component of CTAA's Vanpool Works program, a collaborative effort to provide organizations with the resources to start and expand vanpool programs of any size. Through the partnership, CTAA members receive technical assistance, operational experience and infrastructure from Enterprise, as well as a selection of flexible vanpool options and marketing guidance and support.

VRT chose to work with Enterprise because of its well-established track record working with employers. Fairless describes the partnership as “a really positive relationship.” A Memorandum of Understanding be-



**CanyonRide Commuter Van**  
Powered by Enterprise Rideshare  
208-345-RIDE

tween VRT and Enterprise allows the agency to:

- Scale the vanpools to size
- Expand agency reach to include Enterprises' large network of employers
- Enhance VRT's ability to reach out to and involve local elected officials
- Turn much of the program's administrative functions over to Enterprise, saving VRT considerable administrative expense, and
- Co-brand the service as Canyon Rides Provided by Enterprise

To incentivize participation, VRT plans to purchase one seat per vanpool for up to a year. Each participating vanpool can choose to spread the cost reduction over the cost of all rides, or to offer a free seat. The subsidy is supported with 5307 funds, along with the local match. VRT is hoping to expand the program to include 10 vanpools within the next year. Unlike the Ada County program – which has purchased some of its vehicles – Canyon County will not be left with unused vans.

Tentative employer participants include the public sector, two major health systems and manufacturers and other businesses that require employees to work multiple shifts.

“The ability to right-size each vehicle allows us to meet the specific needs of individual employers,” says Fairless, who is confident that the ability to operate smaller vanpools will positively impact recruitment and retention among employers.

Not resting on its laurels, VRT is currently exploring additional kinds of job access transportation. These include traditional vanpools using paid drivers to transport community residents to non-work destinations and exploring new and better ways to improve vehicle sharing as an important component of its community-based transportation initiatives.

### Vanpools: Flexible and Efficient

Long thought to be the exclusive domain of high-occupancy lanes in major metropolitan areas, vanpools are increasingly a viable option in smaller urban areas as well as rural communities. The flexibility and efficiencies inherent in vanpool models allow mobility providers, social service organizations, employers and riders to expand access to people and locations where conventional transit service is not feasible.

As one of the most cost-effective and convenient commuting options, vanpools can demonstrate an agency's commitment to meeting commuter needs. Vanpool programs are easily administered and can operate when and where needed, regardless of

the available of transit service. As evidenced by the programs highlighted above, vanpools can expand an agency's customer base and open the door to new markets and opportunities.

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**CT**



Our Fall-Winter 2014 edition of DigitalCT Magazine – The Changing American Commute to Work – focused extensively on vanpool programs and CTAA's Vanpool Works. Click on the image above to view and download the entire edition.



# How to Regularly Win Rodeos:

## Champion Drivers Share Their Strategies



By Rich Sampson

Every year, the [National Community Transportation Roadeo](#) is the featured kick-off event at the annual Community Transportation EXPO. Showcasing the professional operation and safety skills of vehicle operators, roadeo competitions are held for virtually anything that moves, from cranes and snowplows to trains and school buses.

CTAA's National Community Transportation Roadeo offers community and public transportation drivers of body-on-chassis (BOC) and smaller minivan-type vehicles to show their stuff and compete against their peers from across the nation.

In that spirit – and that of this How To edition of *DigitalCT Magazine* – Editor and CTAA Roadeo Coordinator Rich Sampson

asked award-winning drivers from our national Roadeo to share some of their perspectives on practicing, calming their nerves and interacting with their fellow competitors. We feature a video discussion with the 2016 Otis Reed Jr. Memorial Driver of the Year Award winner Robin Smith of Harrisonburg, Va., and an extensive dialogue with her 2015 predecessor – [Felix Vitandi](#) of Coleman, Texas – as well as Q&As with top five BOC division award winners Brian Fitzpatrick of [Cape May Fare Free Transportation](#) (N.J.), and Wade Hancock of [CARTS](#) in Cullman, Ala.

As always, we encourage all BOC and minivan drivers to compete in their local, state and/or regional roadeos, as well as our national competition. Our comprehensive [Roadeo Guide](#) is the go-to resource to help prepare for or organize a BOC or minivan Roadeo according to our guidelines.

Additionally, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) hosts a similar [Roadeo for 30- and 40-foot buses](#), as well as a separate event for [rail transit operators](#). CTAA and APTA members can take part in either bus competition at the discounted member rates.



Click the photo above for DigitalCT Editor Rich Sampson's video discussion with reigning CTAA Otis Reed Jr. Driver of the Year winner Robin Smith of [Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation](#) (Va.)



Click the photo above for an extensive interview with previous CTAA Otis Reed Jr. Driver of the Year winner Felix Vitandi of [City & Rural Rides](#), part of RouteMatch Software's excellent *People Who Move People* profile series.

### Q&A with Award-Winning Drivers

**Digital CT:** How do you prepare for a Rodeo?

**Brian Fitzpatrick:** I do some reading in driving books and use our system's permanent driving course (see question number two).

**Wade Hancock:** I retired from teaching high school career tech welding. We participated in many contests and we were very successful there. During this time, I developed a plan-and-prepare attitude. I tell our other drivers that are going to the state and national Rodeo to read the Rodeo packet and know everything about each section and obstacle. To me, a driver must be able to see the course in their mind before even driving it. You must be able to realize you may not have not drove an obstacle perfectly, but forget about it once you are through it and focus on the next one.

**2) Does your system have regular practice opportunities on a rodeo course or individual obstacles?**

**Fitzpatrick:** Cape May County Fare Free sets up a complete course at our facility and we actually use it as a training day every year. Each one of us must go through the entire course – all four parts – and pass it. This is how we determine who gets to go to the state Reodeo.



Brian Fitzpatrick (right) with a fellow driver at CTAA's National Rodeo in St. Paul, Minn., in 2014.

**Hancock:** We do not conduct regular practice sessions during the year. I tell our drivers that in my day-to-day driving, I practice many of the obstacles. Examples of this are parking as close to curbs as possible without touching when loading/unloading passengers, right turns next to curbs (wrap around it without touching), placing rear wheels on the white line on the edge of the highway when driving and such.

**3) What's your approach to the stationary elements: Pre-Trip Inspection and Passenger Assistance?**

**Fitzpatrick:** My approach is actually I do



Wade Hancock (right) receives his 2016 Body-on-Chassis Division Champion trophy from CTAA Rodeo Committee member Lenzy Williams – himself a former Driver of the Year Award winner and fellow Alabaman – at the 2016 CTAA National Rodeo in Portland, Ore.

the same thing every day at my job and that's how I go about it in the competition, and for me, that works.

**Hancock:** 1) you must relax, 2) you must be detail-oriented, 3) you can practice these daily with your own pre-trip and loading patrons during the day.

**4) What's the most challenging obstacle for you?**



**Fitzpatrick:** Getting in a bus I've never driven before and trying to be comfortable to do the course. Sometimes, it is just hard to get your judgments correct as you need them for the course. But again, it's something we do every day in our job.

**Hancock:** I would have to say the right- and left-hand reverse. Set-up is very critical and you're are in a bus you have never driven. Also, depending on mirror set-up, it is hard to tell where your rear bumper is. I would rather stop too far out than risk hitting the rear cone and losing all the points. The bus in Portland had a rear bumper that you could not see in the mirrors (it did not stick out on the side).

**5) What advice do you have for other drivers?**

**Fitzpatrick:** You've got to love your job and want to make a difference for people. I think you'll do a great job and try hard. And remember it's just for fun, and you could meet some seriously nice people.

**Hancock:** As for advice to other drivers, yhe main thing I think hurts drivers is they don't relax. Do not get nervous about the Rodeo. We drive every day in far more dangerous conditions and get everyone home safe. Relax, relax, relax! Actually, I am already preparing for Detroit next year. I do not come to the national Rodeo to lose! Mental preparedness is very important. **CT**



CTAA's Small Urban Network is working to support **innovative** small-urban transit providers and improve federal transit legislation and policy for smaller cities, particularly to restore bus capital investment and grow the STIC program. If you represent a transit operation in a small-urban community, please contact Scott Bogren at [bogren@ctaa.org](mailto:bogren@ctaa.org) and be sure to subscribe to our SUN mailing list at [www.ctaa.org/sun](http://www.ctaa.org/sun).



# How to Create a Transit Political Action Committee

By Rich Sampson

Time and again, transit leaders bemoan their supposed inability to impact the political process that often determines their fate. Elections for local, state and federal offices, as well as local ballot measures, all deliver profound impacts on mobility providers. Because of their public or nonprofit status, many agencies and their employees are expressly barred from engaging in these important contests aside from providing information that doesn't advocate an outcome.

While the nuances information provision role is often misunderstood, many leaders wisely err on the side of caution, that doesn't mean transit advocates must remain on the sidelines. One such tool available to ensure transit systems – and, more importantly, their riders – have a voice in the political process is the creation of political action committees (PACs), specifically organized to beneficial support ballot measures or supportive candidates.

In 2014 and 2015, the [Rogue Valley Transit District](#) (RVTD) faced ballot measures crucial to delivering increased investment for the system. RVTD General Manager Julie Brown describes the local, independent pro-transit PAC that was instrumental in the successful 2015 ballot measure.



**DigitalCT: What's involved in setting up a PAC for a transit campaign?**

**Julie Brown:** First, you must get a group together that is concerned and passionate about transit in your community. This grass root effort is very important. Once the core group is established, you will need to review your state's [regulatory requirements](#) concerning a Political Action Committee. You can usually get this information on the state website, along with the rule book and filing documents. In our state, you must register your PAC before you start fundraising and all financial information must be reported in a timely manner. The group will need to decide who will play in leadership roles and who will work behind the scenes. During our campaign, three of our board members took the lead as Chair, Vice

Chair, and Treasurer.

**DigitalCT: Who can take on some of the legwork on fundraising and outreach beyond the transit agency?**

**Brown:** In our state, because we are considered a quasi-governmental entity (a special district) we are considered state employees and prohibited by Oregon Revised Statute to participate in the campaign. We were allowed to provide facts to the ballot measure, but not opinions and we were allowed to provide information. The political action committee hired an outside organizer that worked on social media, fundraising and basic organization. In addition, this person organized the PAC meetings, kept minutes and a calendar of events and the people responsible for activities. For fundraising, they hosted house parties and asked individuals to give.

The PAC did all the fundraising and outreach beyond the transit agency.

**DigitalCT: What did the PAC use its resources for? (commercials, materials, meetings, etc)**

**Brown:** Since this was the second attempt at a ballot measure, the previous PAC had raised \$22,000 and had a remaining balance of \$8,000 from the November 2014 ballot measure. During the second attempt, the PAC



RVTD General Manager Julie Brown

raised an additional \$26,000, bringing their total to \$34,000. The PAC used this resource to hire an organizer and an ad agency to create a logo and graphic artwork for Facebook and the website. They bought a couple of banners which they used at tabling events. They printed handouts and used them whenever given a chance, including door-to-door canvassing. Since this was the second attempt on the ballot, the PAC used the lawn signs from the previous attempt. The previous PAC had made

sure that the signs did not have a ballot measure number so if they needed to go out again they could reuse the signs. The PAC also had a volunteer who rode the bus and got patrons to tell their story as to why transit was important to them. The story along with a picture of the individual was then used on the website and Facebook (of course, the individual agreed to the use of their information) These stories we posted a couple of times a week. The last thing that the PAC did was ride the bus and got riders to register to vote.

**DigitalCT: How can PACs remain independent of the transit system to do its work legally and effectively?**

**Brown:** They met outside of the board meetings, worked on weekends and outside of business hours so that transit employees could fundraise canvass and table at events. They used outside individuals who were free to participate during the working hours.

**DigitalCT: What advice do you have for other communities considering establishing a PAC?**

**Brown:** The earlier you get started the better. Start by building a coalition that will eventually move into the role of the PAC.

Big donations were made to our PAC by the [Oregon Transit Association](#) and the Amalgamated Transit Union. Don't discount small donations. More than 24,000 was raised by small donations.

Have a request for  
a future segment of  
DigitalCT's

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# How to Engage Your Employees:

## The Four Keys to Reproducible Results

By Eliakim Thorpe

Matthew and Janice are emerging leaders who oversee their employees together. During a lunch meeting at a local restaurant, they began to discuss their future revenue projections and how well their operation is performed in recent years. What began as a conversation about dollars and margins quickly turned into a debate over the Great Recession, and the benefits of transforming an organization primarily driven primarily by metrics, to an organization led by purpose-driven employees.

Matthew prefers to discuss strategy, revenue projections and cost margins regardless of the current economic conditions impacting revenue. He firmly believes that the organization can be financially resilient during economic turmoil if a fiscal strategy is developed. Janice believes in maximizing human capital; not necessarily every employee, but those who've demonstrated passion, dedication and an unwavering commitment because of their belief in the values of the organization. She is confident that if people change, the organization will change and weather any economic instability.

Rose, a well-respected manager, joined in

and shared her perspective on the importance of organizational transformation that must be internally-driven by people, and not solely motivated by bottom lines. She believes that if human capital is not leveraged properly within an organization, transformation can never occur and the development of a revenue strategy will be insufficient in an ever-changing global economy. Conversely, some of the most resilient organizations can encounter troubles because they fail to realize the importance of organizational transformation. The most successful brands implement organizational transformation designed to change people and not organizational structures.

Rose and Janice are correct. The engine to every economy is people. Without people there is no economy. Purpose-driven, passionate, talented, and dedicated employees make transformation successful. As an enterprise, you evaluate what is in your control and what you can influence. You can't control market conditions, inflation, and the decline of the economy. But you can control the growth of people and the emphasis you place on having a transformed workforce during a prospering and declining economy.



When you embark on your leadership journey to foster a transformative work environment, it is critical to ensure consistency and long-term success. There are four keys to reproducible results for executives to consider on the path to transformation.

### Engaged Employees

During any transformational process, it is imperative that the organization understand that people power the transformation. Organizations must understand that the greatest commodity at their disposal is not products, revenue or capital – but people. Every dimension of a transformational company is tightly connected to its people, because they are the greatest asset of any business.



Your workforce must be your company's cornerstone if it is to be successful, efficient and sustainable. Without people, there is no organization! When your workforce feels – and truly believes – that they have a direct stake in the future of the company, they become invaluable assets toward your transformative goals.

### Organizational Culture

Every organization must learn to be intentional about the attitudes, behaviors, values and guiding principles it broadcasts. Whatever a leader broadcasts becomes its organizational culture. Organizational culture is built upon Convictions, Conduct and Character. If the manager or leader is unable to demonstrate these 3 C's, it will create bad attitudes, unwanted behaviors, limited perspectives and a difficult working environment.

Developing this culture requires a committed and consistent articulation of its values that contribute to the social and psychological environment of any organization. A culture that includes expectations, experiences and a shared philosophy by all provides guidance on how an organization interacts with its employees and its customers (in a larger context, its community and society). In essence, organizational culture is simply the temperament of an enterprise guided by its leader, who is skilled with setting the temperature. The temperament of the leader will determine the culture of an organization. A strong organizational culture becomes the

## 4 Keys to Achieving Empowered Employees



Treat your employees as assets, not obligations



Build organizational culture on Convictions, Conduct and Character



Employee motivation = employee productivity



Establish a process for input in innovation-based projects

GPS when an organization loses it way!

### Performance Increase

Every organization wants a greater ROI. Greater output and increased productivity come at minimal cost when employees are engaged and there is a strong culture courses through your company. Many organizations define performance as the intellectual and physical energy of an employee, which is defined as meeting a specific job responsibility. It is leveraging the capabilities of its workforce to generate greater output. The better the alignment with vision and value, the more likely people will rise to greater output. The components of a productive and high-performing organization include decisive and quick-thinking decision-making, fast to-market strategy, and the ability to maintain momentum. Leaders must be skilled at energizing the workforce gifts and talents if greater productivity is desired. When employees are motivated, greater productivity is manifested!

### New Product Innovation

Creativity and ingenuity must be at the forefront of product and service innovation. Employees want to create impact. The best way for that to occur is to allow them to be part of the innovation-based projects in your company by letting them get their hands dirty. Ideation is important, but being part of implementing the ideas that come to life can be a more exciting and meaningful growth

opportunity for your employees that will inspire them to perform.

Additionally, provide your employees the resources to be innovative in their work. When given the right tools and resources, the best employees will instinctively challenge themselves to be more innovative – and will perform better. When an organization is immersed in a transformational culture – not just ideation – innovation occurs.

Organizations that are successful in their transformational endeavors are people-centered, purpose-driven, solution-focused, service-oriented, profit-savvy, and innovatively positioned to create lasting change. The challenge in business leadership or entrepreneurship nowadays is the ability to be resolute and steadfast in an economic climate that appears to promote results above partnership with consumers to create lasting change in and around the community. Organizations are more likely to face adverse economic conditions if they are primarily driven by revenue. Investment in people must be at the center of any transformational organization.

Close observation of successful organizations during adversity found that those which believed in transformational leadership styles and a workforce with a transformative and evolved culture resulted in a boost in productivity, highly-motivated employees and stronger organizational outcomes. **CT**



### About The Author

*Eliakim Thorpe is a sought-after speaker, consultant, thought-leader and entrepreneur, author, and a leading authority on organizational transformation. He is the creator of the T.H.R.I.V.I.N.G. Organization: A New Philosophy to Transform Organizations, which is both a philosophy and a systematic process to help businesses create frameworks to become transformational—internally and externally. As an IT professional, Eliakim has worked with and consulted for Fortune 10 to Fortune 500 companies such as IBM, Whirlpool and GM. For more information about Eliakim, please visit [www.EliakimThorpeSpeaks.com](http://www.EliakimThorpeSpeaks.com).*



# How to Survey Employees

## A Transit Agency Template

There are many strategies and mechanisms for engaging employees to transform organizational cultures, including surveys. Here's one example utilized by [Southwest Vermont Transit](#).

### Transit Staff Review

*Please complete this document and return it by e-mail. We will meet to discuss your responses and any other items that we wish to address.*

Name of person being reviewed:

Date of review:

There will be two documents as part of this review:

1. This document completed by you
2. A brief summary written that you will be asked to provide final comment and signature.

Copies of both documents will be given to you in the hope that you will reference them throughout the year and we will be able to use them as a basis for comparison next year. Please be direct and honest for this process to be successful.

### The Company

What's the best thing about our company?

What is our company most lacking?

What do you see as the primary drivers of success in our company?

How would you describe the culture here?

If you were in charge of the company, what changes would you make?

Please rate our company's quality on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, for the following.

\_\_\_ Work Environment

\_\_\_ Benefits

\_\_\_ Communication

\_\_\_ Resources to do your job

\_\_\_ Teamwork



### Your Manager

Describe your relationship with your manager.

What can they do to help you do your job?

What have they done to hinder your job?

Other thoughts, if you have them

### Your Performance

Please give a brief overview of how you feel you have performed during the past 12 months.

What were your major accomplishments?

What were things you could have done better?

What skills do you have that benefit the company the most? Give examples of how these skills benefitted the company within the last year.

What skills do you wish you could improve?

What is the best part of your job? What do you enjoy the most about your job?

What is not the best part of your job? What do you enjoy the least about your job?

Are there software or other tools you don't have now that you need to do your job better?

What specific training would you like to see that is currently not being offered now?

List in order of your priority the top five goals you need to accomplish in the coming year and why.

Do you feel you are properly compensated? If not, why not?

What leadership opportunities could you take to improve company culture?

List the things you did the past year to team-build?

List the things you did this past year to make the company better?

Describe your relationship with your direct reports.

Give a one-paragraph overview of the state of your department.

### Ratings

On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, rate yourself on the following questions.

\_\_\_ I complete work requests on time without being reminded

\_\_\_ I have a team approach

\_\_\_ I follow instructions well

\_\_\_ I have a great relationship with direct reports

\_\_\_ I was assisted by my manager to accomplish daily and long-term tasks

\_\_\_ I am part of the management team and am in the loop

\_\_\_ I understand what is expected of me

\_\_\_ I am frustrated with my job and need to work on an improvement plan

\_\_\_ I enjoy my job

### Conclusions

Please summarize your thoughts, concerns, performance, and anything else that has not been covered above.

*Thank you for your thoughts and effort.*

*Please sign this document only after the review interview and process is complete.*

*This document is not being signed per your instructions above – only the brief summary prepared by you.*



# How to Prepare for an FTA Audit or Review

By Dick Doyle



*Participation in an Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [Triennial Review](#) or audit is a fact of life for any mobility provider receiving federal funds administered by FTA. The process is often tense, time-consuming and challenging. We asked former FTA Region 1 Administrator Dick Doyle – now a member of CTAA's Board of Directors and a consultant with the [Transportation Planning and Research Group](#) (TPRG) – for some tips for a more productive and less strenuous process – ed.*

As part of its oversight function, FTA conducts Triennial Reviews of all grantees that are the recipients of Section 5309 urbanized area formula funds and State Management Reviews for the state administration of Section 5310 and Section 5311 funds.

FTA conducts the reviews using its own regional office staff and outside contractors.

Typical reviews include information and documentation requests, entrance and exit conferences, requests for meetings with various department heads and staff, site visits to grantee facilities and/or sub recipients and draft and final reports.

## Suggestions for a Positive FTA Review:

- Be prepared. Attend the [annual workshops](#) that FTA conducts on Triennial Review and State Management requirements.
- Review the associated [Triennial Review and State Management Review Handbooks](#) that FTA publishes on a yearly basis.
- Review any previous FTA findings and agency commitments to make sure they have been carried out (FTA does not like repeat findings).
- Schedule a pre-site visit call with the reviewers to discuss early results of their documentation review and areas that they want to specifically focus on during the site visit.



- Be welcoming to the reviewers during their site visit.
- Be available throughout your whole interview time.
- Be positive about your organization and the work you are doing.
- Be enthusiastic about your specific Department/Office accomplishments.
- Be thorough and accurate in responding to pre-site visit information requests.

## How to Prepare for a FTA Audit or Review

- Be familiar with any information you have provided and thoroughly able to discuss it.
- Be prepared during the site visit to provide documentation to back up statements.
- Make sure that all agency personnel know when a site visit is being conducted and their specific roles/involvement.
- Keep to the questions at hand with no extraneous sharing of opinions.
- If an issue arises, see if it can be corrected while FTA's regional staff/consultants are conducting the review.
- Try to make the review a win/win for both FTA and you. FTA is able to carry out its mandated oversight function while the grantee/state agency is able to affirm its policies and procedures and/or improve processes and efficiencies.

CT



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# How to Figure Out Technology

By Sheryl Gross-Glaser

Let me be blunt: I hate having to use two TV remote controls. I hate software that requires education to employ effectively. I look forward to these decisions about as much as I relish the thought of having a tooth pulled or – insert your own nightmare dental procedure here.

The same is true for technology and applications for transit providers and mobility networks. Many of us feel overwhelmed and doomed to the paralysis of inaction. Our objective is to blunt those fears and establish a process that can at least move closer to making an informed technology decision.

## Go the Checklist Route

A checklist is an effective approach to making technology decisions. Checklists are easy. They ensure that you do not skip critical steps, especially useful when engaging in decision-making processes that are complex and involve multiple people. A checklist can be tailored to any type of group or for any type of process. My goal is to render these decision processes manageable so that you do not compare them to nightmarish dental procedures.



## Before the Checklist – Change Your Attitude

We are all tempted to hand over the search, decision making and training to someone else – a consultant, a vendor, a magician of some sort. I outsourced my last laptop decision and since I said cost was my only concern, I ended up with a piece of junk I would happily place on a bonfire were I not concerned about toxic fumes.

Face the ugly truth: Your time and attention are crucial to getting good results. Whether a consultant, a vendor, or that magician is called in, you will do best by becoming **ACTIVELY** – in bold and in caps – involved in the searching, considering of options, and decision-making along the way.

Do not be paralyzed into inaction or handing over decision-making to an expert. You and your colleague decision-makers are the experts in what you and your staff do, and what your partners, customers, and other stakeholders want.

## The Checklist

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?
2. WHY?
3. WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?
4. WILL THE TECHNOLOGY ACTUALLY ACHIEVE (OR HELP TO ACHIEVE) THIS (THESE) GOAL(S)?
5. GATHER MEANINGFUL INPUT FROM THE PEOPLE WHO WILL USE THE TECHNOLOGY. THESE INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: DRIVERS, RIDERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, CALL CENTER STAFF, YOUR ENTIRE WORKFORCE, OR WHOEVER.
6. WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE? TO WHOM? (FUNDERS, PARTNERS, DRIVERS, RIDERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, CALL CENTER STAFF, WHOEVER)

7. DETERMINE PERFORMANCE MEASURES
  8. ARE THERE ANY REASONS – BESIDES MONEY – TO MAKE A DIFFERENT DECISION?
  9. OBTAIN REVIEWS OF THE PRODUCT AND ANY INDIVIDUALIZED WORK OF THE VENDOR OR CONSULTANT.
  10. IS IT POSSIBLE TO TEST THE NEW TECHNOLOGY – BEFORE A MAJOR PURCHASE – WITH ACTUAL USERS?
  11. IS THERE A PROBLEM THAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED IN THE FIRST PLACE?
  12. WHAT ARE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF MAKING A CHANGE? INCLUDE POTENTIAL, BUT SIGNIFICANT, PROBLEMS (SUCH AS RIDERS COMPLETELY ABANDONING YOUR SERVICE DUE TO – INSERT HERE.)
- CIRCLE BACK AND AROUND – GO BACKWARDS IN THE CHECKLIST AS WELL AS FORWARD IF YOU LEARN ANYTHING THAT RAISES THE NEED FOR FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH ANYONE INVOLVED.
  - SET A DEADLINE SO THAT THE DECISION DOES NOT TAKE FOREVER.

### Let's Pretend

Play pretend. Test out your preliminary process of a tech decision by yourself or with colleagues with a no-risk, pretend situation.

Pretend scenario: You receive zero to five telephone calls per day from riders and potential riders. Should you purchase an interactive voice response (IVR) system to answer and take care of calls with simple inquiries?

#### 1. What do you want to achieve?

You want to save staff time. If you install IVR, the amount saved over the course of two years, for example, will be more than the amount to be spent on the technology, which will be a net savings for the agency.

#### 2. Why?

If staff time is saved, staff will be free to accomplish other tasks. Offer your own role-play (in your head or with colleagues) list of what those other tasks might be.

#### 3. What are the options?

You are not an expert, but you can search for options. If you feel in over your head, is there a partner – a stakeholder, a staff member, a local college student, or a consultant – who can research options and translate that information into something you can understand? (Using the medical analogy, a surgeon



The perfect compliment to *Digital CT* is our bi-weekly E-Newsletter, *CT Fast Mail*. Delivering the latest news on transit policy from the nation's capitol, developments from across the country, research and analysis publications and information on resources and technical assistance from the Community Transportation Association and other partners, *CT Fast Mail* is the most direct location for the most relevant news and updates in the industry.

And it's free to sign-up! Simply send an email to [fastmail@ctaa.org](mailto:fastmail@ctaa.org) and you'll be connected with the next issue of *CT Fast Mail*. In the meantime, view the latest edition at [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org).

### General Rules

- LISTEN TO USERS, RIDERS, PARTNERS.
- ASK QUESTIONS OF VENDORS, CONSULTANTS, AND ANYONE YOU ARE PAYING IN RELATION TO A TECHNOLOGY.

will explain a procedure without going into every detail so that a patient understands the goal, the expectations, the timing, and the range of possible results. You do not have to go to medical school to comprehend such information.)

In our pretend scenario, what are the IVR options and alternatives to IVR? Remember, this is pretend, so feel free to make something up.

#### **4. Will the technology (or help to achieve) this (these) goal(s)?**

Yes. Although some calls will have to be answered, the technology will take care of 50 to 75 percent of the calls, which will free up considerable staff time and avoid the need to hire additional staff. These savings will accomplish a net savings for the agency, though this will be a small amount.

**5. Gather meaningful input from the people who will use the technology.** These include, but are not limited to, drivers, riders, social workers, call center staff, your entire workforce, or whoever.

Whether to make a change and whether a particular technology or system will be a good fit are questions that you and your decision-making colleagues will not be capable of accurately answering if you fail to consult with the actual potential users. Are the users dissatisfied with the current situation? Even if they are satisfied, do they welcome the proposed change? Do they have suggestions

about how well the current system is – or is not – performing? Do they have opinions or information about what changes are needed?

If you are not already aware of these insights, gather them now. The effective use of whatever is procured will be, as the advertisement says, priceless.

These must be one-on-one, not group, conversations. You do not want anyone to remain silent. You want each person's opinion to get attention. Thank each person for taking the time out of his or her busy day to have this conversation. Ask open-ended questions – not yes-or-no questions. Ask something simple, such as “What do you think about if we get some new [insert here]?” Then, with each relevant person listen for five minutes. Do not speak unless the person is giving a cursory response. Listen.

Categorize the responses. It will help to figure the concerns expressed and what are unique, but significant, points raised.

Returning to our pretend scenario: The staff who answer the phones have mixed opinions. There is valuable information gleaned from riders and potential riders, but it is sporadic and unpredictable when such information is obtained. They are of differing opinions about whether it is their role to make people who call in feel less isolated. As for the technology, though they are of mixed minds about whether to purchase anything new, there is consensus about which system

would be best.

In our pretend IVR scenario, there are three main concerns articulated. You make a simple, handwritten table with check marks and phrases that pop out to you. The concerns are:

- Reduction in perceived quality of service?
- Potential riders hanging up and receiving no assistance?
- Less opportunity to collect data and anecdotes?

You might do well to circle back to your technology users and ask them about whether and which options under consideration will meet their needs and be easiest to use. This is not a waste of time. If your users of the technology are happy and productive, your job will be much more pleasant and those above you – whether supervisors or a board – will be happier as well.

**6. What will success look like? To whom? Who is relevant: funders, partners, drivers, riders, social workers, call center staff, whoever?**

Your view of success envisions happy staff, satisfied users, and superiors who have not been bothered with the fallout from a bad decision. Your questions are: What do you want? What does your staff – or other relevant parties – want? What do your superiors





want? What is the ultimate aim of your agency or organization and does this purchase of technology fit into it?

Let's suppose these parties all want different things. The callers want a voice on the phone and quick information. You want to spend less while not sacrificing current quality and ridership numbers. Some of your superiors/funders/leaders are focused on financial savings, while others are more concerned about service quality. A couple of your funders want to see more people well-served. In actuality, they all want everything,

meaning excellent service without spending too much.

Your drivers, whom you perhaps did not see as users of an IVR system, want riders on time when the vehicle arrives. A rider who feels disrespected might take out that emotion on the one person he or she interacts with most: the driver. And riders who are no-shows, late or unpleasant are not good for anyone's bottom line. Remember that the ultimate goal of your organization is to help seniors and people with disabilities.

Take some time to figure out if you must please everyone here, considering that conflicting goals can be a nightmare. What is the real objective that must be achieved?

Playing pretend again, pick an ultimate objective and use that to answer the next question.

### **7. Determine performance measures**

You have gone halfway with the answer to question #6. Make sure you the information you need is available. If not, figure out a reasonable proxy for success.

Let's pretend as your ultimate objective for IVR, you chose saving staff time. Your bottom line in dollars could be your performance measure if you do not need as much staff. Or you can measure what additional tasks can be accomplished assuming a particular amount of time saved. What if caller satisfaction is your goal? Your performance measure could be responses to a survey or it could be thank yous you receive.

### **8. Are there any reasons – besides money – to make a different decision?**

Yes. The information gleaned from even simple calls serves purposes beyond helping people to arrange rides. The calls provide information on rider satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The calls give isolated riders and potential riders a caring person to speak with. Staff provide assistance to callers beyond transportation. Although some money

would be saved, it is questionable whether riders and potential riders would be well served with IVR.

Answering this question is critical because it gives you and/or colleagues an opportunity to circle back and play devil's advocate. This is the time to consider conflicting goals and whether a particular technology fits into the broad scope of your work. You want to be asking yourself and your colleagues, perhaps even your technology users and customers, this question before you plunk down a significant sum of money.

### **9. Obtain reviews of the product and any individualized work of the vendor or consultant.**

If you buy a dress, a TV, or a gadget for the garage or the kitchen, you look at the product reviews. Seek out reviews even if the tech product will be customized for your agency or system. Someone else has likely procured something similar. Seek reviews that are unbiased, that are from real users who are not paid or expected to generate good reviews.

Request contact information of customers of the vendor or consultant you are considering from state or national associations. Its best to call those contacts. Remember that the cost of a bad decision is higher than the cost of some of your time (or a staff member's time) to find out what happens after you sign on the dotted line.

Not every firm is good after you sign the contract. Figure out what support you will need during implementation and make sure that previous customers have received the kind of service you are seeking.

In our pretend scenario, let's assume reviews of the product or servicing after purchase are mixed. Discuss what would be important to you and your team. What is not so important?

### **10. Is it possible to test the new technology – before a major purchase – with actual users?**

Ask potential vendors and any consultant if it is possible test the new technology – before a major purchase – with actual users? You never know unless you ask. If testing is impossible, pay closer to the reviews you have gathered.

### **11. Is there a problem that needs to be solved in the first place?**

Let's be honest. We all get enticed by thoughts of the latest software, apps, and shiny devices. Perhaps you even say to yourself something like, "everyone is getting those."

Back to the scenario: You are decently-funded, your employees are satisfied, your callers like an actual person on the line, and the drivers do not want to rock their currently-balanced boat. Maybe you don't even have a problem.

### **12. What are unintended consequences of making a change?**

You don't have a crystal ball, but you have a friend or a colleague who is not involved in the decision – meaning a person or persons without skin in the game. In whatever way works for you and your team, make sure this question is asked and ask it of someone who is uninvolved, someone with a fresh perspective. Have your inner circle also reach out to do this.

Perhaps no one wants to paint a less-than-rosy picture for you, especially if you are the boss. Find someone who will be brutally honest.

Consider realistic, significant potential problems that anyone has raised.

### **Play Some More**

If you feel it's fruitful, do some more pretend with likely technology decisions that are on the horizon, but not under current consideration. This is a non-threatening exercise to use, and a way to adjust the checklist before you, your colleagues, perhaps your superiors, and definitely your user group figure out the next technology purchasing challenge.

Better to figure out your process before the pressure is on.

### Stuff You'll Want to Read

Adjust the checklist process in this article or select one that will work better for you. Here are two well-written resources with valuable information:

[National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) (NADTC)

NADTC is featuring an ongoing [blog post series](#) about how to approach and make good technology decisions.

[TCRP Report 84: Improving Public Transportation Technology Implementations and Anticipating Emerging Technologies](#) (2008)

The section entitled Specific Best Practices for Overcoming Obstacles and Maximizing Benefits (Section 2.2.3, p. 43-55) sets forth best practices for institutionalizing an effective decision-making process for technology-related decisions. The first five pages are useful for any size entity, with much of the rest more applicable to larger organizations. Though the report is from 2008, the processes and considerations in the recommended section are timeless.

[Wonderful article about checklists](#) for medical care that explains the effectiveness of checklists in different situations.

*Sheryl Gross-Glaser is a Coordination Specialist with CTAA and the National Center for Mobility Management. She can be reached at [grossglaser@ctaa.org](mailto:grossglaser@ctaa.org) or 202.386.1669. CT*

## Frustrated by Tech?



## CTAA Can Help

Are the myriad options for transit software and technology products and services becoming overwhelming? CTAA's Communications and Technology Consulting can help you assess your needs and priorities and narrow your choices, all with a trained eye from decades of experience working with community and public transportation providers like you.

Contact CTAA's Rich Sampson at [sampson@ctaa.org](mailto:sampson@ctaa.org) or 202.415.966 for more



# How to Access CTAA's Partnership with Toyota

By Bob Carlson

As part of CTAA's commitment to providing the highest level of benefit to our members, we have become a Fleet Dealer for Toyota vehicles, which are commonly used for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT), specialized demand-response services and vanpools. The Sienna minivan and Prius sedan are two vehicles which provide both the passenger-carrying level needed by providers and high-fuel efficiency to help keep operational costs low. In addition to the ability of the Sienna to transport seven passengers in its standard three-row seating configuration, it can also be modified to transport one wheelchair and four ambulatory passengers or for two wheelchair and one ambulatory passengers.

The CTAA Fleet pricing is among the lowest prices available from Toyota. Based on the CTAA Spec Sheets, Siennas are available for \$32,000 and Priuses are priced at \$29,000. Liberal terms of financing are available to qualified purchasers. These prices are available only to CTAA members on vehicles which are titled to transportation providers and who will use them in revenue service or in conjunction with administrative activities.

In order to initiate a purchase, a member

or prospective member must contact the Fleet Officer (*the author, at [carlson@ctaa.org](mailto:carlson@ctaa.org) or 202.415.9661 – ed*) to verify membership in good standing status, as well as the registered name of the member. Once that is accomplished, the member will be placed in contact with our dealership representative to negotiate all the required steps of purchase, including credit applications if the member is not paying cash. Qualified members can get low-interest loans with terms as long as 72 months.

Although the CTAA Fleet Dealer representative is located in New York state, all vehicles will be delivered through local Toyota dealers near the member. CTAA is working with the FTA to secure a Waiver of the Buy America requirements on Sienna minivans.

Modifications for wheelchair accommodation will be completed prior to delivery and can be financed as part of the overall purchase at a cost over and above those cited in the CTAA Spec Sheet.

*Bob Carlson is CTAA's Fleet Officer for the Toyota partnership. For any additional information on the partnership, he can be reached at [carlson@ctaa.org](mailto:carlson@ctaa.org) or 202.415.9661. CT*

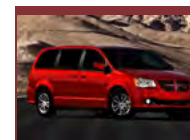


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Toyota 2014 general passenger Siennas: without ramps new in warehouse, perfect for any use not requiring ramps or lifts.

**\$22,700**

# How to Transform Your Communications – Using Just One Hour a Week

By Scott Bogren



Having visited hundreds of transit systems in my more than two decades working with CTAA, I have seen — on countless occasions — the potential impact of improved communications. That said, I also fully understand the limitations of the 24-hour day on many a community and public transportation manager. You just can't do it all.

That's why, several years ago, I crafted a one-hour-a-week approach to improving communications for any size or type of transit agency. The idea was to tackle improved communications in manageable, bit-size portions, as well as to help reluctant and busy

transit leaders to give it a whirl. Since, I've delivered a full-blown training session on the one-hour-a-week communications plan in numerous states across the country, as well as at the [Community Transportation EXPO](#). Each time, I've had some takers in the audience who let me know, some months later, how this simple exercise made a significant impact at their agency.

Here's how it works:

First and foremost, you'll need to fully commit to reserving one hour each week (say, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. every Thursday) to develop and then follow through on improved communications. Setting aside these 60 minutes is an absolute must for the plan to work, so be serious about doing so if you're committed to this concept. That means no calls or meetings, other than those focusing on communications.

Use the first several of these hours to select an appropriate communications goal or objective. The goal should coincide or reinforce one of your agency's over-arching goals. For example, perhaps building new partnerships and potential local funders is an organizational goal; or maybe converting winning



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support from local/state/federal elected officials; or maybe you're planning a local ballot initiative to support your operation. The goal of the hour a week communications project is to actively and directly support overall organizational goals.

So, after you've spent the first few hours properly picking the communications objective and lining it up with organizational goals, it's time to get started. First up is selecting the targets for the communications effort. Be specific — with whom will you communicate to get the desired result. It's best to develop a list of potential targets and


prioritize them afterwards, selecting the audience that you believe will provide the most return on investment.

Next, begin to list all of the ways in which you might communicate with that individual/organization around the stated objective. Again, it's important to be specific here because you'll want to end-up with a long list of potential communications methods. You should consider concepts as simple and relatively easy as a phone call, and as detailed and time-consuming as developing a full-blown campaign. Think about the resources and staff time that might be needed along with each communications method, because that does make a difference. After several one-hour sessions, you should emerge with a list of prioritized targets and methods, each attached to specific goals that meet overall organizational objectives. Now, match them up — targets and methods — and your plan is being developed.

Be careful not to overcommit. The point of the one-hour-a-week communications plan is to take manageable steps, not mammoth ones. If it seems undoable, or even unlikely, it probably is. Dedicate yourself to the plan you've developed. Spend two months (in one-hour-a-week increments!) working the plan you've developed. It takes time, and sometimes messaging takes awhile to sink in with the intended target. Don't expect immediate results — though often you'll realize them.

Now that you've developed and worked the communications plan, it's time to evaluate. This is critical: you must take a few of the hours to critically evaluate what you did. What worked? What didn't? What can be used to fulfill other communications goals? What new targets did you discover (this often happens)? Which colleagues did you learn have communications aptitude?

After taking an hour or two to evaluate, it's time to set a



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**CTAA'S**  
**COMMUNICATIONS**  
**CORPS**



new goal and run the process all over once again. That's the idea behind the one-hour-a-week communications plan — it's meant to always be evolving and adapting to the organization's needs.

We can help. CTAA offers Communications Consulting to its members at steeply discounted rates (see promo on previous page). We can assist with setting objectives or selecting targets, we can help test your strategies and evaluate their effectiveness. Just get in touch with CTAA's Communications Manager Rich Sampson ([sampson@ctaa.org](mailto:sampson@ctaa.org); phone: 202.415.9666).

Communications is a key part of any transit manager's job — even when it's not expressly detailed in a job description. Community and public transit agencies that are thriving, uniformly, are those with strategic and effective communications programs. I see this everywhere I travel and at virtually every system I visit.

*Scott Bogren is CTAA's Executive Director. He can be reached at [bogren@ctaa.org](mailto:bogren@ctaa.org) or by phone at 202.247.1921. CT*



# How to Recruit & Retain Drivers

By Caryn Souza

Attracting employees – from top executives to front-line staff such as drivers and dispatchers – first requires articulating specific goals for the organization, using a clear concise statement. These concepts are crucial to ensuring those responding to openings understand the organization's mission and see their role in making it happen. A potential mission statement that is likely to attract people-first employees could read as follows:

We recognize that mobility is a fundamental right for our citizens and an essential need for our community to maintain a high quality of life.

We, at ABC Transit, therefore, dedicate ourselves to provide safe and customer-friendly service in a manner consistent with our stewardship of the communities trust and resources.

## Applying Values to Work

Values define what is expected from all employees (labor and management) and how they are to perform and behave at work.

Therefore, anytime an employee is hired or disciplined, a discussion takes place about



your organizations values, such as:

- Report to work on time and fit for duty
- Practice safety in all work activities
- Demonstrate high levels of skill in your jobs
- Respect the property of the company and co-workers
- Treat co-workers with dignity and respect
- Present a positive image of the company when performing job duties

## How to Hire the Right People

- What works for you?
- Are you meeting your hiring goals?
- What positions remain open the longest?
- What positions have the highest turn-over?

- Hire for Attitude, you can always train the skills

## Recruitment Methods

- Help wanted ads
- School employment services
- Employee referrals
- State employee agencies
- Current customers
- Bus ads (inside/outside vehicle)
- Public Service announcements (PSA's)
- Job Fairs (internal, external)
- Internet-based venues (your own website, state association, CTAA)
  - Give your website a human face by profiling on a first name basis your stars. Have your staff featured to tell why they are proud, find it fun, are challenged. Feature a diverse mix of employees: age, background, men and women
- High School/train people not going to college
- Retirees
- Chamber of Commerce
- Welfare to Work, Share workers

What situational questions would you ask a driver candidate that incorporates what you have defined as required attitude, skills that ties in with your organizations mission and values?

### Finding, Hiring, and Keeping the Right People is Critical for any Organization

#### Driver

#### Attitude:

- Compassionate, patient
- Sunny disposition, punctual – on time
- Dependable, helpful
- Problem solving
- Flexibility

#### Mission

#### Skills:

- Pleasant under pressure
- Positive Attitude
- Speak well/Listen
- Multi-task/organization
- Deal with escalating tension

### Selection Guidelines & Hiring Decisions

- Review goals and objectives
- Review applicants reaction to key questions (sticky notes on application)
- Review why candidate left previous employer?
- Reference checks
- Access applicants potential  
Attitude, teamwork, mission
- Applicable DOT/FTA requirements
- Pre-employment requirements **CT**

**MEMBER PROFILE**

**Jackson County Civic Action Committee (JCCAC)**  
**Moss Point, Miss.**

Learn more about your colleagues and peers in the community and public transportation industry

**Rose Joe-Stephens, CCTM**  
**Director of Community Services**

*JCCAC – located in Moss Point in Southeastern Mississippi, just north of Pascagoula – first joined CTAA in 2004.*

#### **DigitalCT: Tell us some basics about your system:**

**Joe-Stephens:** Jackson County Civic Action Committee (JCCAC) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt Community Action Agency located in Moss Point, Miss. The agency was incorporated on August 31, 1965. We provide services beginning with Early Childhood/Head Start through Senior Programs. Jackson County is located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the southeastern corner of Mississippi. Jackson County has four municipalities – Pascagoula, Gautier, Moss Point and Ocean Springs –

with a population of 140,450 (2013 census). We provide comprehensive services and assistance throughout Jackson County. Our mission is to serve culturally-diverse communities by providing quality services that focus on Human Development and Self-sufficiency.

#### **DigitalCT: What type of people ride your system and where are they going?**

**Joe-Stephens:** We administer programs through multiple funding streams. One of the programs is Aging Services. The senior program is available to individuals sixty years of age and older and are upwardly mobile and independent. Some of the services conducted daily through the Senior Center are crafts, games, education series (money management;



nutrition, exercise, health and safety), congregate meals that provide one third of the average daily allowance of nutrients, information and referral to services not provided through our program and transportation services.

Our transportation program is a Section 5310 - Specialized Transportation Program to improve accessibility and mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities. Transportation services assist the consumer in maintaining their independence as long as possible by promoting access to available services in the community. It also helps to delay premature institutionalization through the provision of travel to obtain needed services or goods. Our goal is to provide safe, reliable and affordable transportation to residents of Jackson County.

JCCAC provides transportation services Monday through Friday throughout Jackson County. The current fleet consists of six buses with 17-25 passenger capacity and one 6 passenger van. All our vehicles are accessible. Clients receive door-to-door service. They are transported to medical appointments, social/recreational outings, personal trips, business and employment.

### DigitalCT: What's something innovative about your system?

**Joe-Stephens:** Hiring bus drivers with the required certification(s) is a major challenge across this nation. We are no different. We have explored many avenues to meet our needs. Our thought process led us to de-

velop interagency partnerships utilizing drivers employed with Head Start, After School and Summer Camp. Oftentimes these drivers experience down time. Once they have transported the children they are available to provide transportation assistance with Aging/Transportation services.

Additionally, to meet transportation needs, other staff members (Senior Center Manager and Nutrition Aide) transport clients. You do not have to be a dedicated Senior Citizen Bus Driver to assist in meeting transportation needs.

In an effort to educate the community on assistance and services and remain relevant, we participate as board/committee members, work with advocacy groups, develop partnerships with local government (city and county), as well as other organizations where we can blend resources to enhance and advance services.

We are also a member of a Regional Coordinated Transportation Group with fourteen other counties under the Planning and Development District.

### DigitalCT: What challenges are you facing?

**Joe-Stephens:**

- Small transit programs are challenged in upgrading operations that would incorporate the use of technology in scheduling, creating routes, tracking and reporting.

- Expanding program services with limited/stagnant funding

### DigitalCT: How can CTAA better help systems like yours?

**Joe-Stephens:**

- Continue to provide opportunities for training, accreditation and certifications
- Continue to provide venues for networking with transportation providers nationwide
- Continue to provide opportunities to visit transit facilities (up close and personal) to identify with operations
- Consider a session at CTAA that would specifically utilize Certified Community Transit Managers (CCTM). The session could focus on the experiences of the CCTM in their community or state. It would be interesting to know how this certification has benefited the individual, their employer, their community and transit across America. **CT**



**Jackson County Civic Action Committee**

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*Community Transportation Magazine* is the voice of the Community Transportation Association, a national association dedicated to making mobility alternatives available to all Americans. The Association's Board of Directors provides national leadership and direction for the Association. The Board relies on the special expertise of its State and Tribal Delegate Council to assist in their important efforts.

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- New Certified Safety and Security Manager (CSSM) Training
- Access to the Insurance Store at CTAA
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Become a member of the Community Transportation Association today by contacting our Membership Director, Caryn Souza, at 202.294.6527 or [souza@ctaa.org](mailto:souza@ctaa.org), or visit [www.ctaa.org/join](http://www.ctaa.org/join).

**Community  
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