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Afraid of safety and security planning?

Don't be. FTA reaches out to rural systems with guidelines to make the process easier.

by Pat Weaver

Safety and security—it's on every transit manager's mind in one way or another. From safe driving practices for your driver to a flooded facility or one heavily damaged by a tornado; to vandalized vehicles to a failed computer system with all your payroll files—we all care about safety and security. And when you really start to look at it, you'd be

hard pressed to find any part of your operations that does not have safety and security component. But, just how do we create a plan that addresses the risks and vulnerabilities of your agency and community; a plan that is thorough, yet reasonable to develop; and one that doesn't require a team of consultants to put in place and to keep in place?

A small transit agency with a director or manager who wears multiple hats, and with no one whose

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Ensuring your agency's continued success

by Tom Worker-Braddock

Planning for staff turnover, even in small agencies, is essential for long-term success.

What would happen if you or another key manager in your agency were to suddenly move to another organization, retire, or need to leave suddenly due to illness or family obligations? A long-time director or manager who leaves a smaller organization is

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Safety & security planning,

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job is devoted solely to safety and security program development, has a particularly difficult time striking a reasonable and prudent approach to

FTA's safety and security guidelines were tested around the country—including right here in Kansas, in Reno County.

emergency planning. The Federal Transit Administration and a working group selected by FTA's Office of Safety are working to develop a solution for you—the FTA Transit Bus Safety and Security Program.

What's included in the FTA voluntary transit bus safety and security program?

There are many resources available to address safety and security for transit agencies. Some have even been developed to target smaller agencies—most recently the Hazard and Security Program (HASP) developed from a project funded by the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), the *Threat, Vulnerability & Emergency Preparedness Toolbox* developed by the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP), and the *Transit Bus Safety Resource Guide*, an online resource maintained by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) in Florida. Still,

Resources:

Hazard and Security Plan Instructor's Guide. Transit Cooperative Research Program. http://www.trb.org/news/blurp_detail.asp?id=5733

Threat and Vulnerability Toolbox. National Rural Transit Assistance Program, 2007. <http://www.nationalrtap.org/vulnerability.asp>.

Transit Bus Safety Resource Guide. Center for Urban Transportation Research. <http://www.cutr.usf.edu/bussafety/>

even with all these resources, it's still difficult for small rural transit agencies to have the time to put all the pieces together in a written form, practice and update routinely.

Safety and security guidelines released by FTA last year were recognized as not adequately addressing the needs of smaller agencies nor did they provide for reasonable implementation. With the help of a national Working Group, a new FTA Program Manager, and a consultant team dedicated to finding solutions for rural agencies, we're now in a new phase of development and technical assistance.

Team visits Reno County to test checklist on rural agencies

To insure that the safety and security guidelines meet the needs of rural agencies, a consulting team commissioned by the FTA is visiting ten different agencies of varying sizes around the country to go through a comprehensive safety and security checklist and ask feedback on the process. Lisa Loeb, executive director of Reno County Area Transportation, hosted Ream Lazaro on the consultant team and Carole Ferguson, FTA's Transit Bus Safety and Security Program Manager, in Hutchinson on June 13. Ream and Carole spent the day meeting and interviewing RCAT

and other county staff and completing a safety and security plan checklist. The team will provide a written report back to RCAT and will use their experience with the process to modify their guidelines for how information is collected and compiled into a plan.

What's included on the safety and security checklist?

The short answer is—nearly every aspect of a rural transit operation includes a safety and security component: vehicle procurement, insurance, maintenance planning and procedures, human resources, reporting, emergency procedures. There are no 30 minute solutions to a good safety and security process—it's integrated into every part of your day-to-day activities. From hiring, training and firing drivers; to buying, fueling and maintaining your vehicles; developing riders' guides and personnel policies—there's a safety and security component in each one of those

There are no 30 minute solutions to a good safety and security process—it's integrated into every part of your day-to-day activities.

activities. Your job is to think of safety and security every day, and consider what you can do today and tomorrow that will make your passengers, your staff and your community safer. Some of the resources that are available now and that are being developed by the FTA Safety and Security Working Group hopefully will make that job easier for you.

For more information about the Working Group, visit the FTA web site at <http://transitsafety.volpe.dot.gov/Safety/BusTasks/html/ProgramStrategies.asp>. ▲

Succession planning,

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especially hard on an agency. Because these people most likely often wear several hats, one person leaving can essentially create several vacant positions. As the baby boomers near retirement, concerns about leadership drains are likely to get worse. *Metro Magazine's* Sept/Oct 2006 General Manager Survey found that the average age of a transit general manager is 51.3 years, with 38% of the survey respondents being 56 or older.

How can your agency protect itself against losing all that experience and institutional knowledge? Current employees and the board of directors will need advanced preparation and training to smoothly fill a vacated manager position. This training needs to be in addition to the core competency and technical training of running systems and processes for their current positions. Advance preparation should concentrate on "soft" skills, i.e., those that improve employees' ability to exercise sound judgment, motivate and direct other employees, and acquire a perspective larger than their current role within the organization. These skills aren't easily delivered via simple training or technical courses, but can be developed by taking a systematic approach over time.

Succession planning: Creating a leadership pipeline within the agency

The process of systematically developing and maintaining a leadership pipeline in your agency is called succession planning. This does not necessarily mean that current employees are promised to be slotted into the executive's seat, nor that outside talent cannot be brought in to fill a director's seat. Rather, succession

planning means that employees are cross-trained not only in horizontal-level positions, but also in positions above them. Cross-training allows the option for a current employee to either be officially promoted up to an executive level position, or to serve as an acting executive while the board of directors advertises and interviews for the replacement.

This additional training gives the board of directors' peace of mind about the direction of the organization, and also builds up the strength of the organization itself. It allows employees to build professional equity and assume greater responsibility while fostering in them a larger perspective of the organization rather than just their job roles.

Some organizations are concerned about the impression given of having a succession plan in place. This is a valid concern. Insecurity can stem from people mistaking that creating a succession plan means the long-time director or manager will soon leave, even when it's not the case. Insecurity about a succession plan can also arise when people see their positions specifically mentioned, or not mentioned, in the plan. Rural transit agencies often are very small, and higher-level positions that allow employee promotion within the agency may not open up often. In this case, where the possibility for a promotion may not occur for many years, employees could see the succession plan as an opportunity to gain management and additional skills that will help them move to similar jobs elsewhere.

Implementing a succession plan requires sufficient communication among the board of directors, the executive director, staff, strategic partners, clients and donors, to minimize feelings of insecurity that might arise among any of the above stakeholders. It helps to emphasize a

key benefit of succession planning: It puts the agency on firmer footing and creates confidence that the organization will continue if the current leader should leave the organization.

Elements of good succession planning

What is important for effective succession planning? Participation by senior leadership—both the board of the directors and agency management—is important so that staff can see that the succession plan is not just rhetoric, but a concrete plan to help them develop their careers. It much touch everyone in the agency. At a large agency, succession planning needs to extend across departments to create a succession plan for the entire agency, as well as individual departments. The executive director and other leaders of the organization need to hold themselves accountable for growing leaders while employees need to be committed to their own self-development.

Succession planning works best when linked to strategic planning and investment in the future; rather than grouped with regular technical or competency training. In good succession plans, leadership competencies are identified and used for employee selection and development, while talent in employees is identified early and developed for long-term needs.

Succession planning shouldn't be seen as a one-time event, but rather an on-going process that constantly keeps an organization ready for change, while consistently keeping employee and executive talents aligned with the agency's needs.

The follow succession planning steps are taken from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management at www.opm.gov.

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Succession planning,

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Step 1: Link strategic and workforce planning decisions. This step examines the agency's long-term vision and direction, and then links that vision with a succession plan. For a rural transit agency, this involves looking at population trends for their region to determine the future level of need for their service, along with vision of what their organization will

zation plan based on long-term needs of the organization, not merely replacing current positions.

Step 3: Identify talent pools. During this step analyze the talent available to the agency. Examine the candidate pools versus the need to develop positions. Recognize employees with critical talents from all levels of the organizations; both the whiz-kid administrative assistant who handles the Web site, to the assistant director

Recognize employees with critical talents from all levels of the organizations; both the whiz-kid administrative assistant who handles the Web site, to the assistant director who knows grant-writing inside and out.

look like and do in the future. The agency should examine what type of skills employees will need to meet the future service goals and vision of the organization, and then connect the succession planning process to this vision and the needs and interests of the agency's leaders.

Step 2: Analyze gaps. Step 2 looks at the gaps between the existing talent and what talent is needed to achieve the agency's vision. During this step identify core and technical competency requirements ("Will we need to increase, or decrease, our federal reporting?," "Are our clients expecting a more accessible Web page?"). Look at the current supply and anticipated demand of competent people within the agency, and then look at the kinds of talent needed for the long run. At this stage identify continuity issues such as preparing the organization for any major changes, identifying leaders who will be transitioning into retirement or new positions, and developing an organi-

who knows grant-writing inside and out. Along with identifying the critical and talented employees, assess the competency and skill levels of your agency work force as a whole. What elements and tasks does the agency do well? Where does the agency need to improve? Finally, look at ways to bring in outside talent; where to post jobs, how to network with potential applicants, and identify specific people outside the organization that would presently, or in the future, benefit the agency.

Step 4: Develop succession strategies. Once the current talent pool has been identified along with the current and future organizational goals, look at your recruitment and retention strategies. Recruitment programs can include developing an internship or shadowing program with a community college—and participating in career fairs for recruiting potential employees. Retaining current employees can include quality of life issues, such as flexible work hours,

ability for employees to telecommute, and having an office located jointly with childcare facilities.

Finally, identify development and learning strategies for your employees to gain the leadership skills needed for different positions. This can include: job assignments, on-the-job coaching and mentoring, higher level meetings with other agencies, training sessions, being a conference leader, or self study. Any of these activities will help employees learn the skills that are hard to learn from classroom session, and allow employees to gain broad perspectives about the organization, exercise judgment, learn how to collaborate with other agencies and organizations, and motivate and lead team members. Not all of these activities may be suitable for small rural agencies with a small staff, but these small agencies will benefit from fostering wider perspectives in their employees.

Small non-profit agencies tend to be run on the ideas, experience, memories and energy of a small group of leaders rather than written policies or procedures. Succession planning is a good opportunity to put this valuable information to paper. At minimum, this succession strategy has two important products: 1) An emergency succession plan that outlines which steps the agency will take after the sudden departure of the executive director such as a death or sudden illness. This plan details, among other things, who will communicate with clients and other agencies, and secure important documents and contact information; and 2) a planned succession policy. This policy should detail the transition from one executive director to another including, among other things, how much notice the leaving director must give, if and how the departing director will help in the search for

the new director, and how much training the departing director will train the incoming director, including if there will be an overlap period.

Additionally, the succession plan should have a written policy linked to human resource processes that prepare and develop employees on an ongoing basis to accept more leadership positions.

Step 5: Implement succession strategies. After the succession strategy is developed, establish measures of success so the agency can determine how effective the succession plan is after it has been implemented. These measures of success might include: Deadlines and dates for succession plans to be written. Is there a written schedule for cross-training current employees? Are there written policies detailing what steps the board needs to take after a leader departs? Does the board of directors know when senior leaders plan to retire? Are all of these components written as part of an overall succession plan? Are senior managers aware that they are responsible for cultivating new leaders? Does human resource follow the succession plan when making hiring decisions?

Now comes the actual implementation. Apply the recruitment and retention programs; implement the development and learning strategies. The agency should link succession planning to the human resource process such as performance management, compensation, recognition, recruitment and retention, and workforce planning. Finally, employ strategies for maintaining senior level commitment.

Step 6: Monitor and evaluate. After the succession plan is implemented, the agency should go back to the measures of success created in Step 5

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FTA drug and alcohol grantee audits: Will you be ready?

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by Jacob Bustad
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The FTA Office of Safety and Security periodically conducts audits of all grantee agencies to assess compliance with drug and alcohol regulations. These audits are comprehensive, including a review of the agency’s policies, procedures and recordkeeping. The FTA is currently conducting these audits throughout the Midwest. If an agency is selected, they will be notified approximately 60 days in advance of the actual audit by FTA.

Sample questions help prepare for on-site audit

In the event that an agency is selected, the FTA provides sample questions that resemble what the auditors will be asking during the audit. Agencies are typically asked many of the questions under the “Program Manager” category, so this makes the sample questions for this category an

excellent resource for preparing for the audit, according to Patty Tolin, Vice President of DATE Services at TMHC Services, Inc. —third-party administrator for the Kansas Rural Transit Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.

If corrective action is needed...

After the audit is complete, the audit team conducts an exit interview and provides a letter and final report documenting any deficiencies and/or corrective actions. The grantee has 90 days to take corrective action and provide documentation of these changes to the audit team. The FTA Office of Safety and Security issues a closeout letter to the grantee once full compliance is reached. The

Sample audit questions are accessible online at http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/safety/datesting/audit/questions/HTML/2-DAPM_Questionnaire.asp, or through the Kansas RTAP site at www.ksrtap.kutc.ku.edu. Check under “What’s New” in the right column.

grantee should keep all correspondence relating to the audit on file, and this information will be reviewed during the FTA Triennial Review.

If you have additional questions, contact Patty Tolin at (888) 842-0348 or ptolin@tmhcservices.com. If you would like to order a print copy of the sample audit questions, see page 15 of this newsletter. ▲



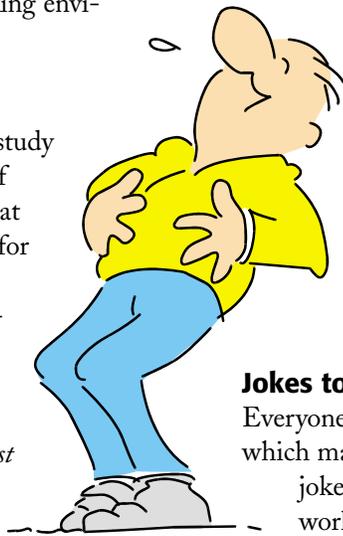
Joking around on the job

by Kelly Heavey

Jokes are supposed to be followed by waves of laughter. But people are becoming more aware of the fine line between funny jokes and insulting offenses. In a transit service job, you are around people of backgrounds and lifestyles different from your own. Becoming aware of (and tolerant of) those differences is the first step in keeping an appropriate sense of humor—a key for a healthy and enjoyable working environment.

Why laugh?

A recent scientific study by the University of Maryland found that laughter is healthy for you—it increases blood flow by causing expansion in the tissue that lines blood vessels. The *Washington Post* reported that howling laughter has even been found to reduce food cravings. And an exercise trend with 1,000 certified leaders nationwide is “laughtercising,” a 10-minute period of laughing hysterically in the middle of



a cardio workout or yoga. [Makes you laugh just to think about it!]

In an office environment, a good chuckle between coworkers can relieve stress, strengthen bonds and spark enough energy to get through the workday. A touch of humor can make transit trips more enjoyable for your riders, as well.

Jokes to avoid

Everyone takes offense to something, which makes joking around tricky. A joke can be offensive to your coworkers and riders, even if they aren't the brunt of the joke. If you have to think twice, then it's wise to stop yourself from telling the joke. To play it safe, avoid any joke that involves race, gender, sexual orientation, politics and religion. Period.

Wanting some good material while you're at work? Here are a few clean joke sites for you to choose from.

Don't worry about offending anyone on this site; only clean jokes are posted by the administrators. Most are in paragraph form and tell stories. <http://www.cleanjokes4u.com/>

A range of jokes, comics, audio and more are available here. Check out the car bumper link for a list of funny bumper stickers. <http://www.ahajokes.com/>

These jokes are not only clean, organized and funny, but they're also rated on a 10-point scale by other readers. <http://www.cleanjoke.com/>

Humor me!

Although the “off limits” list covers a lot of ground, there are certainly topics you can joke about. Les McGehee with Humor University, a company specializing in office humor, suggests

Tell jokes that will make people laugh, not cringe.

a few safe topics for humor in the office. She suggests joking about an embarrassing experience, relatives, growing up or something funny on the job.

You might get a few laughs by posting a “Joke of the Day” on your bus. Consider making it transportation-related. In the office, you could forward funny or odd news stories to your co-workers. And if nothing else, you can always make a humbling joke about yourself.

While people should eliminate offensive humor from their workdays, laughter shouldn't be wiped out of a job entirely. Possessing a solid awareness of what you say and how it affects others doesn't mean you can't ever crack a joke. Consider the impact of your words and tell jokes

Sources:

Humor University: http://www.humoru.com/articles/art_smileawhile.html

Laughtercising Blog: <http://www.cscout.com/blog/2007/02/17/trend-laughtercising.html>

Transportation Jokes: <http://www.olivekids.com/tptjokes.html>

Clean Jokes 4 You: <http://www.cleanjokes4u.com/>

Aha Jokes: <http://www.ahajokes.com>

Clean Joke: <http://www.cleanjoke.com>

that will make people laugh, not cringe. A transit agency is more appealing to riders if the workers enjoy their jobs, and ample enjoyment comes “joking around” now and then. See below for some silly puns with transportation as a theme. These are from www.olivekids.com

Transportation puns

Q. What did the jack say to the car?
A. “Can I give you a lift?”

Q. Who drives away all of his customers?
A. A taxicab driver!

Q. When driving through fog, what should you use?
A. Your car!

Q. Which snakes are found on cars?
A. Windscreen vipers!

Q. What do you call a laughing motorcycle?
A. A Yamahahaha!

Q. What has one horn and gives milk?
A. A milk truck!

Q. What did the first stoplight say to the second stoplight?
A. Don’t look; I’m changing!

Q. What part of a car is the laziest?
A. The wheels. They are always tired!

Q. What driver doesn’t have a license?
A. A screw driver!

Q. What happens when a frog’s car breaks down?
A. It gets toad away!

Q. What kind of ears do trains have?
A. Engineers (engine ears)! ▲

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and compare those to the actual outcomes. Using these measures of success, is the succession plan effective?

After the succession plan has been started, managers need to keep track of how well those promising employees with critical talent are developing their own leadership skills. Senior managers should be receptive to feedback from the entire agency on the per-

formance of employees who have been given leadership tasks or roles as part of their training. Did the preparatory training they received allow

them to move smoothly into different positions, or does the succession training need to be revised?

Senior managers will also need to look at the succession planning process as part of a broader perspective. Is the succession planning process preparing the organization for to meet its future goals? Is succession planning helping the agency respond to changes in the population

of the area and changes in state or federal policies and regulations? If not, the agency needs to return to the succession plan and examine where the plan needs to change.

Conclusion

Right now, do you know what would happen to your agency if the senior leader or a department head had to

A succession plan details, among other things, who will communicate with clients and other agencies, and secure important documents and contact information, if your manager leaves.

leave tomorrow? Does the expertise and experience of your agency pivot around a few key people? Succession planning builds up the agency’s core strength by cross-training individuals so that the expertise and experience of key staff can be shared, developed and fostered in up-and-coming employees. Succession planning creates both strong employees and a continued future for your agency. ▲

Sources:

Hall, Holly. Planning Successful Successions Preparing for a leader’s departure can prevent problems. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. <http://www.philanthropy.com/free/articles/v18/i06/06000601.htm>. Accessed 6/25/2007

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Succession Planning Process Office of Personnel Management www.opm.gov/hcaaf_resource_center/assets/Lead_tool1.pdf Accessed 6/25/2007

Project ACTION answers hairy questions

by Kelly Heavey

What would you say if someone boarded your bus with a bird perched on her shoulder? Don't jump to conclusions; it might be for mobility assistance. If you are unsure of how to handle service animals in your agency, or if you would just like more information, consider taking a look at Easter Seals Project ACTION's *Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals*. The eight-page Q&A guide is a resource for any agency that would like to know more about serving individuals assisted by animals.

Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals explains that the

A service animal is any animal trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability. This assistance is not just for blindness; it could be for balance, mobility assistance, and more.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considers a service animal to be any animal trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability. This assistance is not just for blindness; it could be for balance, mobility assistance, and more. In addition to guide dogs, this includes birds, monkeys and cats. An article in the January 2006 issue of the *Kansas Trans Reporter* entitled, "See Spot

Ride," explores this topic further.

Many topics in *Frequently asked Questions about Service Animals* cover disability policies a transportation agency must follow. For example, a driver is never allowed to ask for a service animal's certification—



because the disability of the person the animal is assisting might be difficult to discern, like epilepsy or deafness. The ADA expects every transportation employ-

ee to be trained on non-discriminatory service. If it's been awhile for some workers in your agency, *Frequently asked Questions* could help them brush up on necessary knowledge about service animals.

Sample Q&As taken from the guide

Q: "What about fear of animals or allergies?"

A: These are not valid reasons for denying service to a customer with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal. The guide suggests having a fearful passenger pay

Source:

www.projectaction.org/clearinghouse; *Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals*. Easter Seals Project Action, updated April 2007.

at the front of the bus, then enter through another door. As for allergies, have the rider stay as far away as possible from the animal on the bus to avoid direct contact. If it is a smaller vehicle, consider scheduling the animal-served individual and the fearful or allergic individual at different times.

Q. "Under what circumstances can a provider refuse to transport a service animal?"

A. The only thing that can prevent a transportation provider from [transporting] that animal with the individual is if the animal is not under control of the handler or it is being disruptive or threatening to the safety of others. The guide goes on to explain that disruptive behavior can range from an overly friendly animal to an aggressive animal. It is the handler's responsibility to control the animal, not the bus driver's.

To access Easter Seals Project ACTION's *Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals*, visit www.projectaction.org/clearinghouse. You must register to have access, and registration is free. If you don't have easy internet access and need a hard copy, see page 15.

The Easter Seals Project ACTION is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal transit administration, and is administered by Easter Seals Inc. ▲



Branding: It's all about image

by Kelly Heavey

Can you think of one thing that Starbucks, Nike, and Coca-Cola all have in common? It's certainly not coffee, running shoes or soda. But one thing they do have in common is the power to bring specific images to your mind with a word. This is the power of branding.

Branding is not exactly the most important thing on a transit agency's agenda, but it is something to ponder. What do you want people to think of when they hear your agency's name? Reliable? Friendly? Essential? Tying an image to a name is tricky, so here is a look at how branding is accomplished and what it can bring to your agency.

Why try to create a brand image for my agency?

In the business world, standing out earns recognition. That recognition leads to remembrance. And if everything goes to plan, the remembrance will help keep people coming back again and again.

A transit agency should understand basic business fundamentals. Peter Schauer with Peter Schauer

Associates in Missouri works with transportation agencies to develop unforgettable brand images, and he thinks that some agencies overlook the potential outcome of a successful campaign.

"A lot of systems run stealth programs," he says. "They don't seem to want to stand out. Either they're ashamed of what they do or they're not proud of what they do, or they haven't gotten the message [about the benefits of branding]."

The American Marketing Association defines brand image as "a mirror reflection...of the brand personality." What people think of your agency is a direct result of what you're providing with each and every point of contact with riders, and it's in your agency's best interest to be aware of that.

Even if your agency doesn't have much in the way of direct competition, it must nurture *rider* loyalty to keep people coming back—and *community* loyalty to keep your program a priority at budget time.

How to build your brand image

According to international management consulting firm McKinsey & Co., in *The Power of Brand Delivery*, creating emotional bonds with customers is the most important strategy for loyalty. McKinsey & Co. says to choose three strong attributes you want people to think of with your agency. In the marketing world these building blocks to emotional

bonds are called "brand triggers." According to McKinsey & Co., these triggers should not be general, we-provide-good-service triggers, but more specific, to make the consumer feel better cared for. For example, are your buses always on time? Do you give special discounts? These triggers are significant when developing a logo or slogan, as well.

McKinsey & Co. suggests integrating the trigger characteristics

Aim for "evolution," not "revolution," when undertaking branding.

into day-to-day functioning in the organization, including the demeanor of your drivers and dispatchers and how they greet and interact with riders. If you care for your customers, they'll in turn think positively about your company.

A brand image is more than a name or a logo. Think of it as a cohesive design pulling elements from all of the aspects of your company. A bus agency could choose specific colors for the agency, to set the stage for brochures, driver-uniforms, and the logo on the bus.

What if you want to change the image you already have?

"You can re-brand," Schauer says. "Every corporate system needs a corporate identity program," and it may be time to update it. Such a program "specifies everything about the corporation: how the phone will be answered, the size of the logo, the approved colors, even what desks to use and what you'll allow on walls."

You might even consider a new name to fit your company. Schauer

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What words come to mind when people think about your agency?
Reliable? Friendly?
Essential?



Tire maintenance = money saved

by Jacob Bustad

Transit agencies, whether rural or metro and regardless of size, all have one common goal when it comes to money: try and save as much as possible. With costs for owning and operating vehicles always increasing, managers continue to search for way to control expenses.

One way to start with what it all rides on: the tires. Proper tire maintenance is an easy way to save money, because proper inflation pressure—adjusted correctly for tire size and load—can result in longer life for the tire, increased safety, and, even better fuel economy.

The air pressure of a tire is so critical because the pressurized air—not the tire itself—carries the weight of a vehicle, absorbing shock and keeping the tire’s shape. This means air pressure also influences handling, traction, and braking.

How a tire wears down

When tires roll, they “flex.” Rubber and steel reinforcement within the tire bend; this “flexing” and the friction of the tire on the road create heat. Heat is what wears down the tire. When a tire is not properly inflated, the tire’s “footprint”—the part of the tire that makes contact with the ground—becomes irregular. Inconsistent contact with the road surface can cause increased tire wear

Excessive wear at the center of the tread indicates that the air pressure in the tire is consistently too high.

This type of wear usually indicates consistent under inflation, causing too much contact with the road by the outer treads.

Feathering—usually indicates deteriorated bushings in the front suspension, causing the wheel alignment to shift.

When an inner or outer rib wears faster than the rest of the tire, improper wheel alignment is usually the cause.

Cups or scalloped dips appearing around the edge of the tread, on one side or the other, almost always indicate worn or bent suspension parts.

Second-rib wear: A bit of this kind of wear is normal for radial tires, but excessive amounts of wear indicate the tires are too wide for the wheels.

http://www.procarcare.com

and reduced traction, performance and handling for the vehicle.

As a vehicle is driven, an under-inflated tire will flex even more, and

rolling resistance increases, as well. This is what causes increased fuel consumption.

Overinflating a tire causes excessive wear because the center of the tread will bear the majority of the vehicle’s weight. Also, this leads to a harsher ride in the vehicle, because overinflated tires do not absorb shock as well. This means debris in

Sources:

“Proper Tire Maintenance Reduces Vehicle Operating Costs,” *On the Move*, Utah LTAP Center newsletter, July 2006.

“Keep Tires In Check So You Can Keep On Truck’n!,” *Rhode Report*, Rhode Island LTAP Center newsletter, Winter 2006-2007.

Tire maintenance

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the road and potholes are an increased risk for puncture or impact damage to the tire.

Improper inflation leads to problems which in general result in tires having to be changed more often. Not only does this increase cost for replacement tires, but also the cost for tire service and vehicle downtime.

Checking tire inflation

But while tires and service may be expensive, air is cheap. And checking inflation pressures does not take much time. It takes about 20 minutes to check and adjust tire pressure

on an 18 wheel tractor-trailer. Tires should be checked when they are cold—before begin driven less than one mile. After a vehicle is driven for an extended period, the tires warm up and air pressure increases, which means the air pressure reading would be inaccurate. A “hot” tire can take up to four hours to cool down after the vehicle is parked.

Tire tips

For some general tips about tire maintenance, check below:

- Invest in a good tire pressure gauge, and keep it in your glove compartment. Beware of service station gauges that may be inaccurate with wear and tear. Make sure that you are familiar with the units on

the gauge, and that the gauge is the correct one for the vehicle (gauges differ depending on vehicle size).

- Check tires when they are cold (parked for 3 hours or more). Check tires often and immediately if a tire looks low!

- Know the proper air pressure for your tires. The pressure marked on the side of the tires is the maximum allowed, and the pressure listed in the manual is the recommended amount.

- Check for wear and tear regularly to prevent any serious damage before it is too late. Look for cuts, cracks, blisters, or signs of zippering. Feel the tires for abnormalities like feathering. (Check the diagram below for tips on how to spot different kinds of tire wear.)

- Consider the temperature. Every 10 degree difference in the temperature can mean the loss or gain of a pound of pressure. This is something to keep in mind when weather conditions change, which can directly affect both the tire performance as well as the reading on your gauge. When the outside temperature increases or decreases dramatically, such as in the spring or fall, it's wise to check your tire pressure even more frequently.

- Know that tires will lose air because rubber is a porous material through which air can travel. Also, leaks can occur through the valve caps or punctures.

- Repair leaks immediately and correctly. Patch the inside and set a plug through any rupture. Know that patches on the outside of a tire will void the warrantee. ▲

Getting a good gauge

For anyone who has ever looked at a tire, announced “Oh, it's fine” and then felt their vehicle wobbling when they picked up speed, this lesson is already learned: your eyes can be deceiving. In fact, it can be tough to spot the difference between tires that are 10 psi apart—and that can be extremely dangerous. This is why you have to get a good tire gauge, and use it often.



There are two main types of gauges:
 —One style has a numbered indicator that pops out on the end (most commonly the “pencil” style)
 —The other type uses a dial to indicate the tire pressure (example at left.)

While both styles are used, the dial type—in both analog and digital—is usually favored by car professionals. The pencil-style gauge can be inaccurate.

It's important to know that while there is a pressure listed on the tire, it's actually the maximum allowable air pressure, not the recommended pressure. The recommended pressure is usually lower. The owner's manual is where to look for this. Also, when you check the tire pressure make sure to check all four tires, and check the spare sometimes as well.

When you bring the vehicle in for service, always make sure to check the tire pressure. Usually the garage will have an accurate gauge, which you can then use to check the accuracy of yours.

Source: Cars.com “Car Talk Advice,” <http://www.cars.com/go/advice/Story.jsp?section=ct&story=ctTire&subject=adv&referer=advice&aff=boston>

Six steps for developing a brand image

Adapted from *Small Business Marketing for Dummies*, these six steps are helpful for any business trying to create a brand image for itself:

1. Define why you're in business.
2. Consider what you want people to think when they hear your name.
3. Think about the specific words you want people to use when defining your business.
4. Pinpoint the advantages you want people to associate with your business.
5. Define your brand.
6. Build your brand through every impression that you make.

For elaborations on these tips, visit:

<http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/id-2914.html>

Branding,

continued from page 9

suggests brainstorming something creative that would stick in peoples' minds. A few examples are Pelivan, operating in the pelican-ridden area in northeast Oklahoma, Ride, an agency in Rhode Island, and Buckwheat Express in West Virginia. The names will get a chuckle out of riders, but don't mistake the fun for unprofessional; a motive lies behind it.

"You first have to be remembered before you can be used, and your branding helps you be remembered and stand out," Schauer says.

If you do decide to revamp your brand image, Advanced Brand Management's author, Paul Temporal, says to aim for "evolution,"

not "revolution," because an all-new image might spark customer concern over new ownership or operations.

Even if your agency is the only one for miles, making a good impression on riders (and keeping it) is important. The trick is in the branding. "It's just like you—being at home," Schauer says. "You have a personal identity, you have a personal brand. It's expressed by the words you use, the clothes you wear. It's the same for a bus program; you need identity."

The more you know about branding, the better for your company. Resources and communication about branding are a click away on sites such as allaboutbranding.com or brandchannel.com, or flip through a copy of a marketing magazine like *Brandweek*. ▲

Sources:

American Marketing Association. www.marketingpower.com

The Power of Brand Delivery. <http://www.mckinsey.com/practices/retail/knowledge/articles/PowerofBrandDelivery.pdf>

Paul Temporal's Branding Tips. <http://www.brandingasia.com/columns/temporal10.htm>

Marketing for Dummies. <http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/id-2914.html>

The cost of crashes to employers

Most traffic crashes do not result in a fatality or a serious injury, but even small mishaps cost money. According to 2003 data from NHTSA, the average crash costs an employer \$16,500. The Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) has developed a cost calculator tool to see how your bottom line could be affected. The more miles driven by your employees, the higher the typical costs of crashes through lost productivity, workers compensation costs, medical expenses, repair bills, replacement transportation, substitute labor and higher insurance premiums. And these costs reflect only a portion of your potential costs. Traffic crashes that occur off the job cost employers, too.

It's a simple equation.

Every mile driven = \$0.16 cents

Motor vehicle crash injuries on- and off-the-job cost employers about \$60 billion annually in 1998-2000. Off-the-job injuries to workers and their dependents represent one-third of those costs. Increasing the use of seat belts and reducing alcohol-impaired driving have the potential for significant cost savings.

Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Accidents was jointly produced by OSHA, NHTSA and NETS and is available for download from the OSHA web site at www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.pdf. For more information on NETS, visit their website at www.trafficsafety.org.

Source: http://www.trafficsafety.org/cost_of_crashes.asp ▲



Patching-up your software

by Jacob Bustad

Photo from www.cityspace.com



The importance of computer software, from simple word processing to high tech design applications, is impossible to understate in the current age of technology. Many transit agencies rely on different software programs for communication through email, for data collection, and for getting out information to the public. [Even this newsletter was designed using a software program.] Some agencies use software for automat-

Download software and patches only from sites that are trusted sources. Email messages that provide a link to a software or patch should not be used.

ed scheduling, monthly reports, vehicle maintenance, management, and more.

Software programs can contain problems or vulnerabilities that were not seen by the program

Microsoft Office patches and automatic updates

Microsoft Office is one of the most common software programs used by transit agencies. The tools and features of Office are used for a variety of tasks, and different applications like Word, Excel, and Powerpoint are becoming staples of nearly every industry. Microsoft is one program developer that continually issues cyber patches and other “updates.” There are several ways to make sure your system has access to these improvements.

Go to <http://update.microsoft.com/>. Depending on the set-up of your office (networked or not), you may get an error message explaining that you must have “Administrator” capabilities, and how to check this status. If you are not an Administrator, you will need to get that information and speak to whoever does have this status.

Also, the Windows homepage (www.microsoft.com/windows) has a link to the latest security updates at the bottom right hand corner of that page. This gives information on each of the individual downloadable “patches,” or you can check out Microsoft Update, which will automatically update your system (some computers logged into networks have this feature installed).

developers, and these are often recognized after the software has been released and installed by the user. To fix these problems, software vendors will often issue “patches.” These patches work in the same way a fabric patch for clothing does—by repairing a “hole” in the program, and upgrading the software as a whole.

To find the appropriate patches for your software, be sure to check vendors’ Web sites. It is important to install a patch as soon as it becomes available, in order to secure your software before the vulnerability causes larger problems. Some programs, like Microsoft Windows, will automatically check for these updates, and other vendors offer the option of receiving notification of new patches

through a mailing list. Read above for more information about Microsoft Office patches. If these options aren’t available, again, check the vendor’s site regularly.

Download software and patches only from sites that are trusted sources. Email messages that provide a link to a software or patch should not be used, because these links can actually lead to a virus disguised as a patch. The same risk occurs in emails that claim to have the patch “attached” —often this attachment is a virus as well.

Source:

US-CERT Security Tip ST04-006, “Understanding Patches” by Mindy McDowell, Carnegie Mellon, 2004. US-CERT is the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team. ▲

Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

August 6-9, 2007

Transportation Disadvantaged Training and Technology Conference
Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and the Florida DOT
Orlando, FL
(352) 392-1701

August 26-28, 2007

Best Practices: Coordination of Transit, Regional Transportation Planning and Land Use Conference
Transportation Research Board, Denver, CO
trbmeetings@nas.edu

Securing Community Mobility Workshops

September 4, Wichita
September 5, Garden City
September 6, Great Bend
September 7, Salina
September 8, Emporia
Kansas RTAP and the National Transit Institute
For more information, contact Kristin at Kansas RTAP, at 785-864-2594

September 10, 2007

Securing Community Mobility: Train the Trainer for Transit Managers
Wichita, Kansas
Kansas RTAP and the National Transit Institute
For more information, contact Kristin at Kansas RTAP, at 785-864-2594

September 10-12, 2007

Annual Meeting of the Kansas Public Transit Association
Wichita, Kansas
FMI: kptacentral@yahoo.com
or <http://www.kstransit.com/> or call (785)235-8825

October 7, 2007

APTA 2007 Annual Meeting, American Public Transportation Association, Charlotte, NC, (202)496-4839
aatkins@apta.com

October 21-24, 2007

Transit Trainers' Workshop, National Transit Institute, Minneapolis, MN, (732)932-1700

Editor's Note:

To include meetings or workshops in our calendar, send information to: Kansas Trans Reporter, KUTC, 1530 W. 15th St., Room 2160, Lawrence, KS 66045.
Email: weaver@ku.edu

Coming in October

2007 Fall Kansas RTAP Driver Training Workshops
Visit: <http://www.kertap.kutc.ku.edu> for dates and locations.

New poster challenges readers to examine their impaired driving behaviors—and change them

The Kansas University Transportation Center has produced a new poster designed to inform drivers about the dangers of impaired driving. It challenges readers to look at their own behaviors, including cell phone use, sleep habits, and use of medications, and describes how those behaviors can impair safe driving.

This poster would be a good addition to your break room, as a reminder to transit drivers (and all staff who drive vehicles, including their own vehicles) about the dangers of impaired driving, and how to avoid those dangers.

To obtain a free copy, see page 15. ▲

Don't be an IMPAIRED driver

Kansas impaired drivers were involved in 18,500 crashes in the year 2006. They cost the public an estimated 900 million dollars.



Don't drink and drive. Alcohol-related crashes kill someone every 31 minutes and injure someone every 2 minutes.



Pull off the road! In one study, cell phone using drivers missed twice as many simulated traffic signals than when they were not on the phone.



Get a good night's sleep. Eight out of 10 traffic accidents involve distracted or drowsy drivers. Get enough rest. And make driving your only task when behind the wheel.



Know the side effects of medication(s).

Drugs—legal and illegal—can interact and cause drivers to be unable to drive as well as they normally would. Learn to recognize side effects. And if the drug you have been taking is illegal, don't use it.



Know your challenges as an older driver.

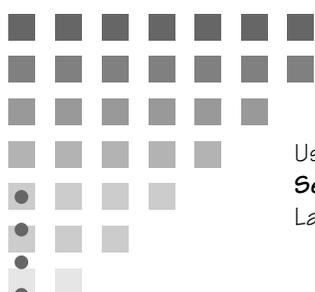
Vision, hearing, and reaction-time all decline with age. Older drivers are more likely to be involved in a crash for every mile they drive than almost any other age group. Learn about increased driving risk as you age, and make appropriate accommodations.

Impaired driving is not just another traffic offense; it is a serious crime that often causes deaths and injuries. Don't drive when impaired.

Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) and Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP). Serving Kansas local transportation agencies. Phone 785-864-5638 • video and publication lending library • workshops • quarterly newsletters • one-on-one problem solving • www.kutc.ku.edu

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Resources Order Form



Use this order form to order hard copies for the PDFs listed here.

Send the order form to: KUTC Lending Library, 1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2160, Lawrence, KS 66044. Or fax the form to 785/ 864-3199.

Download or hard copy

Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals.

In recognition of the critical role that service animals play in the independent travel of people with disabilities, this document was developed to answer some frequently-asked questions on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the rights and responsibilities of people traveling with service animals. [Download](http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Service_Animal_FAQs.pdf?docID=32703) from http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Service_Animal_FAQs.pdf?docID=32703, or

Send hard copy

The Power of Brand Delivery. McKinsey Practices

[Download](http://www.mckinsey.com/practices/retail/knowledge/articles/PowerofBrandDelivery.pdf) from <http://www.mckinsey.com/practices/retail/knowledge/articles/PowerofBrandDelivery.pdf>, or

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Don't be an IMPAIRED Driver—poster

Kansas LTAP and RTAP, 2007.

Send hard copy

Hazard and Security Plan's Instruction Guide.

TRB's Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 86: Public Transportation Security, Volume 10—Hazard and Security Plan Workshop: Instructor Guide is designed to assist rural, small urban, and

community-based passenger transportation agencies in creating hazard and security plans or in evaluating and modifying existing plans, policies, and procedures consistent with the National Incident Management System. Available online as a pdf or to order a hard copy directly from TRB.

http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail

Threat and Vulnerability Toolbox. The Threat & Vulnerability Toolbox from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program is a package of instructional materials and practical exercises to help transit managers set priorities for safety, security and emergency preparedness. [Download](http://www.nationalrtap.org/vulnerability) from <http://www.nationalrtap.org/vulnerability>, or

Send hard copy

Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes.

This booklet outlines ten steps for building a driver safety program in your workplace. These steps will be useful to any organization regardless of size of the organization, type of traffic encountered, number of vehicles involved, or whether employees drive company or personal vehicles for work purposes. Also included are real-life examples of successful safety programs, key traffic safety issues to address in the workplace, instructions for calculating your organization's loss from motor vehicle crashes, and a list of resources to help you fine-tune your program. (35 pages.) [Download](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.pdf) at http://www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.pdf, or

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Kansas Trans Reporter

The *Kansas Trans Reporter* is an educational publication published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center. The newsletter is distributed free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service.

The *Kansas Trans Reporter* is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The purposes of the program are to: 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

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Other services In addition to publishing the *Kansas Trans Reporter*, the Kansas RTAP program offers a variety of other educational services. Following is a partial list of these services:

- Publication dissemination
- Program planning assistance
- Technical assistance
- Video lending library
- Telephone consultation
- Computer database searches
- Training development
- Referral services
- Web site
- E-mail discussion group

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Kansas RTAP staff Assistance can be obtained by contacting a *Kansas Trans Reporter* staff person at the numbers or address above.

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