Ridership Gains through Strategic Planning, Customer Focus and Marketing Planning

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Charlotte Area Transit System
Since 1998 More and More Are Riding CATS

Ridership up 76%

CATS Historical Ridership by Service Type

Annual Ridership

Fiscal Year


All Services
Rail
RideShare Services
Human Services Transportation
Activity Center Circulators
Community Circulator
Regional Express
Local and Express Services

* Estimate (assumes a 5% annual increase in ridership)
Charlotte Mecklenburg Centers & Corridors Vision

- Adopted by Council in 1994
- Long-term growth framework
- Five primary transportation and development corridors
- Goals:
  - Focus most growth in Centers & Corridors
  - Maximize use of transportation system & infrastructure
  - Encourage redevelopment & reuse of underutilized sites
Transit System Expansion

- Basically a City of Charlotte system
- Couple of express routes within Mecklenburg County
- Few neighborhood circulators
- Few customer amenities
- Limited safety/security investments
Transit System Expansion

**County-Wide Service Plan**
- Expanded Service Hours
- Greater Service Frequency
- More Routes
- Countywide ADA Service
- Regional Expansion
- Improved Safety and Reliability
Transit System Expansion

Community / Neighborhood Services

1. Greater Access and Mobility
2. Better connections
3. Increased frequencies
4. Streamlined routes
Innovative Services

Village Rider:

• Demand response circulator
• Has fixed route and schedule
• Can vary from route by $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to drop off / pick up customer
• Helps new markets to establish ridership; grow to fixed routes
Gold Rush:

• Uptown Circulator
• 50/50 Partnership with uptown Development Corp.
• Ridership doubled
• Capture SOV commuters
• Tourism
Wachovia Bank

- Wanted easy way to connect uptown with suburban campus
- Developed service which is open to the public but gets funding from Wachovia
- Nearly 100% of cost is paid for by bank
Regional Partnership:

- 6 regional express routes to surrounding counties
- 50% paid by other counties
- Fares are deducted prior to determining cost
- CATS assumes all customer services, schedules, marketing, etc.
Blue Line Characteristics

- Opened November 24, 2007
- Uptown Charlotte to I-485
  - 9.6 miles
- 15 stations (7 park & rides)
- Operates seven days a week from 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- Service frequency
  - Rush hour: 7.5 minutes
  - Non-rush hour: 15 minutes
- Bus/rail integration serves the Blue Line directly:
  - 20 new and modified routes
LYNX Blue Line Success!

- LYNX Blue Line ridership averaging 13,000 daily trips
  - Original projection: 9,100 by the end of the first year
  - Vehicles often at capacity
  - Some Park & Ride lots at/near capacity
- System Undersized
  - Ordering 4 more LRV’s
  - Ordering additional TVM’s
  - 1100 space garage FULL
- Over $1.5 billion in actual and proposed corridor development through 2011
Ridership

- February 2008
  - 2,000,000 trips
  - Highest increase in USA (35%)*

- Average LYNX Weekday
  - >13,000
  - Exceeds Year 1 projection by 45%

- Total LYNX Ridership
  - > 1 million

Data for January – March, 2008  *National Transit Database
CIAA Tournament
February 25 – March 1

• More Than 181,000 Attendees*

• More Than 80,000 Trips On LYNX

• Championship Saturday: 31,500 trips

• CATS Ambassadors Helped Ensure Pleasant LYNX Experience

* Source: Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association
ACC Tournament

- More Than 120,000* Attendees
- More Than 90,000 Trips On LYNX
- Largest Passenger Load Since Free Debut Weekend
- CATS Ambassadors Helped Ensure Pleasant LYNX Experience

Source: Brian Morrison, Atlantic Coast Conference - Media Relations
Focus on Customer Service
Customer Focus

Customers
- Daily
- Special
- Occasional

Non-Riders
- Supporters
- Potential Customers
- Non-Supporters
Customer Focus

Market Research of Riders and Non-riders:
• Annual intercept interviews / phone surveys (95% confident within 2.5% - 3%)

On-board interviews:
• Importance vs. Performance on 40 customer service elements
• Attitudinal and Qualitative on transportation
Customer Focus

Top Ten Important Items

Customers
- Service: - Frequent weekday
  - Buses run early
  - Direct routes
  - Travel Time
- Reasonable fares
- Provide valuable service

Non-Riders
- Safety: - Transit Center
  - Bus Stops
  - Well lighted bus stops
- Service:
  - On time
  - No pass by
- Info: - Easy access to info

Safe Drivers
Safe from Crime
Bus Stops Convenient
Route info at Bus Stops

Customers and Non-Riders

Non-Riders

Customers
Customer Focused: Transit Amenities
Customer Focused: Transit Amenities
Seniors, as a percentage of customers, grew from 8% in 2004 to over 13% in 2007.
• Strategic Planning – long-term growth of system that integrates new services

• Developing funding partners through aligning service needs.

• Focusing on the customer to determine importance of all aspects of the system
  – Service delivery, safety, amenities, customer service, etc.
Questions?