It Takes A Region To Raise Ridership!

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About DCTA

- DCTA is the smallest of the three transit agencies in North Texas.
- ➤ DCTA expects to carry 2.7 million passengers in FY12.
- DCTA's primary service area has approximately 300,000 population plus 55,000 college students.
- DCTA services:
 - A-train Commuter Rail (connection with DART)
 - Fixed Route Services
 - Campus Shuttle Services
 - Demand Response
 - Vanpool
- DCTA has three main ridership types:
 - Transit dependent
 - > Student
 - Commuters into urban area



Marketing Challenges

- Large, expensive media market (& I only need a small slice)
- Limited marketing budget
- ➤ It's Texas people like their cars
- Difficulty reaching choice users
- Transit is relatively new to Denton County
- > Low summer ridership because school is out
- New ideas to promote "Dump the Pump"



Marketing Opportunities

- Ozone "Stop Talking Out of Your Tailpipe" Regional Campaign
- Regional Employee Trip Reduction Grant
- > APTA "Dump the Pump"
- Growth in Social Media
- Increased Regional Connectivity
- Growing Agency Focus on Regional Transit Partnerships
- Increased Political and Media Focus on Transit
- Growing Traffic Congestion



Campaign Goals:

- ➤ Promote and encourage non-transit users to "Dump the Pump" and try transit in hopes of changing their behavior in the future.
- ➤ Directly relate the cost of commuting in a single-occupant vehicle by tying gas prices with transit savings.
- Partner with regional transit partners and the business community to leverage media relationships and social media.



Campaign Objectives:

- ➤ Increase Ridership
- > Promote APTA National "Dump the Pump"
- Distribute Free Transit Passes
- Encourage Regional Connectivity
- ➤ Develop Relationships with Area Businesses
- Generate Earned Media Opportunities



Target Audience:

- Curious User: I have always wanted to try transit, but never had an opportunity to.
- "Could Be" Commuter: I drive this same corridor to work/school everyday and never thought about trying transit.
- ➤ Drives a "gas guzzler": I just paid \$\$\$ to fill up my tank. For a lot less, someone else could drive me to work everyday for a week and I could avoid the traffic.



Campaign Elements

- ➤ Budget printing of passes only
- ➤ Partnership Between DCTA, DART and the T
- ➤ 3,500 Regional Transit Passes
- ➤ Social Media
- > Earned Media
- > Five Local DCTA Events





Campaign Elements

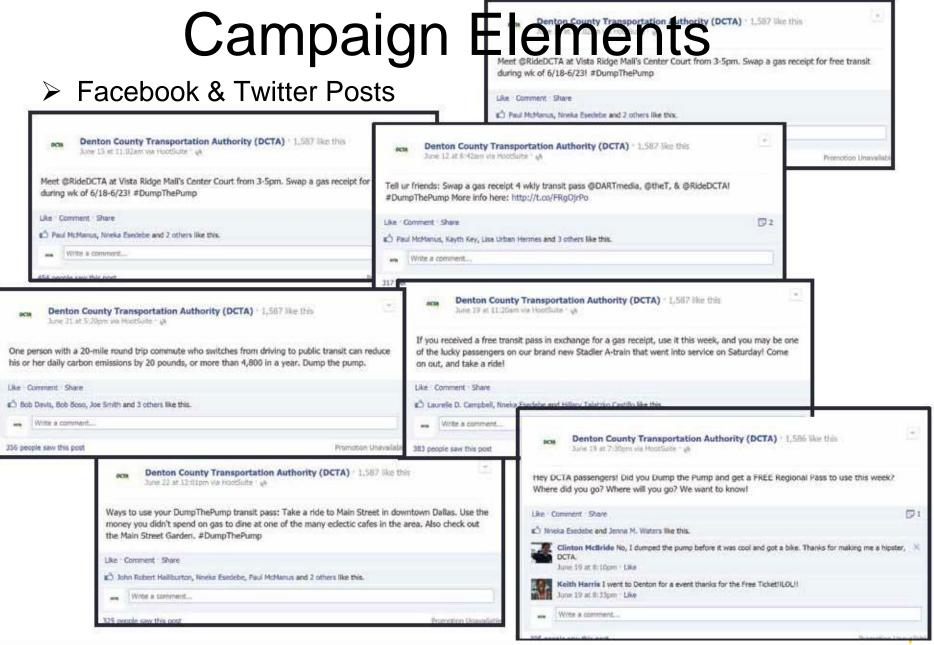
- Location Selection:
 - DCTA Locations: Apartment Complex, Downtown Concert, Chic Fil A Family Night, City Hall, New Rail Vehicle Launch
 - Others: Water park, concerts, downtown areas
- > Selected Locations that were:
 - Didn't necessarily have a direct tie to transit.
 - Had a built in crowd
 - Had its own social media, communication methods to client base



Campaign Elements

Twitter Posts, Retweets & Tags





Campaign Results

- 200+ social media interactions #DumpThePump
- > \$35,000 earned media value
- 500 free transit passes distributed in DCTA's service area
- ➤ 91% of respondents surveyed used their free transit pass and over half used their pass more than once during the free week. 1/3 used it five times.
- ➤ All respondents noted they would use transit again in the future.
- > \$8,900 in gas receipts were collected.
- All agencies saw ridership increases.



Lessons Learned

- > Start Sooner
- Budget Something
- Location is Key
- ➤ Better Follow Through
- > Take Pictures
- Partnerships Work (What else could we do)
 - Regional University Promotions
 - Holiday Shopping
 - Social Media Only Campaigns

