

# **BIG IDEAS**

**small budget**



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## Who Are We?

- Lakeland Area Mass Transit District is a separate taxing district providing public transportation to the Lakeland area. Our funding comes from an ad-valorem tax plus the generosity of the FTA and FDOT. Our Board of Directors is made up of City and County Commissioners.
- We've been operating for 29 years
- We operate as the Citrus Connection because a naming contest was held when the agency was started. Our area is heavy into citrus fruits so we are often confused with agricultural businesses—but we're used to it.

## WHO RIDES OUR BUSES?



- We provide just under 2 million rides annually on fixed route.
- A recent on-board survey told us that 60% of our riders have no vehicle and 25% have a car but generally it isn't available.
- Approximately 5% - 10% of the local population use our service. The majority of our riders don't have a vehicle or are disabled. However, depending on the economy, jobs and cost of fuel, we have added choice riders to that number.
- Our route frequencies run from ½ hour to 2 hours.

## WHOSE ATTENTION DO WE WANT?



- The other 90-95% of residents, many of whom who help support us but have never ridden the bus and maybe never will.
- We want them to know that even if you never use public transit your community is better off because we're here.
- We want them to know that although we're big, slow and stop at railroad tracks causing them to drive slower than they want, we improve the quality of life for many people.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

Several years ago the Citrus Connection had a marketing grant that provided a 50% reimbursement for marketing expenses.

So, for my first 3 years I had a marketing budget that was **DOUBLE** my “real” budget—time for Living Large!

That was then, this is now.





## **DOLLAR STRETCHERS**

### Media Thoughts

- If a TV commercial is in your future, go with creative that allows multiple :30's from one day of shooting, keeping down expenses while giving the public a fresh view of you.
- Depending on your market, consider using cable TV—your spot runs on popular channels, while targeting dollars into your local area.
- On a media buy, better to run less days but have a greater reach & frequency on the days you do run.
- If you run radio try to strategically place it at the beginning or end of your tv run. This is a proven tactic to stretch impressions and spend less.

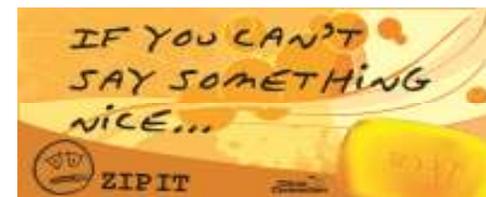
## ***We Are Moving Billboards***

Exterior ads—if your agency permits bus ads, take advantage of the space to create a look that focuses on your priorities. Our focus is to show happy people riding public transit.



## Interior Bus Ads - It's A Captive Audience!

Most interior ads are 11" x 12" or 24". An ad card made of very durable polystyrene will cost \$5 or \$6 each, maybe even less. Helpful for self promotion, important information, bus rules, etc.




Citrus Connection	
fares	TARIFAS
adults/ADULTOS	\$1.25
students/ESTUDIANTES	\$1.00
seniors/MAYORES	\$0.60
disabled/INCAPACITADOS	\$0.60
children/NENOS	FREE/gratis

We're GOING Your Way!



## TALK IS CHEAP – RESULTS REWARDING

It's a labor-intensive process, but community activities can be worth their weight in gold.

- In House Events—at your terminal or transfer points to meet and greet riders. Set up a table and they'll come talk to you. Use these free events to promote route and fare info, new transit features, etc.
- Community Events—many have low or no fees associated with table space. Costs include your time and hand-outs to attract attention. (think balloons)
- Offer the “volunteer” opportunity to all departments—you might be surprised on the response you receive.

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## **TALK IS CHEAP –RESULTS REWARDING**

**(continued)**

- Look for event opportunities through your local Chamber website or the City/County website; school activities; etc.
- It's easier to draw a crowd when you're at an event marketed by others rather than to start from scratch absorbing all the associated costs.



## We Really Like

- Standard media outlets may give you a “deal” but they’re not going to give away their inventory.
- Blogs are BIG! Blog blabbers can be a great source of free publicity. Although, remember that door swings both ways.
- Wonderful opportunities exist through Social Media. At our APTA sessions it will get much attention so I won’t dwell on it here but if you can embrace it and make it work in your transit system, it’s a great dollar stretcher—and where you find the young folks.

**Thank  
You!**