

BRT Branding, Imaging and Marketing

Abstract: This recommended practice provides guidance for developing a brand image for bus rapid transit systems and on marketing the brand to the public.

Keywords: branding, BRT, bus rapid transit, image, marketing, revenue generation

Summary: Bus rapid transit (BRT) service creates a premium rapid transit experience using rubber-tired vehicles. Branding helps convey the premium service experience to riders and helps distinguish BRT service from other bus service. This document establishes guidelines for branding, imaging and marketing BRT service for planners, transit agencies, local governments, developers and others interested in developing new, or enhancing existing, BRT systems.

This document is part of a suite of recommended practices covering the key elements that comprise BRT service. Because BRT elements perform best when working together as a system, this document may reference others in this series of recommended practices. Users of this document are advised to review all guidance documents to better understand how different BRT elements are interrelated in delivering a high impact transit project.

Scope and purpose: The recommended practice provides guidance on branding and marketing for BRT and provides examples from current BRT systems. It includes guidance on developing a branding strategy and reviews how the BRT system elements, color scheme, naming scheme, operating features and performance can help create a premium image. The document also includes recommendations on communications, employee training and measuring performance.

This document represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any recommended practices or guidelines contained herein is voluntary. APTA standards are mandatory to the extent incorporated by an applicable statute or regulation. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In cases where this is a conflict or contradiction between an applicable law or regulation and this document, consult with a legal advisor to determine which document takes precedence.

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA-RP-BUS-BRT-001-10, Rev 1, “BRT Branding, Imaging and Marketing.”

Bus rapid transit (BRT) consists of a suite of elements that create a high-quality rapid transit experience using rubber-tired vehicles. This experience often includes a high degree of performance (especially speed and reliability), ease of use, careful attention to aesthetics, and comprehensive planning that includes associated land uses. BRT seeks to meet or exceed these characteristics through the careful application of selected elements.

This recommended practice, *Bus Rapid Transit Branding, Imaging and Marketing*, is intended to provide guidance for creating and implementing a brand image that conveys the premium quality of the BRT system and serves to distinguish the BRT from other bus service. This document provides guidance on how to develop a brand strategy and how the various elements of the BRT service can be used to convey the brand. The document includes numerous examples from BRT systems in the U.S. and Canada.

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that plan, design, build and/or operate bus rapid transit systems and those that are considering doing so;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others to plan, design, build and/or operate bus rapid transit systems; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how bus rapid transit systems are planned, designed, built and/or operated.

This recommended practice is one in a suite of BRT recommended practices published by APTA; the full list can be found under “[Related APTA Standards](#)”.

BRT Branding, Imaging and Marketing

1. The role of branding and marketing in BRT service

Branding a product or service creates an identifiable, marketable and common theme that extends across the product and all related touch points in which customers may interact with the brand.

Branding a BRT service gives it a distinct identity, which results in clear and positive public recognition and improved acceptance of the service. In addition to creating or enhancing positive public acceptance of the service, creating a relevant and compelling brand for a BRT system can deliver the following benefits:

- **Clearly differentiated transit service:** Branding can create a premium, higher-quality rapid transit image for a BRT service, distinguishing it from standard or more conventional services.
- **Enhanced outreach efforts:** A common brand proposition among the various components of a BRT system will simplify marketing efforts and allow a transit agency to more effectively reach its target customers.
- **Increased customer loyalty:** A consistent brand identity will help customers navigate the system by making the BRT system easily identifiable and distinguish it from other services. Consistent delivery of the brand promise will create loyal customers.
- **Improved employee satisfaction and retention:** A consistent and compelling brand creates pride and a sense of ownership and contribution for employees.
- **Increased brand value:** This can be measured by ridership growth, added revenue from naming rights, public-private partnerships and more.
- **Potential for attracting development activity:** An attractive and compelling brand, backed up by high quality service, can help attract new economic development or intensify existing land uses in and around the BRT corridor.
- **Improved image among stakeholders:** A strong brand will also improve perceptions among the business community and influential stakeholders.

Some industry studies among recently deployed BRT services have suggested that branding and imaging alone can contribute to ridership increases. For example, the Connecticut Department of Transportation reports that 20% of the riders of its CTfastrak BRT service were new to transit. The Cleveland RTA reports that the branding of the Healthline BRT service led to a 28% increase in annual ridership over that of the previous bus service which had many of the same operating characteristics. In addition, branding and imaging have been identified by the U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as one of the elements of BRT service that, absent a dedicated roadway, helps define candidate BRT projects as eligible for FTA Capital Investment Grants Program funding (see Table 1 for more on the FTA definitions of BRT). Thus, from both a planning and a policy perspective, branding should be an important consideration from the beginning of a BRT project's development.

The U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has its own definitions of BRT service that establish whether the BRT is eligible for New Starts or Small Starts funding under the Capital Investment Grants Program: Corridor-Based BRT and Fixed Guideway BRT. Below is a brief overview of the FTA's definitions of BRT:

TABLE 1
U.S. Federal Transit Administration BRT Definition

FTA BRT Definition
Fixed Guideway BRT operates in majority separate right-of-way (ROW) during peak periods
Corridor based BRT operates in mixed traffic
Defined stations that are accessible, offer shelter, real-time information
Traffic signal priority for public transportation vehicles
Short bi-directional headways
Weekday for Corridor based BRT; Weekdays and weekends for Fixed Guideway BRT
Any other feature as the Secretary may determine are necessary to produce high quality public transit services.

Users of this document are advised to be aware of the elements of BRT that are required to qualify for these two funding sources if they plan to apply for Capital Investment Grants Program funding. For more information, review the FTA's Capital Investment Grants Program website:
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grant-programs/capital-investments/about-program>.

2. Branding strategy and implementation

A branding strategy for a BRT service gives transit agencies the opportunity to proactively define the way people think and feel about the service. The branding strategy can create a targeted brand experience for customers and allow them to form relationships with the brand. Brand strategies for a new service cannot be developed in isolation, however. In order to be credible and effective, the branding strategy must build on and incorporate the core brand equities and values of the agency and meet customers' expectations.

2.1 Developing a branding strategy



There are four steps in developing a branding strategy:

- **Who:** Identify and characterize the target audiences.
- **What:** Determine the “brand promise” to be made to the audiences.
- **How:** Determine how all the audience “touch points” will communicate the brand.
- **Why:** Determine why audiences should care about the brand.

2.1.1 The who: Target audiences

Successful branding strategies begin with clearly identified target audiences. There are many target audiences beyond the obvious riding public. Others include funders, policymakers, planners, local jurisdictions, developers, business owners, employees and media.

2.1.2 The what: Brand promise

Once the target audiences have been identified and characterized, the next step is to determine how to make BRT relevant and compelling to each group. Establish the brand promise based on the wants, needs and expectations of these audiences.

Key Principles of BRT Brand Strategy

The brand promise is not a tagline or advertising copy. Instead, it serves as the strategic platform for all tactical marketing elements.

The brand promise should be engaging and relevant and clearly communicate the benefits of the service. For example, the brand promise could emphasize BRT as a premium service distinct from other public transportation offerings, its environmental benefits, its speed and frequency, or its passenger amenities.

The brand message also should explain the brand architecture: how BRT fits into the overall system. The brand promise is not a tagline or advertising copy. Instead, it serves as the strategic platform for all tactical marketing elements.

Table 2 provides some examples of existing brand promises.

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TABLE 2
Brand Promises and Messages of BRT Services

City	Service	Features	Brand promise/attributes	Comments
Boston (MBTA)	Silver Line	Mixed and dedicated roadway and tunnel operations; some LRT-type stations	Part of rail network, quality	Also generates significant land-use development around stations.
Cleveland, Ohio (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority)	HealthLine	Dedicated and mixed roadways; precision docking stations, doors on both sides	Fast, safe, first-class, “rail-like”	Original brand name was “Silver Line.” Naming rights were sold to a major healthcare institution.
Eugene, Oregon (Lane Transit District)	EmX Eugene and Gateway lines	Dedicated lanes, bidirectional in places, stations, attractive landscaping, dedicated and distinctively designed vehicles, bikes on board	Fast, environmentally friendly	EmX is short for “Emerald Express.” Named after the Emerald Valley.
Everett, Washington (Community Transit)	Swift Green Line Blue Line	Dedicated lane, stations	Fast, environmentally friendly; “Move at the speed of Swift”	Use of bird logo taps into the environmental ethic of the U.S. Northwest.
Hartford, Connecticut (Connecticut DOT)	CTfastrak	Dedicated busway	One-seat ride to key destinations	System of routes using bus-only roadway. Transit rewards program. Ride. Shop. Save.
Indianapolis (IndyGo)	IndyGo Red Line	60 ft electric articulated buses, all-door boarding, bikes on board, dedicated lanes, transit signal priority	Taking Indy into the future; efficient but bold	Costs less than rail, yet provides permanence for economic development
Kansas City, Missouri (KCATA)	RideKC MAX	Three arterial BRT lines, level boarding, conductive concrete, smart kiosks	Fast, frequent, technology features, convenient, stylish	Prospect MAX opened Dec. 9, 2019
Los Angeles (LA Metro)	Metro Rapid	Arterial BRT, art at each station	“Light rail on tires,” faster, more frequent	Sales slogan “Fast. Frequent. Fabulous.” taps into LA ethos.
Los Angeles (LA Metro)	Orange Line Silver Line	Dedicated roadway, light rail-like stations, dedicated and distinctively designed vehicles	Part of rail network	Color chosen to reflect citrus heritage in valley.
Minneapolis (Metro Transit)	METRO A Line	Branded within family of services that includes light rail	Fast. Frequent. All Day.	Dedicated guideway BRT and LRT use color line names, arterial BRT uses letter names

2.1.3 The how: Touch points

The next step in the branding strategy is to develop the “how.” How will the brand communicate with the target audiences? What are the touch points where the audience will interact with the brand? How can a consistent message be delivered across all touch points?

In the case of BRT branding, there are many touch points, including but not limited to the following:

- all branded aspects of the BRT system, such as stations and vehicles
- signage, maps, schedules and fare media
- publications and marketing information
- operator and supervisor uniforms
- digital communication such as social media and website
- advertising
- public events and promotion, including the service launch

2.1.4 The why: Why audiences should care

The branding can indicate to riders, policymakers and the public key characteristics such as:

- Enhance travel options
- Speed and Frequency of Service
- Desirable passenger amenities
- Environmental benefits
- Promotes economic development

2.2 Brand strategy tactics and implementation

A comprehensive tactical plan should be developed to address how each of the following system components consistently communicates the brand promise:

- name of service and lines
- color schemes, graphics and logos
- elements of the BRT system
- operating features and performance
- customer information such as signage, maps and schedules
- publications, media, public relations and marketing information
- employee selection and training

2.2.1 Name of service and lines

The names of the service and the lines should be simple, easy to remember, and easily identifiable in a map or publication. The names should resonate with the community, possibly by including a geographic reference or by embodying an area's image.

In regions with rail service, the BRT system can be closely branded or identified as an extension of the rail or other family of services. In regions with only bus service, the BRT system can be branded or identified as a typical rail system would be: as a premium service.

Examples of service naming

The EmX in Eugene, Oregon, operated by the Lane Transit District, is an example of a name using a local geographic reference. "EmX" is short for "Emerald Express" and is a reference to Eugene's nickname, "The Emerald City." In Pittsburgh, the busways were named the South Busway, the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway (often abbreviated to East Busway) and the West Busway, to provide a geographic reference.

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In Aspen, Colorado, the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) named its BRT VelociRFTA, incorporating the agency acronym in a memorable pun on the “velociraptor” dinosaur. The logo includes an image of a velociraptor (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
BRT Naming – VelociRFTA (Aspen, CO)

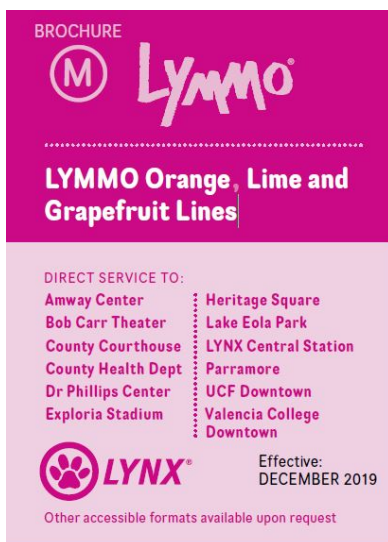


Some cities with rail service have given their BRT services color-coded names, such as Boston’s Silver Line or the LA Metro Orange Line. These color-coded lines carry with them a rail-like designation and convey the message that the BRT service is a component of an area’s rapid transit network instead of a separate bus system.

Examples of line naming

The Lane Transit District named its first EmX line the Green Line. This name was intended to reflect the EmX’s environmental branding. In Orlando, the LYMMO BRT has individual lines named Orange, Lime and Grapefruit, to play off the citrus farming associated with the region.

FIGURE 2
BRT Line Naming for the LYMMO (Orlando, FL)



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Several BRT systems have used colors to identify the individual BRT lines. York Region Transit in Ontario used multiple colors for its VIVA line names: Blue, Pink, Purple, Orange and Green. In Boston, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority named the Silver Line BRT lines according to their geographic location; for example, the Washington Street service and the Waterfront service.

In Los Angeles, the dedicated BRT service in the San Fernando Valley has been named the Orange Line. This name serves two purposes. It pays homage to the region's citrus agriculture history, and it also reflects that the BRT has been branded and designed as part of the region's rail rapid transit network, with rail-like stations and prepaid fare collection. This is distinct from Metro Rapid, the surface arterial BRT service launched earlier by the same public transportation operator. Both enjoy distinct brand identities that communicate different service characteristics.

Another example is one that not only used geographic location to help identify the line, but also generated more than \$10 million for the agency. As the Silver Line BRT brand was being fully developed in Cleveland, the system sold the naming rights to a team of healthcare institutions that are directly served by the line and changed the name to the "HealthLine." Further details on the HealthLine naming are found in Section 2.2.2.

2.2.2 Sponsorship/naming rights

An advantage of establishing a strong brand identity may be the ability to develop a Sponsorship or Naming Rights agreement for the BRT line or service. Such an agreement may enhance the brand and could generate extraordinary revenue and/or in-kind services for the agency.

In some cases, an agency may, to enhance the image of the vehicles or brand, decide to forgo traditional transit advertising displays from the vehicles, in which case a sponsorship could replace such revenues to the agency. An example is the HealthLine BRT in Cleveland, which is being sponsored by the two largest employers along the corridor, the Cleveland Clinic and the University Hospital Network, which is generating \$250,000 annually to the Greater Cleveland RTA, for a period of 25 years. One element supported by this sponsorship revenue is the seasonal plantings at stations, as shown in **Figure 3**.

FIGURE 3
Cleveland HealthLine



In some cases, an external entity may agree to pay for the construction and maintenance of the stations in return to the naming rights at the stations.

2.2.3 Color schemes, graphics and logos

Color schemes, graphics and logos can carry the brand from the vehicle to the stations, to the signage and to the printed materials, unifying the elements under one brand identity. They also can serve as a unifying element among the larger family of services and can aid passengers in wayfinding, boarding and transferring among interconnected services.

2.2.4 Branding of BRT system vehicles and stations

The physical elements of the overall BRT system have a major impact on the brand or image. These physical elements may include the following:

- rapid transit vehicles
- station design and configuration
- running way, including grade separation, exclusive lane or mixed traffic, and lane markings
- fare collection, off or onboard the vehicle
- traffic signal prioritization
- level boarding
- use of advanced ITS features

In addition to representing the overall brand or image of the BRT service, some of these physical elements may themselves be branded. Both **vehicles** and **stations** are elements that may be branded by the transit agency to further establish a strong brand identity for the BRT service.

Rapid transit vehicles

The vehicles themselves, which in many cases are highly identifiable, are often a major component of the brand identity. Some issues to be considered:

- Is the styling distinct and appealing?
- Do the paint and the graphics package support the brand?
- Do the interior features such as seating support the brand identity?

It is best to ensure that BRT vehicles are easily differentiated from the other buses and bus services in the region. For example, in Boston, the vehicles for the Silver Line are painted silver. In Los Angeles, the vehicles for the Orange Line are silver, to resemble the Los Angeles railcars, but a bold orange graphic extending nearly the entire length of the vehicle clearly identifies it as an Orange Line bus. Metro Rapid buses are stylized and painted with a distinct red-and-gray theme to distinguish them from local buses. In each case, the BRT vehicles are unique in their communities.

When a more standard vehicle or bus is used, the distinctive branding can come from a unique paint or graphics package, easily identifiable as different from conventional buses' paint and graphics packages.

Vehicle length also can help establish the brand. A vehicle longer than the standard 40-foot bus, if needed for capacity considerations, can be important to the brand development by differentiating the service from other bus service, if the other service primarily uses 40-foot buses, and by more closely resembling rail vehicles. Buses that are smaller than the standard 40 feet may also be an option. Other rail-like features on the vehicles, such as doors on both sides, also can support the brand.

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Figure 4 shows the distinctive branding on some BRT vehicles.

FIGURE 4
BRT Vehicle Branding Examples



EmX Line (Eugene, OR)



The HealthLine (Cleveland, OH)



Swift Bus Rapid Transit (Snohomish County, WA)



IndyGo Red Line (Indianapolis, IN)



Pace Pulse (Chicago, IL)



MAX Line (Kansas City, MO)

FIGURE 4
BRT Vehicle Branding Examples



Metro Rapid (Los Angeles, CA)



Metro Transit (Minneapolis, MN)



VelociRFTA (Aspen, CO)



GRTC Pulse (Richmond, VA)

Stations

As with the vehicles, stations should be highly identifiable and a major component of the brand identity. The agency should consider whether the station styling is distinct and appealing.

It is best to ensure that the stations are easily differentiated from the other conventional bus shelters in the region. In addition, tying the look of the stations to other branding components, such as the vehicle color and style, can further reinforce the brand. For example, for Boston's Silver Line, the stations are silver to support the silver vehicles—all contributing to the brand identity.

In cases where the BRT station is shared by non-BRT services, the BRT brand should remain prominent.

To further identify the BRT brand, provide passenger amenities at the BRT stations that are different from the amenities provided at non-BRT stations. Some examples:

- upgraded signage and system maps
- real-time passenger information systems
- internet access

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- TV monitors
- public address systems
- security cameras and emergency phones
- platform loading markings
- level boarding
- off-board fare collection
- vending facilities (e.g., newspaper stands)
- bike facilities
- good access for pedestrians and people using wheelchairs
- transit-supportive land use and policies
- park-and-ride facilities
- connections to other local transit modes and intercity bus and rail services
- landscaping
- lighting

Figure 5 shows examples of BRT stations and stops with distinctive branding:

FIGURE 5
BRT Station Branding Examples



VelociRFTA (Aspen, CO)

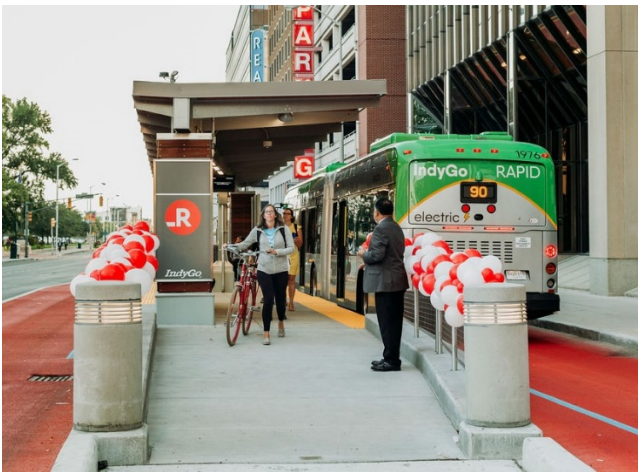
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GRTC Pulse (Richmond, VA)



Metro Transit (Minneapolis, MN)



IndyGo Red Line (Indianapolis, IN)



Pace Pulse (Chicago, IL)



LYMMO (Orlando, FL)



Orange Line (Los Angeles, CA)

2.2.5 Operating features and performance

The operating features and performance of the BRT system will have a significant impact on the brand. Features to consider include the following:

- frequency and span of service
- reliability of service
- safety
- travel time
- customer comfort

2.2.6 Customer information such as signage, maps and schedules

Signage, maps, schedules and fare media must reinforce the brand. If the goal is to brand the BRT system as being similar to other rapid transit services such as traditional light rail, then the signage, system maps and schedules should be designed and presented in a way similar to signage, maps and schedules on a rail system.

Metro Transit in Minneapolis developed a campaign on both their bus and rail service to promote our METRO system, including the BRT corridor, in advance of the C Line launch in 2019. This campaign helped tie together the various services while promoting the coming C Line BRT.

FIGURE 6

Metro Transit METRO advertising on rail cars (Minneapolis, MN)



The map and schedule should be presented in the most simple, easy-to-understand way possible (e.g., schematic instead of detailed). In many cases, the relative simplicity of the BRT route will support this concept. The user information should be coordinated with the same brand image (including the logo, type style, and graphical elements).

Information technology, such as real-time passenger information and trip planners, also can support the brand. Examples of information technology tools that support the brand are in Figure xx.

FIGURE 7
Branded ITS Elements



Pace Pulse (Chicago, IL)



VelociRFTA (Aspen, CO)

2.2.7 Publications, media, public relations and marketing information

Develop a message platform for communications in order to:

- retain existing riders, attract new riders and educate the general public;
- build a new base of commuting riders; and
- generate occasional/event-based ridership.

The message will change as the project moves from planning to construction to in-service. More complex systems will need to explain how to ride. All-door boarding, prepaid fares, taking bikes on the buses may be new to riders and drivers of traditional transit systems.

2.2.7.1 Phase 1: During planning and construction

- Build good will and active advocacy from key stakeholder groups who can encourage people to ride.
- Generate awareness and understanding so that people anticipate positive change.
- Build positive perception, support and word of mouth with all audiences.

Examples:

- Place sponsorships and spots on local media and geo-targeted onto streaming services. Don't forget outlets targeting Limited English Proficiency (LEP) audiences.
- Access corporations/influencer/community leaders through local business journals/websites, community newspapers/websites.
- Offer "First Look Tours" to illustrate project progress and milestone achievements.
- Provide news releases on construction schedule, bus designs, vendor RFPs issued.
- Attend community and group association meetings to introduce details and benefits of the project to community and business leaders and answer questions.
- Advertise on local billboards near the project. Creative should change based on the countdown to opening day.
- Prepare short-form videos to explain features: stations, facilities, travel information.
- Use promotional swag, such as shown in **Figure 8**, to build excitement and keep the community talking about the project during planning and construction.

FIGURE 8
Promotional BRT Items



KCATA Main Street MAX BRT
(Kansas City, MO)



KCATA Main Street MAX BRT
(Kansas City, MO)



CTfastrak BRT (Hartford, CT)



Metro Transit (Minneapolis, MN)



Pace Pulse (Chicago, IL)



Pace Pulse (Chicago, IL)

2.2.7.2 Phase 2: Six months prior to opening

- Generate interest and excitement to get people ready to ride.
- Build consumer engagement with trip planning tools and ticket sales information.
- Generate excitement for ticket sales alerts and launch information.
- Build support and active participation from all partners and influencers.

Examples:

- Create an interactive service map that allows visitors to select their route and see schedules.
- Continue interactions listed in Phase 1, but change the message. For example: Phase 1 featured the bus design; in Phase 2, unveil the bus. Use the branded vehicle to promote the upcoming service.
- Develop radio spots to communicate key messages to communities surrounding the project.
- Develop television commercials to communicate key messages.
- Place banner ads on local print and media websites and content on social media.

2.2.7.3 Phase 3: Launch

- Create purchase demand and motivate people to commit to buy and try.
- Generate trial ridership from day one.
- Generate repeat usage from loyal ridership.
- Build trial and occasional ridership.
- Bring national focus by involving Federal Transit Administration.

2.2.7.4 Public relations

- Campaign should be proactive, dynamic and inclusive of neighborhood characteristics.
- Correction of misinformation is critical and should be addressed immediately.

Website and content

The project website should provide up-to-date information about the project and incorporate the branding and program messaging. Include responses to anticipated questions in a “Frequently Asked Questions” section.

Social media

The campaign should promote the program’s messaging points. Social media tools require daily attention to keep them fresh. They also need to be monitored for negative comments, which must be addressed immediately.

Collateral materials

Create a variety of simple, printed materials for construction and public audiences to promote the basic concept of the project, facts and website information. All printed information should incorporate the branding scheme and be available via website as well. Versions should be available for any LEP populations (and possibly Safe Harbor) in their language.

Photography

Photos should incorporate how students, business professionals and families will be using the system and include community photos. Include photos of people at settings that are accessible via the system.

Press releases

Engage in regular media outreach, including the creation and distribution of monthly press releases that feature “hard” news items. Identify one primary project spokesperson to actively quote in news releases so news media will feel more comfortable engaging in discussions and coverage.

Editorial reply campaign

Create unofficial and informal groups of editorial reply members that mostly consist of residents within the community, along with municipal or county officials. The campaign should include print and online news sources.

Community relations campaign

Launch a highly proactive community outreach program that includes one-on-one and group meetings with neighborhood groups, business associations and industry gatherings in a soft-sell manner. Include accurate and informative information while emphasizing the listening aspect of the program. Integrate photos of people at these events into the news and social media campaign.

FIGURE 9

Community Relations: Metro Transit Outreach (Minneapolis, MN)



Speaking opportunities

A regular speaking campaign can communicate the project’s benefits and the expertise behind the planning (chamber of commerce, Lions Club, neighborhood associations.) There are many professionals (engineers, designers, urban transportation experts) involved with the project who can speak at various community and business events.

Promotional event opportunities and cross-promotions

Arrange to be at outside promotional events and third-party opportunities such as business expos and nonprofit fundraisers; appear at city council meetings during the public comment session to offer updated project information.

Other ideas:

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- **Media bus/walking tours:** Offer one-on-one news media tours of the project.
- **Press kits (online and print)**
- **Business outreach program:** Educate top employers and their employees about the benefits of the project.
- **“Coming Soon” signs:** Inform the neighborhood about the exact nature of construction activities.
- **Vehicles:** Before service, wrap a current bus in the new system branding and use it at events

2.2.8 Employee selection and training

Employees are ambassadors for the system and should be tapped as a resource for public opinion. They can also be trained about the brand messaging. Make sure employees know what is different about BRT. Every action of an employee serves either to build the brand or to erode it. Employees must deliver a consistent message at each contact point with the customer by maintaining the transit system’s dress code, customer greeting, conflict resolution process, etc. This applies to employees throughout the system. Employees should also be a strong presence at the opening and first days of a new BRT service launch.

FIGURE 10
Employee Dress Code



This can be an opportunity to explore innovative staffing measures jointly with staff, contractors and union. For example, Cleveland created a branding team for the HealthLine, which is responsible for maintaining the brand image. Los Angeles created an ambassador program with employees as ambassadors at stations.

BRT can also trigger questions around the agency’s overall advertising strategy. Consideration should be given to how traditional transit advertising might affect its BRT branding.

2.3 Communication methods and strategies

There are a variety of communication methods and strategies that can be used to implement and promote the BRT brand. Market research among target audiences may reveal optimal methods, but the more common tactics include the following:

- public events and promotions, including the service launch
- media
- advertising campaigns

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- ongoing public relations
- signage
- direct mail or targeted at-school or at-work programs

FIGURE 11
Promotions - KCATA MAX (Kansas City, MO)



2.4 Performance measurement and feedback

As with any branding initiative, it is critical to conduct ongoing assessment of the implementation and performance to ensure that the brand remains relevant and is consistently communicated.

Obtain feedback both from employees and the public and ridership. Feedback can be collected through formal tools such as online surveys, onboard surveys or telephone interviews, as well as informal, directional input obtained via customer comments and complaints.

Additionally, monitoring metrics such as new versus repeat customers, customer loyalty, employee retention, ridership increases and revenue growth can be useful in ongoing planning initiatives and communication strategies.

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Related APTA standards

APTA-BTS-BRT-RP-002-10, Rev. 1, "[Bus Rapid Transit Stations](#)"
APTA-BTS-BRT-RP-003-10, Rev. 1, "[Bus Rapid Transit Running Ways](#)"
APTA-BTS-BRT-RP-004-10, Rev. 1, "[Bus Rapid Transit Service Design and Operations](#)"
APTA-BTS-BRT-RP-005-10, "[Implementing BRT Intelligent Transportation Systems](#)"
APTA-SUDS-UD-RP-007-13, "[Best Practices for Integrating Art into Capital Projects](#)"
APTA-SUDS-UD-RP-009-18, "[Bicycle and Transit Integration](#)"

Definitions

brand: The sum of all experiences, images and perceptions people have about a product, service or company. A brand includes logos, icons, colors, fonts, product names, personality, values, heritage, reputation, functional attributes (e.g., employee/customer service, product offering, pricing, service delivery) and emotional attributes (e.g., flexible, dependable, trustworthy).

Abbreviations and acronyms

BRT	bus rapid transit
EmX	Emerald Express (Eugene, Oregon)
FTA	U.S. Federal Transit Administration
ITS	intelligent transportation systems
LRT	light rail transit
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program

Summary of document changes

- Removed outdated tables and images
- Added more text on "Sponsorship/naming rights"
- Added more text on "Publications, media, public relations and marketing information"
- Updated BRT examples and pictures of BRT systems throughout the document

Document history

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