



Recruiting & Retaining Bus Operators

APTA Emerging Leaders
Group 1

Our Team



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Presentation Overview



The Issues

Recruitment

Retention



Survey

Methodology

Findings



Industry Case Studies

Orange County Transit
Authority

Regional
Transportation
District, Denver



Recommendations

Recruiting / Retaining

Career Growth
Opportunities



Conclusion

Next Steps

Recruitment Issues

- Perception of transit industry
- Stigma of bus operator profession
- Low unemployment rates
- Lack of diversity
- Barriers created by federal and state regulations

Retention Issues

- Low wages and benefit packages offered
- Lack of consistent hours and shifts
- Part time vs. full time opportunities
- Absence of career planning/ training for existing operators
- Driver safety

Methodology



50 SURVEYS COMPLETED
AT ROUTEMATCH USER
CONFERENCE



LEVERAGED MENTORS TO
INTERVIEW SEVERAL
HIGH LEVEL EXECUTIVES.



FOCUSED ON TWO
TRANSIT AGENCIES AS
CASE STUDIES



RESEARCHED SCHOLARLY
ARTICLES

Survey Findings: Successful Recruitment Strategies



Incorporate multiple
media platforms



Referral / sign on
bonuses



Competitive pay and
benefits package



Customer Service Skill
Set vs Driving
Experience

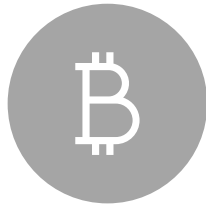


Partner with local
veteran organizations
in the community

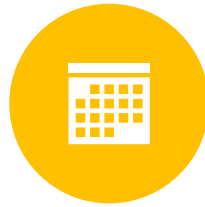
Survey Findings: Successful Retention Strategies



EMPLOYEE
APPRECIATION
EVENTS



BONUS REWARD
PROGRAM.
(LONGEVITY, SAFETY)



FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES
ROTATING
WEEKENDS



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
TRAINING



OPEN COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN
MANAGEMENT AND
OPERATORS

Case Studies

Orange County Transportation Authority



Challenges

- Not keeping up with and planning for retirements
 - Turnover spike trend in March due to popular retirement time
- Contracting out service
 - Competition with partners to recruit drivers
- Understaffing
 - Trainers and supervisors being used to operate buses
 - Scheduled overtime high



Where can your career take you?

Becoming an OC Bus Driver is your chance to discover a life-long career. With excellent pay, benefits, and room to grow, it could be your path to success. Hourly wages start at \$18.25.



A role with purpose

As an OC Bus Driver, you're an important part of what keeps Orange County moving. Each day, you'll help residents and visitors reach their destinations safely - providing reliable transportation that enhances the quality of life for our community.

Choose from full and part-time positions.

[APPLY NOW](#)

Case Studies

Orange County Transportation Authority



Recruitment Efforts

- Entirely new website just for drivers – **ocbus.com/careers**
 - Video interviews with drivers
 - Wages and benefits advertised
 - Job comparisons with competitors
 - Career and wage growth opportunities
 - Social media presence

Employee Referral Program

- #1 Source of high yield quality drivers
 - Outreach materials for employees to disperse in their communities
- Employment Advertising
 - Buses wrapped with pictures of bus drivers
 - “Now Hiring” advertised on headway signs

Case Studies

Orange County Transportation Authority



Retention Efforts

- Improving quality of life in employees
 - Robust wellness program
 - Gyms on site – staffed with trainers
- Behavioral interviews
- Mentorship program
- Promoting internally
 - 80% of bus operations management team began careers as OC Bus Drivers

Results

- 100 Bus Drivers recruited with 68 Drivers passing certification
 - Last year, of 61 Driver hired, 35 Drivers made it through training

Case Studies

Regional Transportation District

Challenges



- Behind the market in wages offered
- Low labor pool due to low unemployment rate
- Increasing Hispanic population – language barrier
- Undesirable shift for employees with less seniority

Case Studies

Regional Transportation District



Recruitment and Retention Efforts

- Worked with collective bargaining units to increase wages
- Initiated Leadership Academy open for all employees
- Created Professional Development and Education fund to take course
- Reduced split shifts by 5%
- Implemented premium pay for split shifts
- Hired bilingual HR representative
- Advertised jobs in English and Spanish
- Offered English language courses to employees

Recommendations To Agencies

Celebrate drivers early and often

- Celebrate operators publicly
- Press releases of operators helping and supporting community
- Parties, bonuses, tokens of appreciation

Provide work life balance support

- Wellness programs and onsite gyms
- Childcare onsite or through local businesses
- Decrease of part time and split shifts

Create a mentorship program

- Pair junior operators with senior dispatchers or planners

Take advantage of a diverse labor pool

- Tailor recruitment efforts to local demographics
- Leverage local veteran organizations
- Take advantage of local institutions

Driver Safety

- CCTV
- Glass door between driver and passengers
- Off board payment

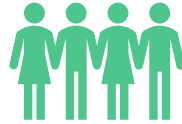
Recommendations To Agencies: Opportunities to Promote Operators to Management



Leadership and Development Programs Successfully Build Skills For Opportunities

Program open to all employees at all
levels

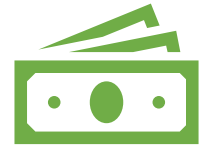
Identify and train potential
management candidates early



Create Individualized Development Plans For Potential Candidates

Cross-functional training /
assignments

Stretch assignments
Mentor relationships



Incentivize By Adjusting Pay Barriers

Ensure pay differential between entry
level management position and top
tier operator with overtime

Thanks!

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- Julie Espy, Orange County Transportation Authority



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