



TDM *Review*

INFO EXPLO!

Association for Commuter Transportation
1341 G Street NW, 10th Floor, Washington DC 20005
888-719-5772 - info@actweb.org
www.actweb.org

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President's Summer Message



Brian Shaw
President
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for Commuter
Transportation

How do you choose to communicate with family, friends, colleagues, clients, commuters today? It's safe to say that depending on who you need to reach, your method will vary. Perhaps you text your kids, email your boss, call your parents, tweet your followers, post to Facebook and upload to YouTube. If you are anything like me, you have only just begun to figure out how best to use all of the various means of communication at our disposal.

Communications is so critical to TDM. A large portion of what we do is getting the word out to our communities about their available travel options. We could always use all the help we can get. Fortunately, the internet has created new ways of communicating that only a few years ago could not even be considered...social media.

I'll admit, I'm still trying to figure out how to best make use of twitter, Facebook and YouTube, collectively known as social media.

It can be overwhelming deciding what to tweet and when and how to make best use of Facebook. There are no set rules for social media and it hasn't been around long enough to have proven, successful established, practices for everyone to follow. But that hasn't stopped corporations, organizations, campaigns, individuals or anyone or anything with a point of view they want to express from trying to figure out social media. Is social media a new means to advertise, self-promote, connect with family and friends, market and communicate, or is it a passing technology to be discarded with CB radios, the telegraph, and pagers.

Fortunately, this issue of *TDM Review*, our first on social media, will help shed light on this increasingly popular topic. The TDM community has begun to embrace social media and is coming up with various ways to make best use of this new communications platform. I know that you'll enjoy reading about how the TDM community is using social media to help change commuting behavior. Most importantly, you will be able to take the innovative approaches described in these pages and apply them in your own work.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing executive committee members, Lynn Overcashier and Elham Shirazi and outgoing board members for their service and dedication to ACT. I also want to thank and welcome our new executive committee

members Chris Simmons and Lynn Manion and board members who start their terms in 2011.

Our partnership with the International Parking Institute is continuing to grow. I recently attended the Pacific Intermountain Parking and Transportation Association (PIPTA)/Rocky Mountain ACT conference. This was first time a joint conference was held between a parking organization and one of our ACT chapters. There are talks of PIPTA and the Cascade holding another joint event next year in Oregon.

As always, I can be reached by email at bshaw@samschwartz.com or out of our Chicago office at (773) 305-0800. I welcome your comments, questions or concerns about ACT or TDM in general.

Editor's Note – Info Explo



Kay Carson
Project Director,
MassRIDES/URS
Corporation

other new social media services to their marketing & communications mix. See how your experience compares to the ones featured here and tweet your observations. Social media offers flexibility (share late-breaking news about roadway closures), cost-savings (how many fancy brochures do you really need?), and personality (travelers can tell their own stories). Be part of the Info Explo; don't just watch it happen.

For more information, or to find out about submitting articles, just [contact me](#).

Info Explo -- In this edition of TDM Review, we are looking at the explosion of information available to us...every minute of every day. In our field of Travel Demand Management, information is a key component. Where can I catch a bus? Is there someone I can carpool with? Can I safely ride my bicycle to work? If we want to reach people "where they are" – when they are open to new ideas about how to get where they are going – then, social media is our salvation. Our messages can now be delivered at the right time, to the right people. How great is that?

Guest Editor, Lynn Overcashier, has assembled a collection of articles looks carefully and playfully at social media – what it is and how it can be harnessed by the TDM industry. Across the country, programs are adding Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and countless

Our next edition of TDM Review will showcase how Vanpooling is creatively adapting to changing markets. ACT's Vanpool Council, led by Carolyn Newsome, is the Guest Editor. Here's what's ahead for 2011:

Green Matters - TDM Confronts Climate Change	GHG emissions reduction; carbon footprint; green culture at home & work		Q1 – 2011 deadline: 11/01/10
Money Talks - Financial Models to Support TDM	Congestion Pricing, PAYDrive Insurance, VMT Tax, Transit Subsidies, Carpool Incentives, Pre-Tax Benefits, Tax Credits, NTD/Vanpools		Q2 – 2011 deadline: 02/01/11
Metrics & Measures – Setting Goals & Tracking Progress	Effective and affordable evaluation tools that lead to successful outcomes	Phil Winters	Q3 – 2011 deadline: 05/01/11
Tweaking Transit - Customized Services to Extend Transit Reach	Shuttles, Shared Taxi, Carpool to Transit, Station Cars, Bicycle/Pedestrian-related infrastructure improvements		Q4 – 2011 deadline: 08/01/11

Guest Editors' Message



Lynn Overcashier
Program Manager
511 Contra Costa

INFO EXPLO

Today's information explosion, or "info explo" as this edition of TDM Review is titled, has taken information dissemination to an astounding new level. It was long after the ubiquitous use of computers that snail mail correspondence went by the wayside to more instantaneous email communications. Over the years, consumers' expectations about responsiveness and access to information has also changed dramatically. With the growing use of "smart" phones and other real-time information tools, social media formats have taken a new role in linking all kinds of users, be they friends, clients, customers, employers, the general public, traditional media or policy makers in ways never imagined even as recently as five years ago.

The mind reels when trying to imagine what changes will happen in the next five years, given the break-neck pace of communication via the many social media mechanisms that have been developed in the recent past. This edition of TDM Review will be a snapshot look at social media today and the new role it

is playing in the promotion of transportation demand management and encouraging the use of commute alternatives. It is being used with varying degrees of success and with varying social media methods, but I believe the train is out of the station, and to keep up in these dizzying times, we must all embrace these new opportunities to reach ever more mobile target audiences.

Enjoy this journey as we explore and share some of the experiences of fellow TDMers who are forging ahead in the "info explo"!

Lynn has been a Program Manager for 511 Contra Costa in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1992, having previously assisted local jurisdictions in drafting TDM Ordinances and implementing demand management plans. Her agency website www.511contracosta.org was one of the first TDM websites which was launched in 1996. Her programs continue to demonstrate innovation using social media, short-term promotions and tapping into standard media in new ways.

Join Us in Chicago!



The 2011 ACT International Conference will be held in Chicago, Ill. July 31 - August 3 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Stay tuned to www.actweb.com for details and updates throughout the year!

Beyond SAFETEA-LU – More TDM in the Mix

By Georgia Gann

The law directing federal surface transportation programs and policies (SAFETEA-LU) expired in September 2009. In the absence of a new transportation authorization, SAFETEA-LU has been extended several times. Legislation introduced last year in the House sets broad goals for congestion relief, community livability, and performance-based measures, but lacks a funding mechanism to pay for the \$450 billion bill. Both the Senate and the Administration are currently crafting their surface transportation authorization legislative proposals—debating federal transportation objectives, policy goals, and drafting legislative language. Without active movement on developing policy principles and legislative language, there is little chance that a comprehensive six-year authorization bill will be passed by the time the current extension of SAFETEA-LU expires on December 31st, 2010. An even larger obstacle to passage of a long-term authorization is the absence of an agreed-upon funding mechanism that would pay for the comprehensive bill. Both Congress and the Administration are hesitant to impose a gas tax increase, and other funding strategies have yet to gain sufficient support. Inaction would result in a fifth extension of the current law.

In June 2009, the House narrowly passed a broad energy and climate change bill with

a cap-and-trade provision. Soon after, a number of Democratic Senators produced an outline of various bills, with changes aimed at attracting Republican support. The proposed legislation included provisions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector broadly through increasing transportation options and improving overall transportation efficiency. Specifically, these measures include a focus on transportation demand management (TDM) and increased usage of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technologies. However, the effort to pass comprehensive energy and climate change legislation stalled amid competing priorities, such as health care and financial regulation. Late last month Congress shelved comprehensive legislation and instead offered a narrower energy bill to respond to the Gulf oil spill.

Although enactment of comprehensive transportation and energy and climate bills has been indefinitely postponed, draft legislation indicates broad policy objectives that include goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing congestion, and improving mobility. Congress, the Obama Administration, and transportation and environmental stakeholders have focused on transportation efficiency as one of the means for achieving these policy objectives. In coordination with TDM, infrastructure, and planning policies, ITS is increasing in importance as an alternative to improve transportation efficiency. Not only

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is there a push for extended deployment of established ITS methods of traffic flow maintenance through increased use of traffic signal control, container management systems, variable message signs etc., there is an increased recognition that not only do these systems need to be deployed but the information and data they produce need to be better disseminated to the commuting public by working with employers, developers and utilizing social media. As such new technologies are expanding and being applied outside traditional realms.

For example, the recently introduced Carpool Equity Act combines aspects of TDM with ITS to promote mobility options, decrease

congestion, and reduce emissions through encouraging carpooling as an alternative to driving alone to work. The Carpool Equity Act (HR 5129), sponsored by Congressman Hodes from New Hampshire, expands the transit portion of the transportation fringe benefit to include carpooling. Transit fringe benefits include a subsidized or pre-tax benefit offered by employers to their employees that can be applied to transit, vanpool, or bicycling costs incurred on their commute to and from work. By providing a monetary incentive, this legislation encourages carpooling to work. When the transit fringe benefit was originally written, technology was unavailable to provide accurate payment

records and substantiation for those who carpool. However, with advances in technology employers can verify when employees carpool and identify and quantify specific costs for reimbursement. The Carpool Equity Act is an example of the expanded role of TDM and ITS in addressing broad policy objectives through improving transportation efficiency.

ACT and the Public Policy Council are working with Congress and the Obama Administration to provide guidance, technical assistance and other support.

Georgia Gann is an Associate with *Pavluchuk & Associates in Washington, D.C.*

Twitter-Dee-Dum: How Social Networking Will Change Ridematching Forever



By John W. Martin

Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr.

Is your program savvy to the new social media? Have you harnessed the awesome power of social networks? Do you want to, but don't know how?

Sit back and read on. We are going to share the TDM industry's mindset on social networking, often referred to as social media or new media, and help you understand how social networking is transforming ridematching. We'll discuss best practices such as the work coming from RIDE Solutions in Roanoke, Virginia (Figure 1) and RideFinders in Richmond, Virginia, and leave you with some actionable ideas on what to do next.

First, let's establish a common definition to make sure we are all using the same terms and then set the record straight on how big social networking has become.

Social networks are defined by academics as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3)



Figure 1

view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.” A more relevant definition for our discussion, however, is “a way to use available technologies (Internet, cell phones, PDAs, etc.) and compatible software applications to locate friends, co-workers and other people of interest to facilitate shared rides.

In this article, the term social networks or social networking are interchangeable with new social media or social media.

How Big Is Social Networking Now?

Social media is much bigger than most people think. Eric Qualman in his book *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business* asks the question “Is social media a fad? Or the biggest shift since the Industrial Revolution?” Statistics from his book clearly make the case...

Welcome to the Revolution!

It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million users. TV took 13 years. The Internet took four while iPod did it in three. And, Facebook added 100 million users in less than nine months!

If Facebook were a country it would be the world's fourth largest, right after the United States and just before Indonesia. According to Facebook, it now has more than 300 million active users. Fifty percent of its active users log on to Facebook in any given day. More than six billion minutes are spent on Facebook each day (worldwide), and the fastest growing demographic is those 35 years old and older.

Social media has overtaken porn as the #1 activity on the Web.

One out of eight couples married in the United States last year met via social media. Eighty percent of companies are using LinkedIn as a primary tool to find employees. The #2 largest search

engine in the world is YouTube.

And, Generation Ys - born between 1982 and 2001 - also known as Millennials, are leading the way. According to a recent Pew Research Survey, 75 percent of Gen Ys have a profile on a social networking site. Half of Gen X-ers, those born between 1965 and 1981, and a third of Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, have personal networking sites, too (Figure 2). We'll explore generational differences in-depth later in the article.

Revolution indeed! But what does this mean for the TDM industry? Is the traditional government-sponsored ridematching program in danger of extinction? Are social networks ready for prime time in TDM marketing?

Social Networks Have Already Taken Root In The TDM Industry

The answer may be found in a recent TDM industry study conducted by Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR), a 45 year-old marketing research firm that specializes in TDM and transportation research.

Figure 2



SIR designed an online study targeting TDM program managers who are members of the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) TDM listserv. SIR heard from 91 respondents. While not a perfectly representative sample, this industry pulse affords a good “directional snapshot” of how TDM industry leaders are currently using social networks to advance ridesharing.

Approximately half (45%) of the survey respondents reported that their TDM program uses social networking. Of those who use social networking, Facebook and Twitter appear to be leading the way at 28 percent and 22 percent, respectively (Figure 3). But the jury is still out on their effectiveness. Just 12 percent of those programs that use social networking said that social networks have been effective in increasing the incidence of ridesharing. It's not that the balance feel these networks are ineffective, many simply don't know how to access the impact of these social networks on their program.

When it comes to third-party on-line ridematching services, one in four TDM program managers who answered the survey said they now promote (Figure 4) these kind of specialty services. NuRide and Craigslist top the list. Perhaps more surprising, one out of five of these managers (21 percent) have already found that promoting third-party online ridematching services has been effective in increasing the incidence of ridesharing for their programs.

Projected Evolution of TDM's Social Networking Market

Based on what we have seen so far, social net-

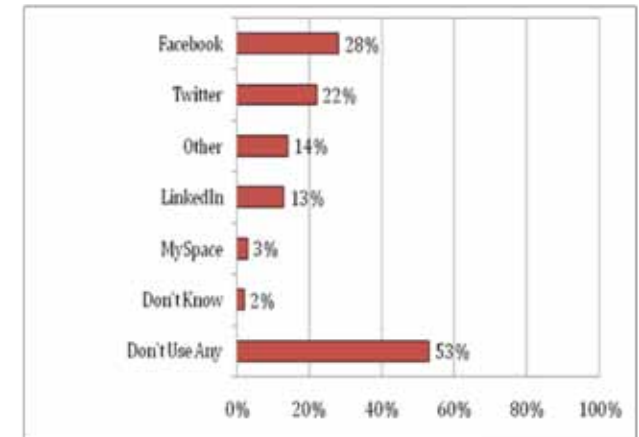
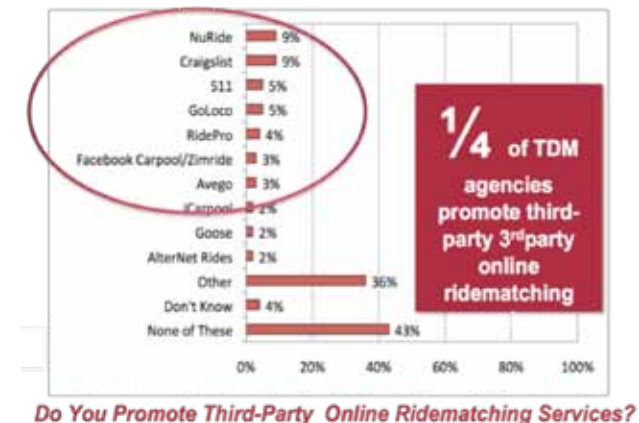


Figure 3



Do You Promote Third-Party Online Ridematching Services?

Figure 4

working has taken root in the TDM industry and will experience dramatic growth in the years ahead. And, like most social causes, this movement will evolve through several natural phases.

Phase One: Communication & Outreach of the Rideshare Cause 2007-2008

While Facebook and Twitter have been around since 2004 and 2006, respectively, TDM agen-

cies first started tinkering with them in 2007 to build awareness of and advocacy support for their TDM programs.

One of the best examples of awareness building is Ride Solutions in Roanoke, Virginia. Jeremy Holmes, Ride Solutions' Program Director and well-respected TDM thought-leader in Virginia sums up it up this way:

"Being active with social networking tools also raises the profile of our program, broadens awareness of our mission, and helps build credibility as experts in the field of commute options. This can help us when trying to implement other services or in encouraging other modes."

Jeremy uses social networking to announce and introduce program participants and service enhancements to Ride Solutions' growing network, building a sense of momentum and community of like-minded people. Visit www.ridesolutions.org and see how this relatively small TDM agency makes itself look big by connecting to other social network tools like Craigslist rideshare boards (local area), YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr (see Figure 1).

A great example of using social media to build a supporter base is just across the state in Richmond, Virginia. GRTC Transit System and its TDM agency RideFinders use social networks to build and sustain the "Friends of Transit" advocacy group (www.transittalk.com). This support group grew to 600 members in its first 30 days of life. Current membership level is approaching 1,800 – that's 1,800 business and community leaders GRTC and RideFinders can call on when they need them. A second advocacy group, STIR (www.projectstir.org), focused on TDM and sus-

tainable transportation, is now forming to complement Friends of Transit.

Phase Two: Ridematching Service Introduction (2009-2010)

The current phase, Phase Two, is using social networks and specifically designed software for ridematching. Two of the most high profile examples referenced earlier are Zimride and NuRide.

Zimride (www.zimride.com), one of the many new online ridematching services, has been particularly innovative in its partnership with Facebook to reach both university and business riders. According to John Zimmer, Zimride's COO and co-founder:

"We embrace ridesharing as a social activity and Facebook provides a rich social context to connect and establish trust. Zimriders can view profiles for common networks, interests and friends before deciding to share a ride."

Zimride has 45 public and private college and university programs and is growing rapidly! At Cornell University, Zimride signed up 3,000 users (20 percent of the student population) in the first six months of the program resulting in 400 monthly rides taken. Its efforts have not gone unnoticed by the business community either. This interest has recently resulted in start-up networks at Wal-Mart and Cigna. Its partnership with Facebook has resulted in 300,000 registered users across all of its networks.

NuRide (www.nuride.com) is another booming online social network-inspired service that exemplifies how to build a community of riders (or NuRiders).



NuRide is a regionally focused commuter rewards program where individuals sign up for free and record their carpool, vanpool, bike, walk, telecommute and public transit trips and earn rewards. NuRide's unique selling proposition includes a critical and proven motivator to trial and, ultimately, consumer behavioral change — incentives or rewards. The philosophy is simple, according to Rick Steele, NuRide's CEO and co-founder:

"In a traditional ridematch system, the rider gives information, finds (or doesn't find) a match and leaves the system. In NuRide, you've joined a network of commuters who keep coming back because of the rewards resulting in an ever increasing database that stays engaged. A commuter may take the bus one day then carpool the next, or telecommute on Fridays and vanpool every Monday. Regardless of the activity, commuters keep coming back for rewards and that keeps them engaged."

And, by all accounts, NuRide's approach appears to keep them coming back. To date, NuRide's network has nearly 47,000 registered users who have reduced 3.8 million vehicle trips



and prevented 45,000 tons of emissions all while earning \$2,000,000 in rewards from 300 local and national sponsors.

Phase Three: Mainstream Ridematching 2010-2015

While both Zimride and NuRide are leading the way in results-oriented ridematching using social networks, they are gated by the number of registered participants. Over the next few years, however, this challenge should start to take care of itself as service use penetration of both services (registration and active use) in their respective market areas - universities and cities where each play, reaches the critical mass necessary to make ridematching a mass-market product.

The recent emergence of “real-time” applications or “apps” for smart phones like Apple’s iPhone, however, may be the tipping point that truly makes ridematching a ubiquitous service and common practice. One such app is Avego™ Shared Transport (www.avego.com).

Avego offers real-time search capability from the convenience of your cell phone. According to its Web site (www.avego.com), Avego™ Shared Transport enables private cars and vans to become

part of the public transport network by providing a marketplace for drivers to offer their vacant seats to others in real time. A driver with vacant seats is dynamically matched with any rider who requests transport along the same route at the same time. The cost of the journey is automatically and fairly calculated and charged to the rider. According to Tom Vanderbilt, the author of the New York Times bestselling book *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)*, writing recently on Slate.com:

“The most promising app I saw is the carpooling app Avego (currently in a “launch and learn state”), which is described as a “cross between carpooling, public transit, and eBay,” with a user reputation/feedback mechanism included; it also would include a payment function—i.e., a way to help out with gas money—which, as one rideshare expert put it to me, ‘is always awkward in person.’”

Another promising iPhone app is Carticipate (www.carticipate.com). According to its Web site, this app is the first rideshare application on a location-aware mobile platform. iPhone users tell the app where they are going. Carticipate knows where you are (via iPhone’s built-in GPS) and finds Carticipate registered drivers or riders along the way. Carticipate works with Facebook, too.



It’s just a matter of time before there are hundreds of rideshare and trip planning apps like Avego and Carticipate as it’s becoming an apps world. iPhone users have already downloaded over a billion apps from games to business. As experts predict that smart phone penetration will continue to grow at an exponential rate, one day in the not so distant future, sharing a ride may just be a finger tap away.

Phase Four: Organic Ridematching 2015 & Beyond

As the Web and online data mining develop further, we will no longer search for products and services; they will find us via social media. This is already happening with travel sites. Frequent flyer clubs now offer to match you with fellow travelers headed to your same destination. You don’t ask for it. The service just knows you may have a need. In the not too distant future, the same will be true for ridesharing.



Social Networking Will Change Ridematching Forever

All signs point to social networking changing the face of ridematching forever. The technology has arrived and will only improve. The networks of available riders will continue to expand. And, perhaps, most importantly, a new kind of commuter is arriving in the workplace — Gen Ys or Millennials, an age cohort that's literally wired for ridesharing arrangements facilitated by social networks.

Gen Ys, America's largest generation, were born between 1982 and 2001. Today, this generation—80 million strong—is leading the TDM charge. In a recent TDM study exploring the relationship between gas prices and ridesharing, the Southeastern Institute of Research found that Gen Ys are trying transit at a greater rate than other generations (Figure 5). This trend is being driven by a number of factors.

First, Gen Ys have replaced the Boomer-inspired 60 hour work week with set 38-40 hour work schedule. Baby Boomers “live to work.” Gen Ys (and Gen Xers for that matter) appear to have their work-life balance a little more balanced. They “work to live.” Consequently, Gen Ys' standard nine-to-five work schedule is more conducive to ridesharing arrangements — meeting fellow ridesharers or catching a fixed route bus.

Second, Gen Ys are part of the national trend towards urban living, which is more convenient to public transportation. Related to this more urban lifestyle, the SIR's study found that America's younger generation of ridesharers are just not as car-centric as their Baby Boomer counterparts

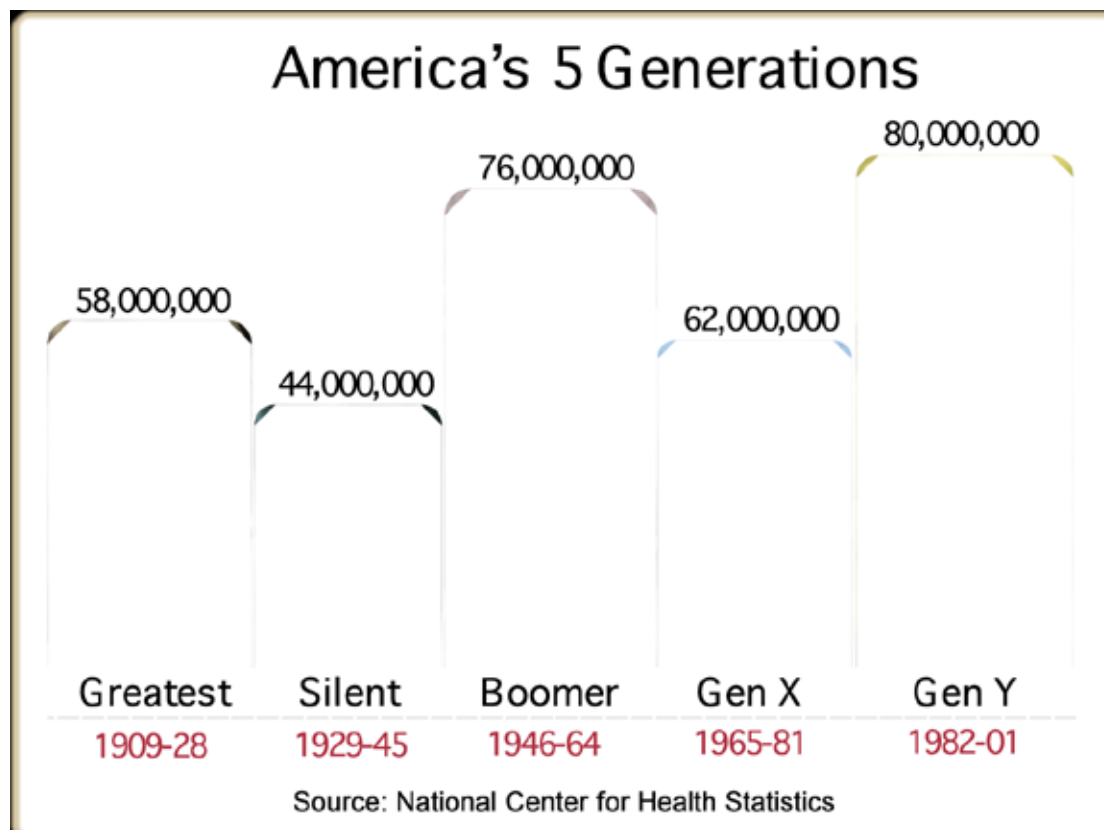


Figure 5

(Figure 6). Among ridesharers, the study found the generational discrepancy even larger when asked how difficult life would be without a car (Figure 7). It appears that Gen Ys may be more suited for a car free lifestyle.

On top of these powerful lifestyle trends, Gen Ys, more than any other generation is wired to embrace and use new technologies like social networking. This is simply based on their life experience and can be best understood in the context of Moore's Law, the theory that is named after Intel co-founder Gordon E. Moore, who eloquently and succinctly described the pace of

computer technology by stating that the number of transistors that can be placed inexpensively on an integrated circuit has and will double approximately every two years. If you overlay Moore's Law on a diagram of America's generations (Figure 8), you quickly see that the fastest pace of technological advancements has happened during the entire life span of Gen Ys — America's digital natives. Since birth, Gen Ys have grown up tethered to technology and instant communication. So what may seem like technology leaps to most older generations, is hardly noticed by this younger co-hort. They multi-task

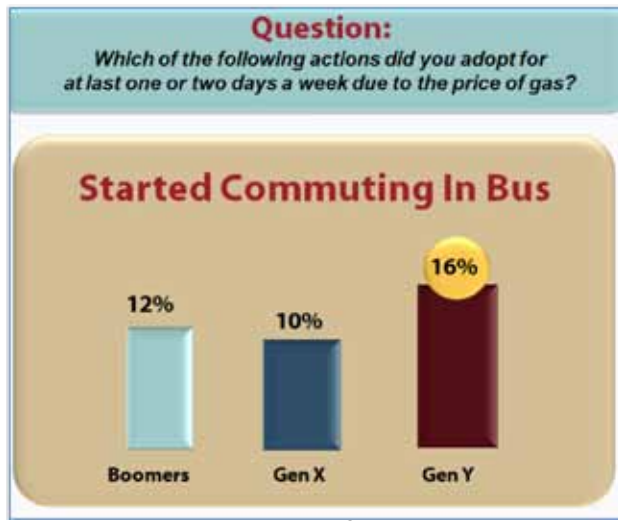


Figure 6

and “fail forward” with each new gadget, intuitively figuring it out without ever reading or even needing instructions. The implication for ride-matching and ridesharing? As a greater portion of this enormous generation (remember, Gen Ys are 80 million in size) enters the workforce, they will bring their technological savvy and need for instantaneous connections with them. This, in turn, will support an even greater use of social networking-supported ridematching, and ultimately ridesharing.

If you’re not focused on Gen Ys now, you should be. Projecting the impact of Moore’s Law into the future, it’s reasonable to see that successive generations will likely have more in common with Gen Ys than with Xers or Boomers. Any investment in serving Gen Y will have a “coat-tail effect” as the technologies, customs and social norms favored by Gen Y will influence future generations for years to come.

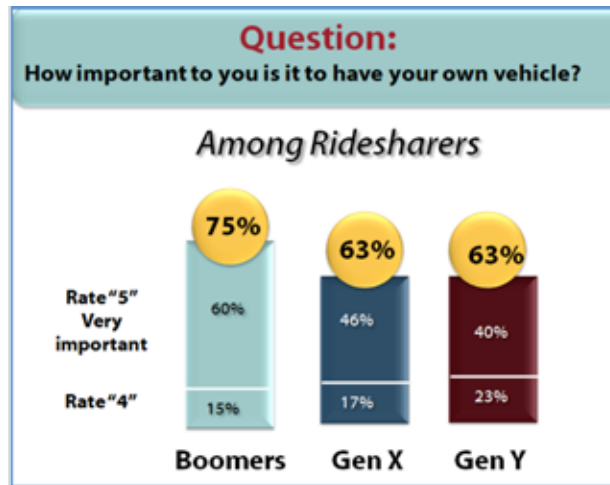


Figure 7

What To Do Next

Are social networks ready for prime time in TDM industry? Unequivocally, Yes.

If you haven’t already done so, look for ways to use social networking to build awareness, advocacy and support your current ridematching in your market. If you want to move beyond tying into social networks like Facebook and Craigslist in order to complement your own ridematching service, invite some of the third-party custom-designed social network-driven ridematching services like NuRide, Zimride, GoLoco, RideShark, and others to give you an online sales presentation.

But before you do, as with any new program exploration, make sure you line up the right questions to ask, particularly if this will be your program’s primary ridematching service. Here are 10 major issues to consider:

1. Critical mass of registrants: Are there enough

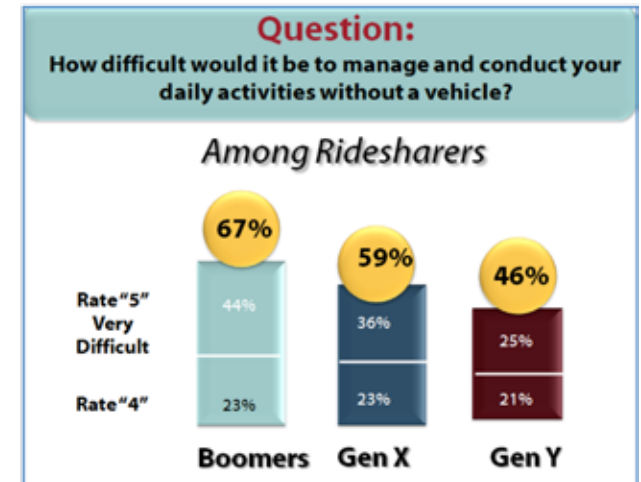


Figure 8

registrants to make the system meaningful for users to ensure viable matches happen?

2. Safety features: Can users select what personal information they want to share?
3. Rewards/incentives: Are rewards available to fuel trial?
4. Ease of use: How intuitive is the service from a users’ perspective? (Remember, Gen Ys don’t read instructions).
5. Links to existing social networks: are these relevant and meaningful. How many relevant local contacts do they offer?
6. User rating system – can you monitor the users collective experience?
7. Partnerships: What other relationships will they bring to the table? For example, Zimride has ties with ZipCar.
8. Marketing savvy and willingness to partner with you and fair pricing: No TDM agency has enough funding. Everyone needs strategic partners that can help leverage scarce budget

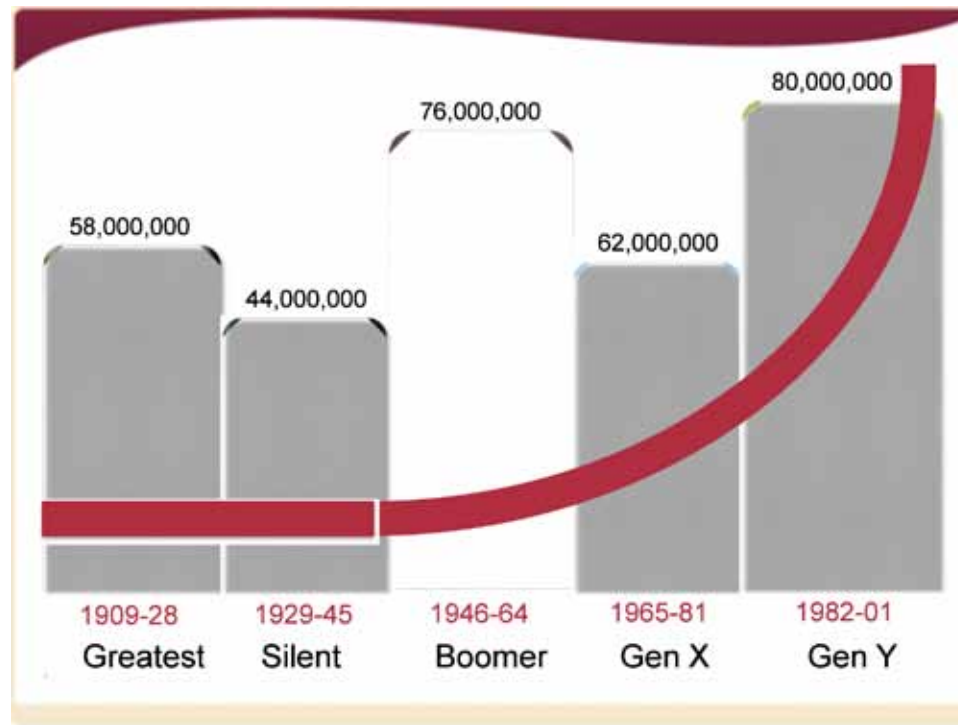


Figure 9

resources.

9. Company's future roll-out plans and staying power as technology evolves: Will the parent firm invest in this evolution? Do they have the financial staying power?
10. Strategic fit: When it is all said and done, it comes down to strategic fit. Does the service and brand reputation align with your TDM agency's brand and core values as an organization?

The last two issues, company resources (#9) and strategic fit (#10), are particularly important for large regional ridematching programs that are housed within a Council of Governments or regional commission. These ridematching services

often utilize comprehensive ridematching software built exclusively for their own service area. While these legacy systems may not be as sexy as new social networking ridematching services, it's a given that high-profile governmental organizations can't afford high-profile mistakes. It may make practical sense in these cases to simultaneously offer two systems – the legacy ridematching system that comes with all the assurances and controls expected of a regional government, as well as connections to one of the new social networking options.

In conclusion, regardless of the size of your TDM agency or market, if you haven't already, now is the time to join the social networking movement. Ridematching via social networking technology is not only here to stay, it has a very bright

future. Sure, some will shun it and others may never have a clue that it's even available. But we believe, over time, the vast majority of ridesharers will use this technology and, in so doing, change ridematching forever.

John W. Martin is President and CEO of the Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc. (www.sirresearch.com), a 45-year-old marketing research firm headquartered in Richmond, Virginia. SIR has conducted over 13,000 studies for Fortune 1000 companies, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations. In addition to heading up SIR, John is the co-founder and CEO of The Boomer Project (www.boomerproject.com), a national research-based marketing "think tank" that tracks generational trends and provides strategic consultation on how to effectively communicate with each generation – Gen Ys, Gen X, Baby Boomers and Silent Generation. You can contact John at 804.358.8981 or jwcm@sirresearch.com.

Using New Media Strategies – Web 2.0 and Social Networking Sites for TDM Programs



By Jessica Horne and Frank Mongioi



With emerging new technologies that affect our media consumption habits, more and more marketing experts are discovering that traditional marketing channels may no longer be as effective and sufficient for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) campaigns. Since consumer's lives are busier, there is less of an opportunity for TDM

professionals to make an impact on potential customers. While our campaigns may continue to utilize traditional marketing channels such as radio, earned media and online advertising, we continue to find that these tactics are no longer sufficient if used exclusively of each other.

Emerging technologies such as Social Networking Sites (SNS) are opening up opportunities for new marketing strategies and techniques. And the best part --- anyone can do it and it requires less TDM funding than traditional marketing budgets. One example is

the ICF International managed New York State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) Clean Air NY TDM program which implements an integrated marketing campaign. The campaign utilizes new technologies including YouTube, Facebook, Blogger.com, and Twitter. These new media and social networking tools help to maintain a 24/7 dialogue with the TDM audience/market and to attract new partners and/or fans through viral techniques. In just the first 15 months on Facebook, the Clean Air NY initiative generated 10,000+ fans as well as more than 200 Twitter followers including Sam Champion of Good Morning America, who started following Clean Air NY earlier this year. Due to Clean Air NY's success on Facebook, the program was recently recognized as one of the Kbuzz's Top 40 Fan Pages on Facebook for 2010.

In addition to the SNS platforms, other new media including use of text messaging campaigns and downloadable widgets can also be cost effective.

Most Successful SNS Platforms for TDM

Facebook

In planning an integrated TDM marketing campaign that utilizes SNS, it is useful to understand the demographic, statistics and

market saturation of certain sites like Facebook. It is easy to be deceived by the generalization that sites like Facebook are for the youngest populations. On the contrary, nearly 40% of US Facebook users are between the ages of 35 and 65. See chart from InsideFacebook.com, January 1, 2010.

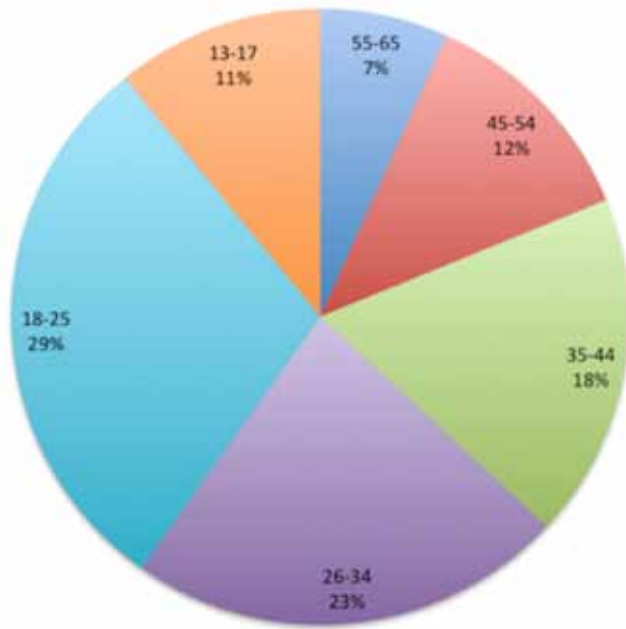
As of December 2009, Facebook was ranked the third most popular Web site in the U.S. - following Google and Yahoo. More than 100 million Americans use Facebook and 93% of Americans believe that companies should have a presence on Facebook. In addition, the interactive element of Facebook may allow you to get closer to your TDM audience than you have ever been before. Comment posts, picture posts and accepting invitation and participation in events can all be part of your customer service feedback loop. Just take a look at these statistical insights (facebook.com statistics) of the average user:

- Becomes a fan of 2 pages each month
- Is a member of 12 groups
- Spends more than 55 minutes per day on Facebook
- Clicks the Like button on 9 items of content each month
- Writes 25 comments on Facebook content each month
- Is invited to 3 events per month

Has Facebook reached its plateau? No, the number of Facebook users grew by more than 140% (Facebook Social Ads Platform) over the past year. In the US, as Facebook usage is exploding, only 14% (allfacebook.com) of the population are active users. So there is still a large

US Facebook Users by Age

InsideFacebook.com, 1/1/2010



opportunity for upward growth.

What was once a college student trend has become a global phenomenon that allows Americans to identify and interact with brands. Facebook has become the most strategic and cost effective way to reach and connect with an audience.

Many companies create a Facebook Page which contains extensive marketing tactics that helps customers learn more about a brand. A Facebook page includes a profile picture, description, contact information, Web site URL hyperlinks, news feeds/status alerts, discussion boards, photos and videos. In addition, companies can

post produced broadcast materials which allows for a longer shelf life, relevant articles, blogs and upcoming events.

SNS users can “like” (recently changed from “fans”) a Facebook Page and interact with the brand and one another, write wall postings or comment on Page statuses. Any interaction they have on the Page will appear in their friend’s newsfeed which causes a viral effect because that person’s friend can “like” the Page as well.

A organization’s success on Facebook is based on how many people who “like” their page, actually interact on their page. For this reason, Facebook social ads are an effective way to recruit an organization’s ideal customer. Social ads can target Facebook users by more than just basic demographics since a users profile tells their life story. Users can be targeted on their birthdays, or based on their job, interest or hobbies. Ads can be revised quickly, providing an opportunity to incorporate real-time notifications into the advertising strategy.

Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging platform where opt-in users can receive tweets directly on their cell phones, RSS reader and/or e-mail. With close to 1 million users, Twitter is a great tool to send out real-time updates to followers. New York State Department of Transportation’s 511NY program uses twitter to report all New York related traffic, travel and transit-related incidents and updates via region.

Twitter allows TDM programs to share real-time transportation and air quality updates.

In addition it could help expand a network of potential ride-sharer customers and connect with meteorologists and reporters.

YouTube

YouTube is another strategic SNS platform that allows for viral video sharing. A TDM program can create its own YouTube channel that includes information about the organization and its services. In the channel set-up, an organization can upload program logo; choose colors that closely resemble branding elements and a program description that contains a call to action.

A TDM programs’ YouTube channel can include videos from events, press conferences as well as spokesperson radio interviews. In addition, an organization can convert radio and television spots and public service announcements and uploaded them to YouTube.

One of the many benefits of YouTube is that it helps to extend broadcast reach and increases repeats online without requiring additional media placement dollars. Another way to increase frequency of views with YouTube is by automatically populating other SNS platforms – Facebook Pages and Blogs – with YouTube videos.

Blog

Creating a blog enhances search engine listings and provides additional exposure of a TDM program. An organization blog can be created via existing blog platforms (i.e. Blogger and Word Press) or by adding blog features to a program Web site. It is beneficial to create a blog

editorial calendar to strategically align blog posts to consumer holidays, seasons, events and most searched keywords and topics. Inviting customers, partners and stakeholders to contribute content as guest bloggers is another way to leverage existing resources/partnerships and expand readership.

Users can subscribe to a blog via a RSS feed for regular article updates and alerts. An organization blog is another beneficial SNS strategy that educates the public beyond basic e-newsletters and website.

Text Messaging

As mentioned above text messaging can also be a great strategy for reaching your TDM customers. According to the CTIA- The Wireless Association, by the end of 2009, 5 billion text messages were sent per day in the United States. Using text messages to send real-time ozone alerts and travel option updates will reach your customer's on a medium that they are constantly checking. Results can be tracked easily by using keyword codes to decipher where an individual opted-in to receive text messaging.

Clean Air NY offers real-time updates on the air quality status so that partners can make informed decisions about choosing air quality friendly travel options on Air Quality Action Days. Text messages are sent to encourage partners to regularly carpool or take public transit, as well as bike or walk to work and school on good air quality days throughout the year. Since its introduction in April 2008, more than 3,000 people have signed on to receive text message updates on air quality in the region, in addition to

the 15,000+ people who opted in to receive them via e-mail.

Downloadable Widgets

Another successful way to get in front of your audience on a daily basis is with a downloadable desktop widget. Widgets are a convenient avenue for providing tips, updates and alerts. In addition, they can advertise SNS platforms, ride-matching systems and provide transit information. A downloadable widget can also engage customers by posting information about Rideshare Month, Bike to Work Week and Earth Day.

Integrate New Technologies into Overall Marketing Strategy

Using these new technologies will result in penetrating the market in ways TDM organizations have not been able to in the past. It allows ride-sharing and alternative commute messaging to have a larger impact on current customers, in addition to reaching new audiences.

These new technologies can truly enhance an organization or program's presence; so it is crucial to fully integrate these platforms into traditional marketing strategies to ensure the messages reach their potential. Clean Air NY and 511NY's program Web sites' feature SNS links and tags on every landing page. In addition, a program's Web site can be enhanced by displaying real-time Twitter feeds and Facebook posts.

Integration of new technologies in traditional marketing practices also allows for optimal results. Clean Air NY includes their text messaging

campaign in all of their advertising – out-of-home and online. In addition, Clean Air NY has included all SNS platform tags and text messaging information on their marketing collateral materials, in earned media radio interviews and print articles. The greater the integration and exposure the more successful an organization's new technology ventures will be.

If you have not already, we encourage you to start your own cost-effective, grass roots, campaign by setting up your own TDM program Facebook Pages, Twitter feeds, YouTube Channel and maximizing the little or no-cost features of these new technologies.

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Ms. Horne is ICF International's Marketing and Outreach Associate for the Clean Air NY program. She has almost five years of experience in marketing and community outreach, including air quality programs with emphasis on non-governmental organizations, businesses, and the general public. Mr. Mongioi serves as ICF's Marketing & Outreach Manager for the Clean Air NY program. He has more than 13 years of experience in transportation demand management (TDM) and air quality programs with expertise in marketing and outreach to employers and consumers.

When Viral is Good – How Social Media Can Engage Travelers and Boost TDM Effectiveness



Lynn Overcashier
Program Manager
511 Contra Costa

Is it possible to use social media and social networking to reduce travel demand?

At least one regional organization—511 Contra Costa (511CC), a transportation demand management agency serving Northern California's Contra Costa County—thinks so, and our experience in the field suggests that our success is replicable nationwide.

In many ways, the challenge is daunting. The county's 19 cities are served by nine different transit agencies, two of which also serve the greater Bay Area - making transit for the first-time user a formidable task. Many parts of the region are poorly served by bus or rail, and—according to data from the Housing and Transportation Affordability Index—the majority of households in Contra Costa County spent over 20% of their income on gas in 2008. Moreover, as Bay Area transit agencies reduce service to meet budget cuts, it becomes even more important to reach out to those who can benefit most from alternative forms of transportation.

Despite these speed bumps, most county residents can, with the right incentives, commute to work by transit or carpool, at least part of the time. In 2007, 511CC aggressively expanded its use of evolving technologies for social media, and has helped a growing percentage of the commuters and employers in Contra Costa County discover that commute alternatives are accessible, affordable, and—with access to the right information—easy to use. Among the sea full of available social media networks and tools, 511CC has chosen to focus the following: Twitter, Facebook, and blogging.

What's in a Tweet?

If you're well-versed in the social networking platform called Twitter, you'll know that a Tweet is a single, 140-character message sent to anyone following you on Twitter's network. Tweets may also contain a link to a website or another Twitter user's profile. Our Tweets at 511 Contra Costa stream live at <http://twitter.com/511cc>, but they can be repackaged and displayed anywhere. You can see our latest updates next to the blue bird on the top-left corner of our website (<http://511contracosta.org>).

Let's say we're feeling particularly nice one Monday morning and want to give away free coffee. We'd turn on the computer and send out the following Tweet:

511 Contra Costa is offering free coffee to the first 100 commuters to visit our website today. <http://511cc.org/aWE4WA>.

Anyone following the agency would drop everything, go to the link in the message, and get their free coffee. Pretty simple, right? Well, that's basically all there is to it—with a few bits of lingo thrown in to make things interesting.

Sick of Traditional Marketing? Go Viral!

Going viral is shorthand for what happens when your messages take on a life of their own.

Getting your promotion out to the community relies on things called mentions and retweets. Mentions and wreaths? No, I said mentions and retweets! When a Twitter user refers to another Twitter user in a tweet, the tweet is known as a "mention". The format of a mention is the @ symbol followed by a Twitter username. For example, someone may refer to 511CC in a tweet by writing:

@511CC has great free transit maps on their website!

This way, people who have used 511CC's services can easily point their friends to our services.

A retweet (RT) occurs when a Twitter user copies another Twitter user's Tweet, word-

for-word, and posts it as his/her own. Let's say someone on twitter named Caffeinated_Commuter saw the free coffee Tweet from before and wants to spread the word. They would then send the following message from their account:

*RT @511CC 511 Contra Costa is offering free coffee to the first 100 commuters to visit our website today.
<http://511cc.org/aWE4WA>*

Anyone following Caffeinated_Commuter who didn't see the original message will become aware of the program. About 300 people now follow 511CC's feed, and we routinely see tweets like this from our followers:

@511CC Hey 511CC, do you know of a good cycling map for accessing the new ped/bike path on the Benicia Bridge from Concord? Thanks.

By monitoring what your followers are saying, you can stay up to date on the latest questions or concerns that your target market may have and interact with those most in need of your knowledge and services. In the case of transportation demand management agencies, this level of interaction with the public is invaluable because it occurs in real time, giving your organization the opportunity to address questions and concerns as they arise.

Speaking of Monitoring...

You might wonder whether someone in your office is supposed to spend the whole day staring

at Twitter.com until someone asks a question. Fortunately for the intern's sanity, this isn't necessary. There are dozens of applications available that allow you to manage your Twitter account(s) and followers. A few of them include: TweetDeck, HootSuite, Seesmic, and twirl. TweetDeck allows you to keep track of multiple streams of information, which are organized in columns. For example, every time someone mentions you in a tweet, it will show up in a column containing only @ replies. Direct messages sent to your Twitter account will show up in another column. HootSuite allows you to go one step further, scheduling tweets to post at a future date and time (a feature not available with TweetDeck). Many tools also support posting to multiple platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace from a single interface, facilitating what can be a cumbersome responsibility to reach out to more than one network with the same message.

In addition, many applications support the creation of custom, more advanced filtering systems. These allow your organization to filter all followers' tweets to just view those containing key words and phrases. For example, 511CC can create a filter showing only tweets that contain the phrase "Contra Costa County." Every time a follower tweets a message containing "Contra Costa County," it will show up in the column. Filtered tweets can increase your awareness about which services you provide well, or which services can be improved. Some fictional examples of tweets that would provide such information are, respectively:

"Contra Costa County transit is great!" and "The bus service in Contra Costa County is confusing."

By creating filters with the most meaningful key words and phrases to your organization's services, you can track what people are saying and when—and sometimes why. The best part about keyword monitoring is that you can respond to each person individually when a question or concern arises, or use it as a platform for encouraging activities such as biking to work or carpooling. As a result, you can begin to function as a dynamic, responsive agency that is both aware and sensitive to the needs of its customers.

To grow its pool of followers, 511CC markets its Twitter account by encouraging mentions and retweets. Every month, new followers, those who RT, or those who mention 511CC have a chance to win a \$25 coffee gift card. Usually, when the winner is chosen, 511CC is mentioned in a tweet, which increases our visibility to others. Here is an actual tweet from a recent winner:

@511CC woot! got my \$25 Peet's gift cards! thanks again! everyone from contra costa county should follow @511CC to get a chance to win!

Sometimes, fans of the organization mention 511CC in a tweet without any prompting.

@511CC you guys do great work!

There are other, more prominent organizations on Twitter, such as The Contra

Costa Times newspaper (@CCTimes) or the State of California (@CAgovernment). These organizations have nearly 2,000 and over 5,000 followers, respectively, and whenever either organization retweets a tweet of 511CC, we are immediately granted access to a wider network of Twitter users, significantly increasing our organization's reach.

What else do we Tweet about other than free coffee? Mostly, our messages are about promotions and incentives related to alternative transportation, air quality alerts, and news about local transit agencies. Many of our Tweets link to our own website, effectively cross-promoting our two main communication platforms. Other transportation demand agencies interested in a similar program should carefully determine the needs of their constituents to develop a Twitter profile enticing enough to follow.

More than just 140 characters: the 511CC blog
(<http://511contracosta.org/blog>)

Just because it's been around for longer than Tweeting, blogging is a practice that's probably familiar to all readers of "TDM Review". Although it seems like everyone is blogging these days, from politicians to your own teenager, it has yet to really pick up in the public sector, and many agencies that do use blogs fail to keep them updated.

The most important thought to keep in mind about blogging is to keep content fresh and frequent so Webizens will keep coming back to your site. The commenting feature on most blogs can also be a valuable medium through

which an agency can answer questions from the community on important issues or discuss the subject matter of the blog post in greater detail. With a static website containing content that is rarely updated, this simply isn't possible.

In discussions that 511 Contra Costa has held with other transit agencies, the chief concern with the blogging approach to community outreach is that commenters might post complaints or unhelpful comments in a public forum. However, with our experience, negative comments are rare. Even in the case where people are legitimately unhappy, the commenting feature has a flipside: people can see both the original issue AND our amazingly quick, publicly-issued response to their concern.

Check out the comment-thread on the following post:

<http://www.511contracosta.org/shuffle-your-commute-with-a-free-deck-of-cards/>

What you'll see is that people are generally excited about the free deck of cards we gave away as part of a promotion to encourage alternative commuting. A few people were concerned about how long delivery would take, and we were able to write back right away letting them know the day we sent out their gift.

Why all the content? Wouldn't it be better just to have a few large web pages and posts rather than a lot of short blog posts?

There's another (hidden) reason to keep your blog updated with relevant content. Relevant content is the key to making your website visible on Google. The practice of fine-tuning one's

website content to rank higher in search engines is called search engine optimization (SEO). Blogging can add great value to a site's ability to rank high in search engine results if the blog writer employs effective SEO techniques, and those annoying comments, previously a point of concern, simply create more fodder for search engines to better find your site.

A well-written blog post will be embedded with rich keywords and phrases that are relevant to the organization's services and goals, which in turn will help bolster the organization's ranking in search results. 511 Contra Costa has employed such techniques and creates 2-4 blog posts weekly related to biking, air quality, local transit agency information and other TDM subjects. As a result of 511CC's blogging efforts, two of its top five visited pages are blog posts, that—when combined—account for nearly 15% of the website's unique page views in the last month.

About a year ago, we wrote a post about the opening of a bicycle/pedestrian path over a local interstate bridge, and received a question about the rule for taking dogs on the path. As comments about this specific query increased, 511CC added more relevant content to the blog post on the bridge's canine friendliness. If you want to see how this affected the site's Google search rankings, visit <http://imgtfy.com/?q=benicia+bridge+dogs>.

511CC on Facebook

Facebook is another great way to reach a lot of people, because—as we all know—Twitter

is not for everyone. By having a personalized landing website within the Facebook network, an organization or individual can display information about who they are and what they do. On a Facebook page, the organization or individual can also post status updates which are similar to tweets. If a Facebook user indicates that they 'like' your organization, they have implicitly agreed to receive any status updates you post, and they now have the ability to communicate with your organization by writing a message on your Facebook page.

511 Contra Costa's Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pleasant-Hill-CA/511-Contra-Costa/256997671754>) allows fans to interact more with each other and with 511CC than they may be able to on Twitter. Facebook differs from a blog in that Facebook fans can indicate that they like a link posted by 511CC by simply clicking Facebook's thumbs-up sign. They can also leave a comment for others to see on 511CC's Facebook wall. Like retweets and mentions on Twitter, when others give your organization's link, photo, or status update a thumbs up, all of THEIR friends are immediately exposed to your information as well. A Facebook page also allows an organization to have custom-designed tabs that can be used to contain more information. 511CC's Facebook page currently contains sections for information on air quality, biking, transit, ridesharing, and transit promotions offered by 511CC.

Having a Facebook page allows an organization to have access to what may be a completely different demographic. According

to articles published on CNN.com and NPR, Twitter and Facebook users often fall in different social classes. By having a presence on both Twitter and Facebook, 511CC has expanded its reach by more than a simple headcount. For those agencies serving particularly underserved demographics or areas with large minority populations, one alternative to consider is the social media network MySpace, which has higher market penetration in those communities.

Based on user surveys, roughly 30-45% of 511CC promotion participants hear about each of our promotions through Twitter or Facebook. This is a fair number of people who we definitely would not have reached with a traditional marketing campaign and likely would not have found with a website alone. In addition, according to follow-up user surveys of promotion participants, 85% reported a mode shift from single occupant driving to carpooling or using.

Getting Recognition for Our Social Media Efforts

In an article published Monday, March 8, 2010, "Tweeting to Save the Planet: The Role—And Limits—of Social Media in Environmental Solutions", 511 Contra Costa was mentioned alongside the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E) as organizations who effectively use Twitter to spread information and environmental awareness. The article also mentioned 511CC's iSmog app, a free download

that delivers Spare the Air notifications and other Bay Area air quality information to your iPhone.

The Verdict on Social Media

Social media and networking through Twitter and Facebook are demonstrably effective strategies for getting our message out and helping people reduce the amount of time they spend commuting in single occupancy vehicles. Moreover, once the social networking becomes more active, a lot of the hard work is done by enthusiastic fans that retweet our messages, give a thumbs-up to our status updates on Facebook, and comment on our blog. Organizations can attempt to reach their target market through creative communication or offering compelling promotions and incentives, and the more conversations out there about your organization, the better.

Effective use of social media can influence individuals' decisions to take transit or other more sustainable forms of transportation. By making the information easily accessible via the dynamic and fast-growing medium provided by social networks, public organizations can experience great results through the same social networking tools their constituents are already using on a regular basis.

Lynn Overcashier is the Program Manager for 511 Contra Costa in Contra Costa County, Calif. She can be reached at lynn@511contracosta.org.

Arlington County's Car-Free Diet Skeptics Duke It Out in 30-Day Challenge



James L. Wright
Regional Director, East Coast
Pulsar Advertising

Todd and Ross square off and foursquare @ without a car

For Todd, it's all about numbers. How much he'll save on gas for his car-free month. How much time he'll save not stuck in traffic. And how much less CO₂ he'll be sending into the atmosphere by not driving. He's ready to show others that being car-free is possible. And that's what really counts.

For Ross, the Car-Free Diet Skeptics Challenge doesn't end after 30 days, because he's actually decided to sell his car. That means he'll have to rely on all of Arlington's non-car options – and his sweet new bike – to get to his job in Fairfax, and wherever else he has to go. How's that for dedication?

And that was the scenario for two Arlington County (Virginia) commuters who accepted the Arlington County Commuter Services' (ACCS) Car-Free Diet Skeptics challenge.

Designed to be a user-generated campaign

VIEW TODD'S "DIET DASHBOARD"

[READ HIS BLOG](#) [foursquare](#) [facebook](#) [twitter](#)

Name: Todd

Occupation: Requirements Analyst

Bio: For Todd, it's all about numbers. How much he'll save on gas for his car-free month. How much time he'll save not stuck in traffic. And how much less CO₂ he'll be sending into the atmosphere by not driving. He's ready to show others that car free is possible. And that's what really counts.

Watch Todd's:

[update video](#) [intro video](#) [application](#)

that required applicants to apply online via a two-minute video that showed why they would make the perfect Car-Free Diet Skeptic.

From these efforts, six contenders came forward and Ross and Todd were selected through online voting that took place March 1-31. Voters were limited to one vote per person per Skeptic per day. Judging combined online voting results with the following judging criteria:

- Articulation of why you are Arlington's biggest Car-Free Diet (CFD) Skeptic and if

VIEW ROSS'S "DIET DASHBOARD"

[READ HIS BLOG](#) [foursquare](#) [facebook](#) [twitter](#)

Name: Ross

Occupation: Consulting

Bio: For Ross, the Car-Free Diet Skeptics Challenge doesn't end after 30 days, because he's actually decided to sell his car. That means he'll have to rely on all of Arlington's non-car options – and his sweet new bike – to get to his job in Fairfax, and wherever else he has to go. How's that for dedication?

Watch Ross's:

[update video](#) [intro video](#) [application](#)

chosen, how you will go about being car-free or car-lite for 30 days

- Ability to communicate well and engage an audience while on camera
- Overall creativity

Todd and Ross began their face-off on Earth Day – April 21, 2010 – and completed the Challenge on Bike to Work Day 30 days later on May 21.

The beauty of this robust social media program is that it took on a life of its own. The

two contestants were merely given access to log their experiences, and they truly embraced the opportunity. Ross and Todd communicated about their challenges and struggles to avoid using a car via Facebook postings, Tweets, blogs, vlogs and with YouTube uploads, photo postings, and by check in's via Foursquare.

The two commuters were true skeptics as witnessed by Todd's blog entry on the second day of the Challenge, but through their postings and updates, you can watch each of them slowly morph from skeptics to believers and even advocates of going car-free (or at least car-lite).

Day 2 – Another One Rides The Bus April 23, 2010 by Todd

Hola!

Today was a perfect illustration of why I'm skeptical about doing this for a full 30 days. May I present to you Exhibit A: my morning personality... Anyway, like I said I'm not exactly a smooth operator in the morning and if I plan on biking into work I need to do at least one of two things: pack up a bag the night before or get myself up on time! I didn't get underway for my 1h 10 min bike commute until close to 9:30. Albeit I lingered around until my wife left because I wanted to spend as much time with her as possible – since she was flying off to visit her family in Cleveland this weekend. (Hello everyone in Cleveland and Tracy I hope you are feeling better!) So because I lingered and because I didn't pre-pack a bag... I was sadly running behind. Thankfully I have a great boss who doesn't mind so much as long as I let him know when to expect me. Still I really do want to be better about arriving at a decent time!

Headed down W&OD Trail

The ride itself was uneventful. I use a tracking software called My Tracks on my phone (Droid). It's pretty nifty (and free) and easy to use if you want to upload your map and data to Google. Here is this morning's ride! (Hint: click on the end point to see related trip data!)

As the 30-days counted down, Todd and Ross became more experienced in getting around and in communicating their regular updates. Todd created a calendar to show his commutes over the course of the 30 days and shared it on his blog.

"Once they learned how to go car-free, whether by bus, Metrorail, bike or walking, I think they found it easier than expected," said Bobbi Greenberg, Marketing Director for Arlington County Commuter Services. "It takes a little extra planning and in some cases, time, but once they figured out how to get around without a car, they did fine and even enjoyed their bike commutes."

The use of non-traditional media only to promote the Challenge makes the program unique. The Skeptics could choose the media they preferred to communicate in based on their location, and followers were able to get real-time updates on their progress and to become engaged with the process by posting comments on their postings, and by friending and following them.

Before launching the Car-Free Diet program, Arlington County conducted extensive research to determine the most compelling

factors associated with visitors and residents using their wide variety of alternative forms of transportation versus the single occupancy vehicle. Research indicated that one of the most attractive features of Arlington County for visitors and residents alike was that they didn't really need a car at all to get around Arlington or to reach the major tourism or cultural sites of the nation's capitol. This is where the Car-Free Diet campaign was born.

It was created to stimulate awareness and motivate behavior change among the young, well-educated professionals, which make up a substantial portion of the Arlington market, and are also the most likely to be willing to try alternate transportation modes. It was designed to leverage the positive environmental perspective indicative of the Arlington area, use high visibility marketing techniques, and connect environmental goals with the brand of Arlington County.

The Car-Free Diet is not an actual diet, but rather a lifestyle that encourages people who drive alone to explore alternative transportation options – like riding the bus or metro, biking, walking, carpooling, vanpooling and teleworking – so they can save money, improve their health and clean up the environment.

In 2000, Arlington, Virginia was the 13th most densely populated jurisdiction in the United States (7,287 persons per square mile). As of January 1, 2010, the population density was 8,224 per square mile and growing. About 200,000 people live in Arlington County and 200,000 people work there. To make this urban expansion manageable, many planners and



residents have embraced a car-free or car-lite lifestyle.

Chris Balish, author of “How to Live Well Without Owning a Car,” wrote an Arlington-specific edition of his book.

“When I was researching my book, I kept getting all these emails from people in Arlington County, Virginia,” Balish said. “They were writing, ‘Oh, it’s so easy. I live in Arlington and I don’t own a car...I’ve never owned a car,’ so I said I’ve got to go to Arlington to figure out what these folks are up to. When I saw all the awesome options for citizens, it’s no wonder that Arlington is the benchmark for cities and counties around the country.”

There are a number of reasons why it’s easy to live a car-free lifestyle in Arlington. These include Arlington’s excellent transit system, which includes commuter rail as well as a local (Arlington Transit - ART) and regional system (Metro) bus services. Complementing the transit system is an extensive network of bike and walk paths, as well as car sharing and soon to be bike sharing.

- 20 percent of Arlington residents do not

own a car

- 50 percent walk, bike or use public transit to get to work
- 7.6 percent bike or walk to work
- Arlington has 86 miles of walking paths and 113 miles of biking paths
- 11 of Metro’s 33 rail stations are located in Arlington
- 13 ART bus routes and 22 Metrobus lines with approximately 100 individual route variations

Still, with all of the inroads Arlington County has made in encouraging its citizens to go car-free or car-lite, there are plenty of naysayers or skeptics who think that going without a car can’t be done.

Enter the Car-Free Diet Skeptics campaign.

Call for Entries Marketing

Working with a small marketing budget, Pulsar Advertising (ACCS Agency of Record) used earned media and social media as well



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as some paid advertising to generate buzz and find Skeptics candidates for the Challenge. To generate interest in the campaign initially, “For Sale” and “Hot Date” teaser videos were posted on free media sites (Youtube, AOL, Vimeo, Google Video, Metacafe, Daily Motion).

Additionally, newsletters and newsletters were used to spread the word including:

- Car-Free Diet newsletter
- ATP Mailing in Solutions
- BikeArlington
- WalkArlington Pacer’s
- WABA.org’s Event Hub
- Citizen Article (Jan/Feb Issue)

Ad banners on partner sites were also used including on Commuterpage.com, arlingtontransportationpartners.com, arlingtontransit.com, arlingtonva.us and arlingtonunwired.com.

Blogs including Carfreediet.com, CommuterPageBlog, Greater Washington, Tara-Leeway Heights Civic Association and social marketing including Facebook. com/arlingtonscarfreediet and twitter.com/carfreediet were also employed.

Paid Facebook advertising (3,156 clicks from January 4-February 28, 2010) and geotargeted Search Engine Marketing (SEM) – Google Adwords (3,374 clicks during the same period) were the only paid media for finding Skeptic contenders.

Street Team activities included:

- Distributing 900 water bottles, 150 Car-free Diet Bags, 100 Car-Free Diet T-Shirts, and 3,660 handout cards to potential Skeptics

- 150 posters and 3,840 handout cards to 193 retail partners
- 1,500 posters and 7,500 handout cards to ATP to distribute to employers
- Contacting 59 Arlington Neighborhood Civic Associations to reach out to their residents
- Making 300 phone calls
- Sending 200 emails
- Organizing event at local restaurant Mister Days for filming of three Skeptics videos

Public Relations

Additionally Pulsar secured Skeptics stories from the media including:

- Dr. Gridlock, Washington Post
- Robert McCartney, Washington Post
- Adam Tuss, WTOP and the other traffic reporters
- Katja Weir, Washington Examiner
- Mike Pope, Arlington Connection
- Gail Pennybacker, WJLA
- Tiffany Wilson, News Channel 8

Creativity was not a problem for either of the CFD Skeptics. They found new and interesting ways to get around as well as ways to track their progress and share with friends and followers. For example, Todd mounted a camera on his head to videotape his morning bike commute.

Todd biked to work several days a week during the 30-day challenge, which led him to losing seven pounds. He also saved more than \$250 during the Challenge by using Metrobus,



Metrorail and by biking to work. His commute time averaged 10-15 minutes longer by bus or rail and 25 minutes by bike, he had more free time to read, listen to music, update his social networks and even get a work out in – all with much less stress. Todd also left a much smaller carbon footprint behind during the 30-day challenge. According to the Arlington’s CFD Calculator, by car, it would have been 501 pounds of CO₂, but by going car-free, he

produced 88 percent less CO2.

And Ross went so far as selling his car – a Mercedes Benz ML320 SUV. He saved over \$50 in the course of the challenge, traveled more than 400 miles, burned 6,400 calories while commuting by bike to work and eliminated 408 pounds of CO2 that he would have emitted while driving to work. His former commute took him about 35 minutes in the evenings to travel 14 miles. Biking to and from work took him one hour and five minutes. When he took the Metro, he saved 20 minutes round trip in travel time.

In the end, however, Todd was named the Grand Prize Winner at a Bike to Work Day Rosslyn pit stop, which drew nearly a thousand bicyclists.

This was his final blog:

Skeptic no more!

May 21st, 2010 by Todd

...Aside from the fatter wallet – I've also shaved off 7lbs while on the car-free diet. I only went to the gym once during the last 30 days and I didn't change any food habits. So it's clear that all that walking and biking has started to pay off. When I first started my bike time was easily 1h 10 mins to get to work. By the end of the challenge it was only an hour!

I think another important thing to consider is that even if commuting without a car takes you longer – you have to consider the quality of the time. If you're on a bus or a metro train – you're not driving. You are free to read, listen to your headphones, play games, text, update social networks, watch a video or have a conversation with a

complete stranger! If you're on your bike – well then you don't have to go to the gym that day – unless you want to!

The Skeptics Challenge significantly increased website traffic to carfreediet.com and carfreedietskeptics.com. The Facebook Fan Page had a 30 percent increase in “likes,” and Twitter followers almost doubled during the campaign.

The CFD Skeptics Challenge also won Outstanding Marketing Campaign from the Association for Commuter Transportation Chesapeake Chapter.

The 30-day CFD Skeptics Challenge was important for two reasons – it proved that even the most skeptical commuter can actually live well without owning a car, and it drew attention to the variety of ways to get around in Arlington County while using social media and other low cost means to promote the Car-Free Diet.

James L. Wright is the East Coast Regional Director for Pulsar Advertising and can be reached at 202) 775-7456 or jwright@pulsaradvertising.com.

