

» » » for Public Transportation

HIGHLIGHTS

- When brand and the customer experience don't sync, the experience becomes your brand.
- Identify and remedy issues that are at odds with your brand.
- For better service and customer service:
 1. Offer multiple customer service & outreach options;
 2. Foster consistent, authentic customer service;
 3. Measure customer satisfaction & use this to improve;
 4. Keep customer-facing employees happy & engaged;
 5. Make your system understandable.

NEWS

Our Santa Clarita office moved!

New numbers are—
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Mailing address remains:
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The Customer Experience is Your Brand

When your advertised brand and your customers' experience—real or perceived—are out of sync, the **perceived customer experience becomes your brand**.

This has often been an issue for public transportation. The brand envisioned and promised by the agency—a *no-hassle, pleasing travel experience*—can be difficult to deliver consistently.



Crowded buses and arduous transfers can erode your brand image.

Too often, the riders' reality includes transfer hassles; long travel times; late, crowded buses; irritable drivers; and dispatch and customer service staff unable to offer effective solutions.

Raising expectations with ads—only to dash them with

an unpleasant interaction—erodes your brand and can turn your marketing against you.

Bringing Customer Experience in Sync with Your Brand

Two steps are key in addressing inequity between purported brand and perceived service:

1. **Take actions** to identify and remedy any real or perceived issues;
2. Where these exist, **market your efforts** to continually improve.

Public agencies are often tempted to slide through step one to reach step two, because step one can be challenging.

For public transportation providers especially, so many factors must be kept in delicate balance that changing any service aspect may seem like a minefield rather than a golden opportunity.

To make optimally useful improvements, **focus on your customers**, who has

one basic wish: an easy solution to their travel needs.

Five Tactics for Improving the Customer Experience

Five proven **tactics** can help enhance your customer's experience and your brand:

1. **Provide options in customer service and outreach**, to reach different generations:
 - **Baby Boomers** (1946-1964) like the human touch and will use the phone.
 - **Gen Xers** (1965-1980) seek communication that is immediate and direct. They choose the method likely to work best—technology *or* traditional.
 - **Gen Y or "Nexters"** (1981-1995) grew up in a fast, interactive, multi-tasking technological world; they want it Now. Offer online and texting resources (they like chat) and clear, to-the-point answers.

How well does your customer experience match your brand identity?

Call Majic Consulting Group to bring your customers' experience in sync with your brand.



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2. Opt for authentic over “WOW” experiences.

Satisfaction is built over time, with repeated good experiences. Build your brand image on simple, consistent, authentic personal service.

Companies such as Southwest Airlines and Zappos.com built brand reputation from customer satisfaction. Team members are encouraged to find flexible, no-script solutions and use personal style to focus on best serving each customer.

3. Measure based on the customer’s perspective.

Many customer service departments mistake operational efficiency metrics for customer loyalty metrics. Improved call times make phone lines more productive, but service that **best satisfies customers** should be the priority.

Beyond customer service department measures, consider how you

measure success in system service: go beyond performance indicators. Regularly survey and solicit feedback—then **make it key** to plans.

4. Engage your customer-facing employees.

Happy employees make happy customers. Empowerment and company pride are two basic ingredients of happy employees. Studies show that employees who understand the value of their contribution are more engaged. Highly engaged drivers and dispatchers feel they are making a difference by doing what is in the best interest of the customer, and are rewarded for those customer successes.

5. Make your system understandable.

The world’s best-designed transit system will not please riders and potential riders if they don’t understand it. Ensure maps and schedules are clear and

provide sufficient detail without being unwieldy or cluttered. Simple concepts, such as north pointing up, make a map easier to follow. (For more tips on map and schedule design for your system, see www.majicconsulting.com/pdf/Ride_Guide.pdf .



Matching each customer’s experience to your brand is the key to building a successful brand image

Starting with the customer experience is the best way to build your brand. Ensuring that customer expectations are understood and met will bring the customer experience in sync your brand.

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