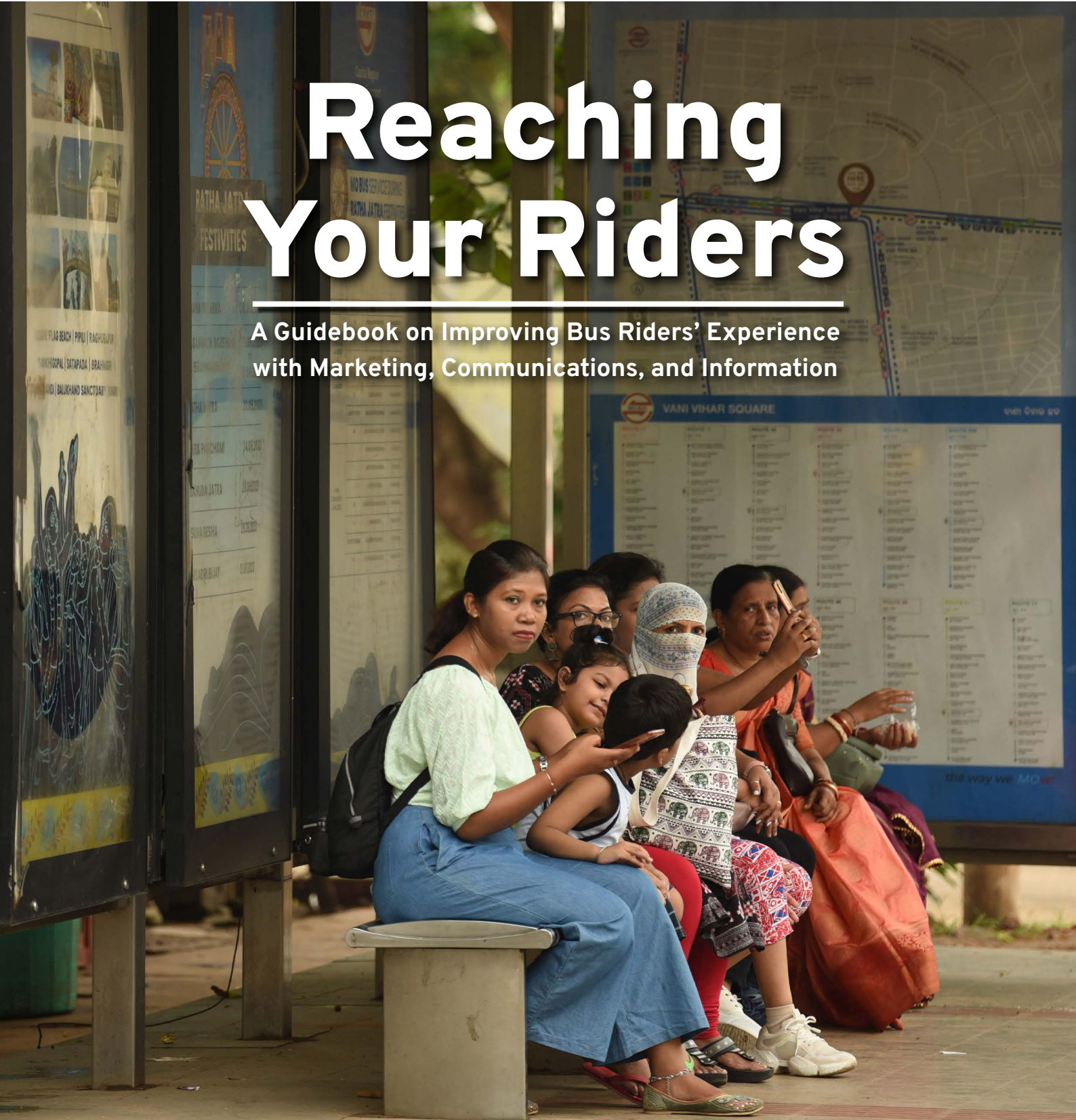


Reaching Your Riders

A Guidebook on Improving Bus Riders' Experience
with Marketing, Communications, and Information





**Association of
State Road Transport Undertakings**

The Association of State Road Transport Undertakings (ASRTU) is the apex coordinating body working under the aegis of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, representing 70 members operating 1,50,000 buses across India.



The Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP) is a global organisation at the forefront of innovation, using technical expertise, direct advocacy, and policy guidance to mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve air quality, and support prosperous, sustainable, and equitable cities.

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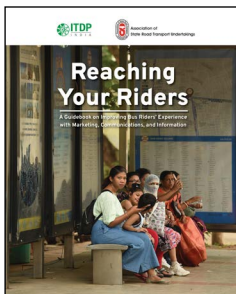
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Group of women waiting for a bus at
a bus stop in the city of Bhubaneswar
Source: Elements Creative

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Message from the Partners

Dr Surya Kiran

Executive Managing Director

Association of State Road Transport Undertakings (ASRTU)

On behalf of the Association of State Road Transport Undertakings (ASRTU), I am proud to present ***Reaching Your Riders***, in partnership with ITDP India. This guidebook is our collective effort to create a positive shift in public perception of buses and increase our bus ridership—an important step towards a more sustainable India.

Reaching Your Riders advocates for a unique approach, complementing high-quality bus operations with the power of marketing, communications, and information to create an environment that not only meets but exceeds the expectations of our riders.

I invite you to explore the possibilities within these pages and join us in making buses the most desirable commute mode once again. Together, we can build a future where public buses thrive, ridership soars, and our communities benefit from reliable and accessible bus-based transport.

I wish you all the very best and offer my full support in this transformation.

Dr Surya Kiran



Riders arrive at a bus stop in Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT)'s Mo Bus in **Bhubaneswar**
Image source: Elements Creative



Message from the Partners

Aswathy Dilip
Managing Director
ITDP India

I am delighted to introduce *Reaching Your Riders*, a collaborative effort between the Association of State Road Transport Undertakings (ASRTU) and ITDP India. This guidebook stands as a testament to our shared commitment to fostering innovative solutions to promote bus ridership in India.

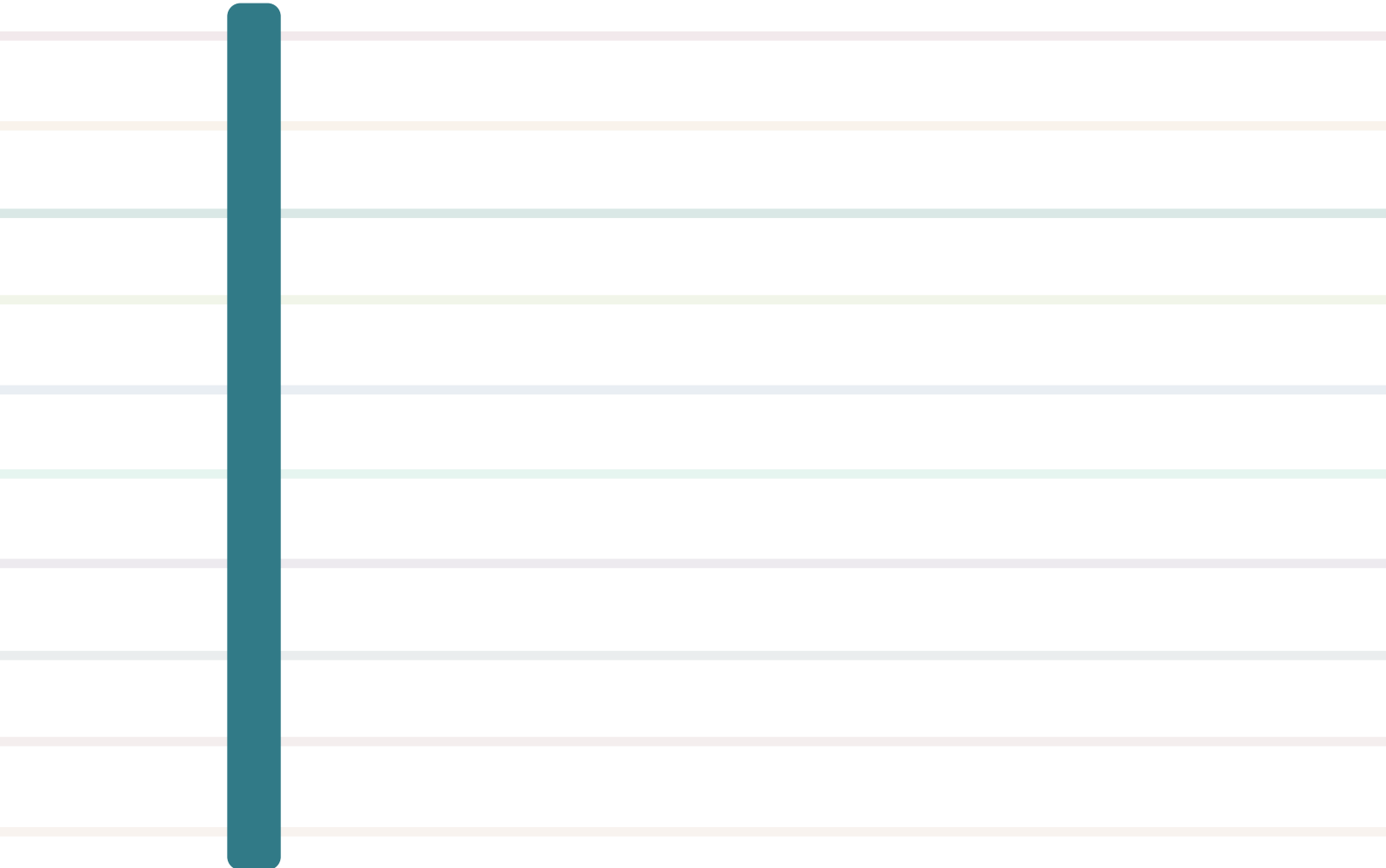
In the dynamic landscape of Indian road transport, we recognise the pivotal role that buses play in shaping the climate-resilient future of our nation. This guide advocates for a paradigm shift, where buses become more than a mode of commute; they become a necessary aspect of building vibrant, connected communities.

Reaching Your Riders is not just a guide; it is a forward-thinking journey aimed at reshaping the narrative around bus systems. By integrating cutting-edge communications strategies with effective marketing and information dissemination, this guidebook presents a holistic approach on how to elevate the public perception of buses and create a system that inspires trust and nurtures loyalty among passengers.

As you read on, envision a future where every bus ride is an enriching experience, where riders feel informed, engaged, and connected. Let's collectively reimagine sustainable mobility in India, propelling buses to the forefront of this journey.

I extend my heartfelt wishes to all readers, urging you to take the insights offered in this guide and actively contribute to transforming our bus systems for our people.

Aswathy Dilip



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A bus rider reads the bus network map at a bus stop in South Moti Bagh, Delhi
Image source: ITDP India

About the Guidebook

Creating systems for marketing, communications, and information is not just a matter of convenience; it is a step toward building a community of riders who appreciate the value of public buses.

Only then will they shift to buses, continue to use them, and invite others to join, too!

Over the last two decades, India has seen a steady decline in public bus ridership. The lack of high-quality, convenient, and reliable bus services and growing aspirations have led people to shift to personal motor vehicles. The increasing number of cars and motorcycles on our streets further aggravates congestion, adversely affects the environment, and worsens accessibility challenges in urban India. Building new infrastructure for the soaring personal motor vehicle population disproportionately impacts bus transport funding, further deteriorating bus services. This creates a vicious cycle, and everyone suffers.

There is only one way out. We need to revive our bus systems.

We need to make buses great again.

And this is not just about providing better service; it is about creating an environment that nurtures a positive experience for everyone on the buses. One of the critical pillars of this transformation lies in focusing on the riders themselves. They are the heart of every bus journey—riders' safety and convenience should be at the forefront of our efforts.

Imagine a world where bus riders take a more proactive and informed approach to their travel rather than simply being passive recipients of bus services. They can access real-time updates about routes, schedules, and potential delays. They can make data-driven decisions, plan their time effectively, and minimise uncertainties. The possibilities are vast, whether through information panels, mobile apps, route maps, or announcement systems. By equipping riders with the right information at the right time and location, we empower them to have a more enjoyable and stress-free experience.

Creating systems for marketing, communications, and information is not just a matter of convenience; it is a step toward building a community of riders who appreciate the value of public buses. Only then will they shift to buses, continue to use them, and invite others to join, too!

We hope this guidebook encourages you to envision the potential of a renewed public bus experience using the power of marketing, communications, and information.

Hi! I'm Comms Cavi, and I'll be your friend guiding you through this book!





Singapore is a global best practice for centring the needs of its riders and developing a unique passenger experience
Image source: Steven Vance

#1

Shaping Your Rider's Experience

With India's rapid urbanisation, there is a pressing need to invest in high-quality bus services and shift people away from personal motor vehicles, lowering demand on fast-depleting resources, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality.

By enhancing the overall bus experience, more individuals can be encouraged to choose buses over personal motor vehicles. While reliable services and efficient operations are crucial for a desirable bus experience, other aspects need attention too. Infrastructure such as clean and accessible buses and well-designed, safe, and comfortable bus stands significantly impact a rider's journey. Effective marketing and communications strategies, along with easily accessible information, play a pivotal role in keeping riders informed and retaining them.

A comfortable experience also hinges on the presence of well-trained and courteous staff who ensure a smooth journey and create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere on board. A robust feedback mechanism allows continuous improvement, addressing rider concerns and needs. Additionally, offering discounts and promotional schemes can make buses a more appealing option.

Aspects that Shape a Rider's Experience

1 Service planning and operations

- Meet the riders' commuting requirements from point a to b

2 Clean, safe, and accessible infrastructure

- Ensure well-maintained buses, bus stops, bus stands with toilets, etc.

3 Marketing, communications, and information

- Make the rider aware of the services and easily get them on a bus

4 Rider feedback on bus-related issues and needs

- Understand the riders' concerns

5 Discounts and promotional schemes

- Make travelling in buses affordable

6 Front-line employee like drivers, conductors, timekeepers

- Have well-trained, courteous, informative staff

7 Ticketing

- Have hassle-free and seamless ticketing and payment methods



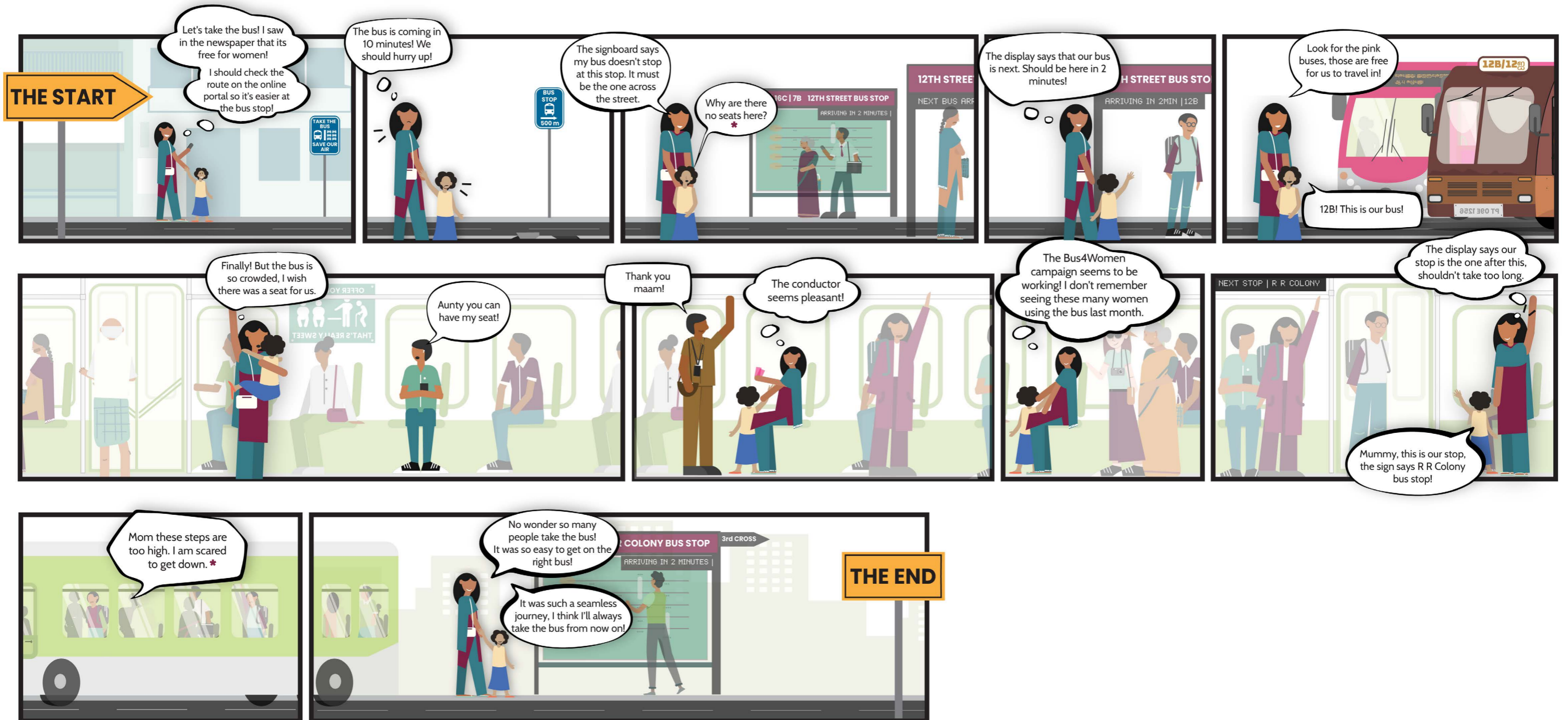
Bus operations and planning is key to a bus rider's journey, but aspects like marketing, information, and grievance redressal help enhance the bus experience multifold.

Dr Surya Kiran
Executive Director
Association of State Road
Transport Undertakings
(ASRTU)



We will be focussing on these aspects of a rider's experience in the guidebook!

Visual Representation of How Marketing, Communications, and Information Improves Rider Experience, in Combination with Other Aspects



*-Issues to be solved by providing clean, safe, and accessible infrastructure



Conduct an assessment at the bus stops to understand the gaps in information provided such as bus stop sign, name of the bus stop, route numbers and destinations, helpline numbers, etc.

Image source: ITDP India

#2

Assessing Your Current System

Assessing your marketing, communications, rider information, and feedback mechanism is critical before you begin planning and execution. By understanding existing gaps, transport agencies can create a system that works for a diverse range of riders.

The assessment will help identify inefficiencies, streamline processes, and make informed planning decisions.

Aspects of the Bus System That Need to Be Assessed

To be evaluated using audits and perception surveys

1 Visibility and brand recognition of the bus system

- Does the brand have a well-defined, easily identifiable logo, and is it consistently placed on all bus infrastructure?
- Is there distinct brand identity for each service, such as ordinary, premium, super fast, air-conditioned, or zero-fare-for-women services?

2 Availability and reliability of passenger information system

- Where are the passenger information systems located?
- Is there real-time information about bus schedules and delays?

3 Accessibility of passenger information system

- Is the bus information available in the local language?
- Can persons with disabilities access the information?

4 Communication channels with riders

- How do riders know about any special fares or special services?
- Are there any on-ground activities to promote bus usage?

5 Feedback methods and grievance redressal

- What are the channels for grievance redressal?
- Is there any standard operating procedure for addressing complaints?

6 Perception of the transport agency and bus services amongst riders

- Do your riders feel they are well-informed?
- What do your riders need to plan their bus journeys better?

7 Perception of the transport agency and bus services amongst employees

- Do your employees feel that they are aware of ongoing developments within the transport agency?
- Do your employees feel that the system for internal communications is adequate?

By understanding existing gaps, transport agencies can create a system that works for a diverse range of riders.

The assessment will help identify inefficiencies and streamline processes to make informed decisions.

Please see the detailed assessment checklist linked in Annexure!



#3

Setting Your Foundation for Communications

Marketing, communications, and information, as well as feedback mechanisms are paramount in bridging the gap between riders and bus operations.

Different groups have varying travel needs and preferences, requiring tailored communications strategies to reach them effectively. Transport agencies hold the responsibility of providing riders with relevant information that enables them to commute comfortably. To achieve success in these efforts, transport agencies must prepare a comprehensive communications strategy and goals and allocate the necessary resources to implement it.

Developing a Communications Strategy

Align your communications strategy and goals with the transport agency's mission. For instance, if the mission is to encourage personal motor vehicle users shift to buses, set communications goals to promote the benefits of bus travel over personal vehicles. Ensure that your strategy reflects the transport agency's commitment of being a sustainable and efficient mode of transport. By directly connecting communications goals to the transport agency's mission, you create a cohesive strategy that supports the broader objective of increasing bus ridership.

Allocating Resources and Leadership for Communications

- 1 Budget and resources:** Allocate the necessary resources to execute the communications functions and apportion the necessary funds by preparing a budget.
- 2 Leadership and team structure:** Appoint a senior leader who will additionally serve as the Communications Head and will supervise the communications functions, set the first principles, and provide a structure of the team that will carry out the communications scope of work.

Ensure that your strategy reflects the transport agency's commitment of being a sustainable and efficient mode of transport. By directly connecting communication goals to the agency's mission, you create a cohesive strategy that supports the broader objective of increasing bus ridership.

Two Types of Communications for a Transport Agency

1 External communications

For existing and potential riders, media, and publications

2 Internal communications


For all management levels, operations and technical staff, bus crew

Establishing First Principles of Communications

The first principles of communications serve as a keystone for reasoning, analysis, and decision-making, and help the transport agency build robust communications solutions from the ground up. These include but are not limited to:

- 1 Driven by strong leadership:** Transport agencies need a champion or a leader to shape the direction for communications. Strong leaders have the vision to develop a communications system that is aligned with the mission and values of the transport agency. Additionally, strong leaders utilise strategic communications to cultivate trust, credibility, and transparency among both riders and the employees.
- 2 Being forward-thinking:** Transport agencies must proactively anticipate and meet rider needs by embracing innovation for enhancing rider experience, providing timely information, and fostering transparent communications. This helps them stay ahead of trends to continually improve services and connectivity for riders.
- 3 Being reliable:** Being branded as reliable is crucial in building trust and confidence among riders, as it demonstrates the transport agency's ability to consistently meet their needs and expectations of quality service. By providing consistent and accurate information on its services, riders can make informed decisions about their travel and reduce uncertainty, enhancing the overall reliability of the bus service.
- 4 Being user-centric:** This approach places the rider at the centre of the design, development, and implementation of all communications initiatives. Transport agencies should engage actively and regularly with riders to understand their behaviours and expectations to create solutions tailored to their specific needs. The goal is to create a positive user experience that is intuitive, enjoyable, and valuable, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty from riders.
- 5 Being dynamic:** Communications interventions must yield desired results through well-defined goals established through a planning process. They should be continuously assessed, refined, and enhanced through data collection and performance evaluation. By actively making decisions that are evidence-based, transport agencies can make informed adjustments and improvements to their strategies.

The first principles of communications serve as a keystone for reasoning, analysis, and decision-making, and help the transport agency build robust communications solutions from the ground up.



Scope of Work in Communications

- 1 Objectives:** Clearly outline the communications objectives, aligning them with the transport agency's communications strategy.
- 2 Target audience and platforms:** Identify and understand the primary target audience, such as passengers, potential riders, stakeholders, and the community. Determine the primary communication channels and platforms for reaching the target audience effectively.
- 3 Content strategy:** Create a strategy for developing and distributing content, including news, updates, promotions, and informative materials.
- 4 Community engagement:** Develop strategies for engaging with local communities through events, sponsorships, and partnerships.
- 5 Message development:** Develop clear and consistent messaging that reflects the transport agency's mission and vision.
- 6 Feedback mechanism:** Establish systems for collecting, analysing, and responding to passenger feedback and complaints.
- 7 Media relations:** Build relationships with local media outlets and develop a protocol for handling press inquiries.
- 8 Internal communications:** Develop a framework for internal communications within the transport agency.
- 9 Performance metrics:** Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the effectiveness of communications efforts.
- 10 Training and development:** Provide training and professional development opportunities for communications staff.
- 11 Legal and compliance:** Ensure that communications efforts comply with relevant regulations and standards.
- 12 Crisis communications plan:** Establish a plan for addressing and communicating during potential crises or service disruptions.

Due to the dynamic nature of communications, the transport agency's needs will evolve over time. Hence, the transport agency must revisit its goals and strategies periodically.



Structure of a Communications Team

Setting up a dedicated Communications Team is not mandatory, but it is critical to drive a variety of communications work. The structure of a Communications Team can vary based on the size of the transport agency, the scope of operations, and the specific communication needs.

The Communications Team could be an independent entity that is onboarded through a request for proposal (RfP) and tender process, but it must be housed within the same building as the transport agency—be it state transport undertaking (STU)/ special purpose vehicle (SPV)/ municipal corporation to carry out the functions in collaboration with the Operations and Technical teams, under the guidance of the Communications Head. Here is a suggested structure:



Please see the RfP template to onboard a Communications Team linked in the Annexure!

1 Communications Manager

- Overall responsibility for communications strategies, plans, and execution
- Guides the team to deliver results
- Oversees the communications team and ensures alignment with the transport agency's goals
- Monitors and analyses communications performance metrics

2 Public Relations Specialist

- Handles media relations, press releases, and media outreach
- Manages the transport agency's public image and reputation
- Coordinates with media outlets and journalists

3 Social Media Manager

- Manages social media platforms, creating, and curating content
- Engages with followers, responds to comments, monitors trends
- Develops social media campaigns and strategies
- Supervises customer inquiries, complaints, and feedback on social media

4 Content Creator/Writer

- Creates written content such as blog posts, articles, newsletters, website copy, and so on
- Ensures content is clear, engaging, and aligned with the transport agency's brand identity
- Ensures communications materials are accessible, appropriate, and translated for diverse audiences

5 Graphic Designer / Visual Content Creator

- Designs visual assets—such as maps, infographics, posters—for various communication channels, including social media, websites, and printed materials
- Ensures consistent visual branding

6 Community Manager

- Engages with the online community, responds to queries, and fosters positive interactions
- Handles customer inquiries, complaints, and feedback
- Conducts on-ground surveys and rider activation programmes

7 Internal Communications Coordinator

- Manages internal communications channels to keep all employees informed
- Coordinates communication of transport agency news, updates, and policies
- Develops and implements emergency communications protocols and plans



In practice

Setting a Communications Cell

Location
**Bhubaneswar,
Odisha**

Implemented by
**Capital Region Urban
Transport (CRUT)**

Contracting model
**3-year contract offered
to an organisation
selected via a tender**

Cost
**~ 5-6 lakhs per month
for a 5-member team**

Timeline
Since 2018

About CRUT

The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of the Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha, formed in 2018 under the Smart Cities Mission. CRUT is in charge of providing public transport facilities within the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), Cuttack Development Authority (CDA), Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC), and Puri-Konark Development Authority (PKDA) area.

CRUT operates 405 buses (including 50 E-Buses) on 84 routes under the brand name Mo Bus, and 50 E-Rickshaws operate under the brand name Mo E-ride.

Overview of the Communications Cell

A Communications Cell was institutionalised right after the SPV was formed in 2018 when the leadership recognised that a good communications strategy is essential to break barriers, usher in a transformative public transport system, and ensure a positive perception of the various public transport initiatives. The in-house Communications Cell highlights and amplifies the services that CRUT offers, such as Mo Bus and Mo E-ride. The Cell also promotes the launch of new routes or special initiatives so that the public can reap the benefits of the public transport services.

The Cell also acts as a bridge between the rider and the transport agency. Riders can give feedback, which is then shared with the management team for deliberation and necessary action.

Communications Cell conducts weekly meetings to plan for the week's outreach
Image source: CRUT



Composition of the Cell

The five-member in-house Communications Cell includes:

- 1 Team lead - branding, campaign, social media, and communications strategy expert
- 2 Public relation expert and outreach coordinator
- 3 Content writer and social media expert
- 4 Graphic designer and visualiser
- 5 Transit branding associate

Functioning of the Cell

Through a tender process, an entity is selected to fulfil the responsibilities of a Communications Cell for a 3-year period contract. The Cell sits within the CRUT Head Office, Bhubaneswar, and reports to the General Manager-Operations & Maintenance. The Cell closely works with the Managing Director and General Manager and strategises innovative rider-centric campaigns and outreach.

Keys to Success

- 1 **Focusing on rider experience:** Every initiative is designed to improve the experience for the riders—who are at the heart of CRUT’s service. Whether it is launching new routes to temple towns during festivals or deploying shuttle services to stadiums during tournaments, there is a consistent focus on understanding riders’ needs and catering to them.
- 2 **Prioritising organisational communications:** As the leadership is a champion of riders’ experience and communications, the thought process penetrates all rungs of the organisation, and communications is, therefore, an organisational priority.
- 3 **Collaboration with operations team:** The Cell works closely with the Operations team to inform riders of any new services, route and schedule changes, addition of bus stops, etc. As the Communications Cell operates from the same building as the other teams, it is easier to coordinate and co-create communications strategies and plan outreach.
- 4 **Scheduling monthly outreach:** A monthly communications calendar helps the team create collateral and content, manage approvals, and schedule and execute outreach and campaigns.
- 5 **Conducting rider surveys:** To ensure that the services meet the needs of the riders, the Communications Cell conducts on-ground and online surveys to get feedback on an ongoing basis.

Scope of Work

The Communications Cell manages the following activities:

- 1 Communications and branding strategy
- 2 Print, social and digital media support
- 3 Promotional campaigns
- 4 Outreach programme support
- 5 Grievance redressal
- 6 Knowledge management



In a transport agency, operations and communications complement each other. Only when the operations and services of the transport agency are good, can your communications be good.

Arun Bothra,
Managing Director,
Capital Region Urban
Transport (CRUT)

CRUT almost tripled its ridership – from 40,000 in May ‘19 to 1.2 lakh in Mar ‘20.

Impact

With the sustained efforts to extensively promote the services and engage with the riders, CRUT almost tripled its ridership—from 40,000 in May 2019 to 1.2 lakh in March 2020.



The Communications Cell at Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) in **Bhubaneswar** ensures that all staff are updated regularly about the transport agency's activities through a robust internal communications system
Image source: ITDP India

#4

Improving Internal Communications

Internal communications ensures that all staff members, from drivers to administrative personnel, are aligned and informed about the ongoing developments within the transport agency. It also provides clarity on the transport agency's goals and how each employee contributes to them.

Effective internal communications fosters better engagement among employees. Engaged staff tend to be more motivated, satisfied, and committed to their roles, resulting in better service quality for riders.

Internal communications also helps maintain consistent messaging, ensuring all staff members convey the same information about services, schedules, and policies to riders.

Setting Up a Robust Internal Communications System

- 1 Internal communications plan:** Develop a comprehensive internal communications plan that outlines goals, channels, and responsibilities for communicating with employees.
- 2 Clear channels:** Establish effective channels for internal communications, such as regular staff meetings, email updates, and an intranet system.
- 3 Leadership involvement:** Ensure agency leaders are actively engaged in internal communications and accessible to staff.
- 4 Two-way communication:** Encourage open communication, allowing staff to provide feedback and ask questions.
- 5 Training and development:** Invest in training and development programmes to enhance employees' communications skills.

The internal communications of the transport agency affects the quality of your external communications.

With robust internal communications, transport agencies can create a more engaged, informed, and efficient workforce, leading to better service for riders.



Iconic red bus of BEST Mumbai
Image source: MidDay

#5

Defining Your Brand's Identity

A bus brand identity is a visual and tangible representation of the bus service. It encompasses the various elements that contribute to how a brand is recognised and perceived by the public, influencing their decision to choose and continue using it.

Suppose the transport agency has more than one service within the same region, such as ordinary, premium, super fast, air-conditioned, or zero-fare-for-women services. In that case, creating separate yet cohesive identities is important so riders can quickly identify one from the other.

Key Components of a Brand Identity as Illustrated by TfL
Transport for London (TfL) is a local government body responsible for most of the transport network in London, United Kingdom.

- 1 Name and logo:** A distinctive name with a logo serves as the primary identifier for the bus brand. This logo is prominently displayed on buses, official materials, and signage, creating immediate recognition.
- 2 Colour scheme:** A consistent and identifiable colour palette must be associated with the bus service. The chosen colours contribute to the overall visual identity and help create a memorable impression.



Distinct identities for different services allows TfL to efficiently manage a diverse and extensive transport network.



A bus service's brand identity is its personality. It's the unique way the service looks, speaks, and connects, leaving a lasting impression in every interaction.

Bankim Kalra
Chief Executive Officer
Centre for Green Mobility

3 Slogan or tagline: A brief and memorable phrase helps encapsulate the essence or key message of the bus service. This tagline reinforces the brand's values and mission, often displayed on buses, on social media, and in promotional materials.



'Every Journey Matters'— TfL's tagline makes a strong public statement about TfL's relentless customer focus.

4 Clean and readable typography: Clear and readable fonts and typefaces used consistently in branding materials, schedules, and signage. Typography contributes to the overall visual style and reinforces a sense of professionalism and reliability.

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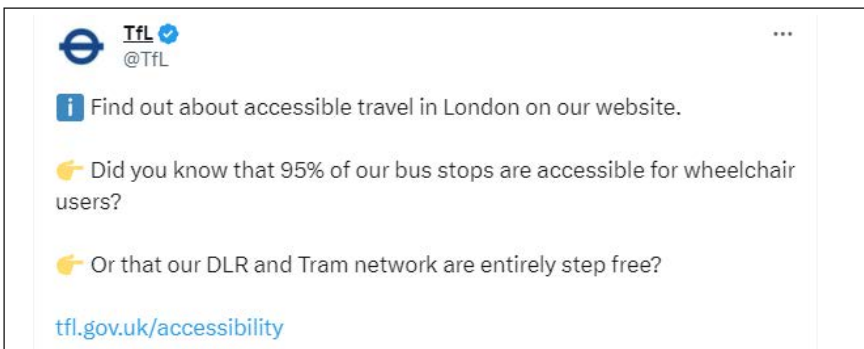
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 Johnston 100 Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OP**QRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuv**wxyz**
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 Johnston 100 Light

TfL only uses the Johnston font family across all its products.

TfL has created comprehensive design guidelines and standards that instruct the font and design of each element in each TfL service.

5 Customer-centric messaging: The tone, language, and messaging used in communications materials must prioritise the needs of riders. Customer-centric messaging emphasises the bus service's commitment to providing a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable travel experience.



The five components work cohesively to create a brand identity that is memorable, distinct, and communicates the values and personality of the bus brand to its riders.

A well-defined brand identity helps establish brand recognition and fosters a connection with the target users.

TfL publishes brand design standards to ensure high quality and consistency across all communications produced by TfL.

Read more here: bit.ly/tflDesignStd



TfL's distinct identities enhance clarity and recognition. Riders can quickly identify the mode of transport they need based on visual cues such as logos, colors, and design elements, and seamlessly navigate through London's large, busy, and complex transport system.



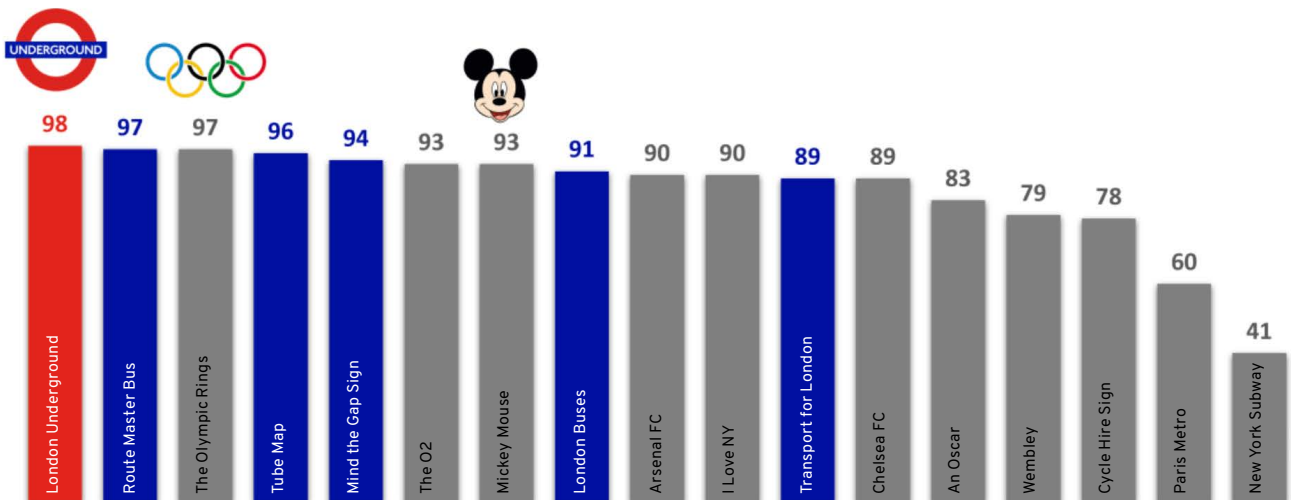
Real-time information counter at a bus stop
Image source: BusandTrainUser



TfL roundel helps identify bus stops
Image source: Trueform



Wayfinding signage within a railway station
Image source: TfL



The TfL brand and its products are amongst the world's most recognised brands. TfL's Underground Roundel is more popular than Mickey Mouse, according to a study by Nielsen (2020). Source: madeby.tfl.gov.uk website

In India, some transport agencies use the regional words of *My / Our / People's* in the names of their bus services to create a sense of community pride and collective ownership.



Odisha's **Mo Bus** means **My Bus** in Odia



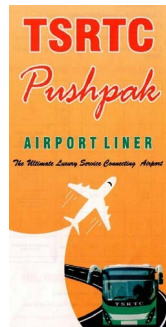
Bengaluru's **Namma BMTC** means **Our BMTC** in Kannada



Ahmedabad's **Janmarg BRT** means **People's Path** in Hindi

Most transport agencies take inspiration from Indian mythology, and ancient languages to give distinct identities to various services or schemes. Here are a few popular ones:

- Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTTC)'s dedicated airport shuttle service is called **Vayu Vajra** that translates to Air Diamond.
- Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC)'s dedicated airport shuttle service is **Pushpak**, the name of a celestial flying chariot.
- Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)'s premium inter-city service is **Airavat**, named after the majestic mythical mount of an Indian demi god.
- KSRTC's **Shakti** scheme (Sanskrit term for power) refers to the free ticket programme for women, symbolising access to power and opportunities through mobility.



Similar to Transport for London, many transport agencies name themselves as a service **for** the region—conveying a sense of purpose and responsibility for the people and communities within that area.



Some transport agencies have created clever acronyms based on the names to reflect their services, like FAST
Fayetteville Area System of Transit, North Carolina,
SMART
Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation, Michigan,
and India's very own BEST
Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking, Mumbai.

Get creative with your bus service names, just ensure that they are easy to remember, distinct, and connect to your people!





7E	7H	7K	7M	15	15G	15F	20	35	35C	42	42B	42C	42D	42M	50	53	53E	53P	64C	64D	
64K	71E	71EX	120	120A	120E	120F	120G	120K	142B	242	17D	101X	18G	20A							

A bus stop with seating near the Puratchi Thalaivar Dr MGR Central railway station in Chennai
 Image source: Elements Creative

MO BUS NETWORK

CRUT
Capital Region Urban Transport
Bhubaneswar • Cuttack • Puri

- ROUTE DETAILS**
- 01 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri
 - 02 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack
 - 03 Bhubaneswar - Puri
 - 04 Cuttack - Puri
 - 05 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Balasore)
 - 06 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Khurda)
 - 07 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada)
 - 08 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore)
 - 09 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Khurda)
 - 10 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore - Khurda)
 - 11 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore - Nuapada)
 - 12 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore - Khurda - Nuapada)
 - 13 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore - Nuapada - Balasore)
 - 14 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore - Nuapada - Khurda)
 - 15 Bhubaneswar - Cuttack - Puri (via Nuapada - Balasore - Nuapada - Balasore - Nuapada)
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the way we MO

Each bus stop in **Bhubaneswar** has a panel with Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT)'s regional network map with all route origin and destination details, route path, and bus stops marked
Image source: ITDP India

#6

Informing Your Riders

When we consider a rider’s bus trip, the first step is to plan the journey, which starts with knowing the bus stop’s location near the origin and destination. The process begins with questions like “*How close by is the bus stop? How will I get to the bus stop? Is the bus stop less than a 5-minute walk away?*” and so on. Right after, the potential rider factors in aspects such as journey duration, preferred routes, bus frequency and timings to make the ultimate decision—**TO BUS OR NOT TO BUS?**

Thus, information is one of the most significant requirements to make a bus trip even possible. Bus information gives people clarity and confidence to use the bus services. When information is easily accessible, planning the journey and getting onto a bus becomes convenient. On the flip side, missing or hard-to-access information becomes the biggest barrier in planning the bus journey. People would then start looking for alternatives and opt for other modes of travel.

One area where ridesharing companies often outperform buses is in providing ride-related information. Requesting a cab ride is a simple task requiring just a few taps on a mobile device. Using buses, however, may involve navigating unreliable schedule information, struggling with websites that do not have route details, or arriving at a bus stop that is no longer functional.

Common Information Needs

A bus rider needs easy access to information, even without a smart phone or internet access. Common information needs include:

- 1 Finding the locations of bus infrastructure**
Bus stops or terminals, ticketing kiosks, wheelchair-accessible stops, etc.
- 2 Knowing schedules and routes in real-time, delays and disruptions**
“Is my bus late or cancelled?”, “How many minutes before the next bus?”
- 3 The duration of the bus journey**
“How long will this bus route take compared to the other?”
- 4 Alternatives in case the desired route is not available**
“Can I take the local train instead of the bus?”
- 5 Ways to submit complaints**
- 6 Ways to call for help in an emergency**



Calling a rideshare cab takes a few taps of a finger. Using a bus can involve navigating inaccurate schedule information, using websites that don’t have bus network maps, and looking for a bus stop that doesn’t even have the route number on.

Steven Higashide,
Author,
Better Buses Better Cities

Making Information Accessible for All

Bus riders are not all the same. They are of different genders, ages, socio-economic groups, and literacy levels. Some may have disabilities. Some may be new or unfamiliar to the place, while others may be third-generation residents.

Several factors affect how these demographics access bus-related information. For instance, in recent years, there has been an increasing focus on making all civic services available to citizens on the internet so people can access it on their personal devices. This digital revolution is essential but it comes at the cost of information being available in formats that non-internet users can access.

Based on the nationwide Transport4All surveys conducted by Smart Cities Mission and ITDP India, ~60% of the respondents below the age of 45 preferred online information, while only 38% over 60 years preferred online information delivery. Hence, consider the following aspects while developing information systems that are accessible to all:


- 1 Diverse rider information needs:** Bus riders exhibit diverse information needs based on factors such as trip purpose, schedule, and personal preferences. Understanding and catering to these unique requirements enhances the overall rider experience. A commuter heading to work may seek different information compared to someone travelling for weekend leisure or family-related activities.
- 2 Access to internet-based technology:** Riders increasingly need access to the internet and digital devices to obtain useful, real-time bus information. In addition to internet-delivered information channels, the transport agency should use information channels for which riders do not require access to the internet. This makes the system more equitable and improves resilience in the face of system outage.
- 3 Language:** If transport agencies share information in ways that are not easily understandable by the riders because the information is either in an unfamiliar language or at too advanced a reading level, then the information is useless to the rider. Every type of bus-related information must be written in an accessible language.
- 4 Universal access:** Locomotor disabilities, hearing impairment, vision impairment, and different forms of neurodiversity may affect the way some riders experience the bus ecosystem. The information provision should consider riders' needs, in terms of what information they require and what accommodations and adaptations may be needed to ensure the information can be clearly understood by everyone, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

By Jan 2023, only 24% of India's urban population had access to the internet. This means that roughly 8 in 10 residents are unable to use internet-based services to plan their bus trip.

Based on a report by IAMAI and Kantar

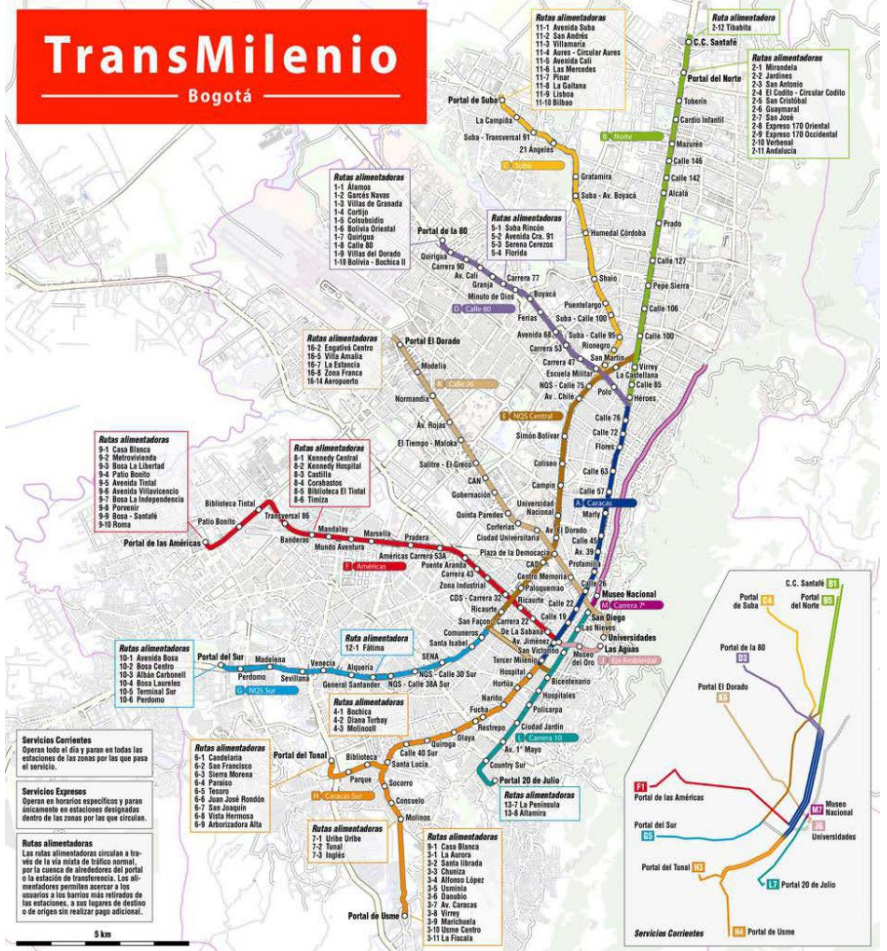
Different Types of Bus Information

- Bus stop signage
- Bus schedules
- Bus network and route maps
- Real-time bus status
- Ticketing-related
- Special fares
- Service disruption
- Code of conduct
- Grievance redressal and helpline

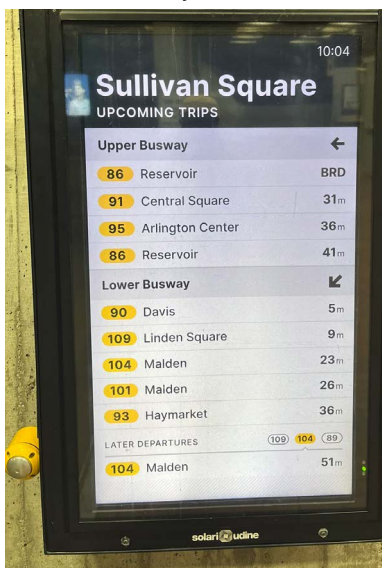
Let's look at all of these in detail 



London's TFL bus stop has poles with information about bus routes, bus schedules, stop information. Image source: designworkplan.com



Bogotá's TransMilenio's bus network map shows the routes the service provides. Image source: TransMilenio



Boston has live bus status at bus stops. Image source: User in Boston

Massachusetts issues service change announcements along with helpline numbers. Image Source: MBTA

T **MBTA BUS**

Stop Change

Affected Routes: 52, 502, 504, 553, 554, 556, 558
 Effective Monday, June 25th 2018

This bus stop will split into two stops.

Buses toward Boston will continue to use this stop.
 Buses toward Newton / Watertown / Waltham will use the new stop 200 feet to the west.

For schedule information: MBTA.com / 617-222-3200 / 617-222-5146 (TTY)

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Bus Stop Signage

What Does It Look Like?

- Bus stop signage typically features a distinctive symbol, often a stylised bus icon or the words “Bus Stop,” to identify the designated waiting area, along with the logo of the transport agency.
- It also features the name of the bus stop and a marker to define the direction, such as A/ B or UP/ DOWN.
- The bus stop signage provides essential information such as bus route numbers, destinations, intermediate stops, and helpline numbers.
- It also redirects riders to the transport agency’s website if they seek more information.



Bogotá’s bus stop pole signage has panels of bus route information that can be replaced in case of any changes
Image source: ITDP India

Bus Schedule

What Does It Look Like?

- A typical bus schedule includes departure and arrival times, route maps, and designated bus stops.
- It must be available at bus stops, on public website, and published monthly in a newspaper.
- Additionally, schedule may highlight peak hours and off-peak periods.
- An up-to-date bus schedule enables riders to coordinate their travel, reducing wait times and ensuring a seamless and stress-free bus experience. It must be updated every time there is a change.
- It may also include information about any special services, such as express routes or limited-stop or seasonal services.

Metropolitan Transport Corporation(MTC)—the bus transport agency for Chennai Metropolitan Area—maintains the bus schedule on its public website
Image source: MTC website

Bus Network and Route Maps

What Do These Look Like?

- A bus network map is an overview of the entire transit system within a city or region.
- It showcases all bus routes, interconnections, and major hubs or transfer points.
- Different routes are usually color-coded or numbered for easy identification.
- Route maps zoom in on individual bus routes.
- They display a bus's specific path, including stops, intersections, and landmarks.
- Additionally, route maps indicate key points of interest, such as schools, hospitals, shopping centres, and tourist attractions.



Bhubaneswar's bus stop has a neighbourhood map and route-wise bus stop details
Image source: ITDP India

How Do They Help Riders?

- 1 Easing navigation:** These maps serve as navigational aids, helping riders plan their journeys. They show the bus routes available and help riders identify the nearest stops and transfer points, making it easier to get from one location to another. Route maps show buses' paths, enabling riders to select routes that minimise travel time or offer stops near points of interest.
- 2 Understanding the network:** Bus network maps provide an overview of the entire transport system, helping riders understand the extent of service in their area. This comprehension encourages more people to use public transport.
- 3 Facilitating transfers:** For journeys that require transfers between different bus routes, maps indicate transfer points, making it easier for riders to switch buses and continue their trips seamlessly.
- 4 Promoting tourism and exploration:** Tourists and newcomers can use these maps to explore the city, locate major attractions, and navigate public transport. The knowledge of the extensive network encourages tourism and helps newcomers explore the region.



Where Can These Be Located?

Offline

Install information panels (either large prints or digital displays) at:

- bus stops
- interchange and terminals
- transport nodes like metro, suburban rails
- points of entry to the city—railway station, airport, inter-city bus terminals

Online

Host the map on a website, a phone app, or integrated with a map software using GTFS

Note: These will have to be updated periodically, in case of any changes.



In practice

Route Maps and Lane Signage

Location

Deccan Gymkhana Bus Stand, Pune

Implemented by

Sarg Design Studio

with support from

Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML)

Cost of the pilot

**Printing and installation cost
~INR 50,000**

Funded by

COSIGN systems, Pune

Timeline

Installed in 2019

About PMPML and Deccan Gymkhana Bus Stand

Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML) is the public transport bus service provider for Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad.

PMPML operates 2079 buses (including 458 e-buses) on 360 routes around the Pune Metropolitan Region, including 51 Rainbow BRT routes.

The five bus lanes of Deccan Gymkhana bus stand serve 42 routes.

Overview of the Pilot

Sarg Design Studio conceived the idea of setting up a PMPML Design Studio—a studio embedded within PMPML to conceptualise, design, and implement passenger information signage and maps for the entire bus network.

As a pilot, the PMPML Design Studio developed a route map and bus lane information signage at the Deccan Gymkhana bus stand that showcases the bus lane map that informs the bus routes on each lane, the bus route list with destination, and shared bus stops.

The wayfinding system uses large information panels to guide riders to wait for their buses in the respective bus lanes.

Information panel with route map at the Deccan Gymkhana bus stand, Bus Lane #1
Image source: Yogesh Dandekar





Information panel with route numbers and the bus lane numbers
Image source: Yogesh Dandekar



Bus lane panel with route numbers that halt in that lane
Image source: Yogesh Dandekar

Keys to Success

- 1 Being language inclusive:** The information is available in both English and in the local Marathi language.
- 2 Shifting perceptions about bus services:** The line diagram of the bus routes helped riders understand the route and the subsequent stops covered by each bus after exiting the Deccan Gymkhana bus stand. This makes it easier for people to select the appropriate bus lane. Since every bus on that lane travels in the same direction, there has been an increase in the perception that there are many buses along the desired route.
- 3 Presenting more route choices:** Riders are now better informed about all the destinations they could reach directly from the Deccan Gymkhana bus stand. The line graphic visually illustrates shared bus stops along the various route numbers. This presents more options to a rider who is otherwise told only of one or two specific bus routes to the desired destination by fellow riders or acquaintances.
- 4 Using colour-coded cues:** The use of distinct colours for each route in the route map helps distinguish each route.
- 5 Providing guidance:** To ensure riders can read the wayfinding and information signage as intended, PMPML Design Studio has installed an information and instruction panel that explains 'How to read the maps'.
- 6 Ensuring visibility:** The placement of the signs at key locations—e.g at the bus stand entrance and the start and end of each bus lane—gets the riders' attention. The large size of the text and the details ensure the legibility of the content.



There was a drastic reduction in the number of pickpocketing incident reportings, as bus lanes at the terminal were no longer jam-packed with a crowd of confused and misdirected passengers.

Yogesh Dandekar
Founder
Sarg Design Studio

Earlier, >70% of riders surveyed felt that less than 10 routes were passing through the bus stand—in contrast to the 42 routes.

Post the pilot, 80% of surveyed riders had clarity about the bus routes and the intermediate bus stops.

Impact of the Pilot

With the clear bus lane and bus route information, riders could avail of the bus services more comfortably as the system improved alighting and boarding conditions. There was a drastic reduction in pickpocketing incident reportings, as bus lanes at the terminal were no longer jam-packed with a crowd of confused and misdirected riders.

In a survey conducted before the installation, more than 70% of riders felt that less than 10 routes were passing through the Deccan Gymkhana bus stand—in contrast to the 42 routes that go via the bus stand. Most riders only used it as an origin or destination point, not an interchange.

A post-installation survey revealed that 80% of respondents had clarity about the bus routes and the intermediate bus stops. Riders no longer had to ask for bus route numbers to specific destinations, as that information was now readily available.

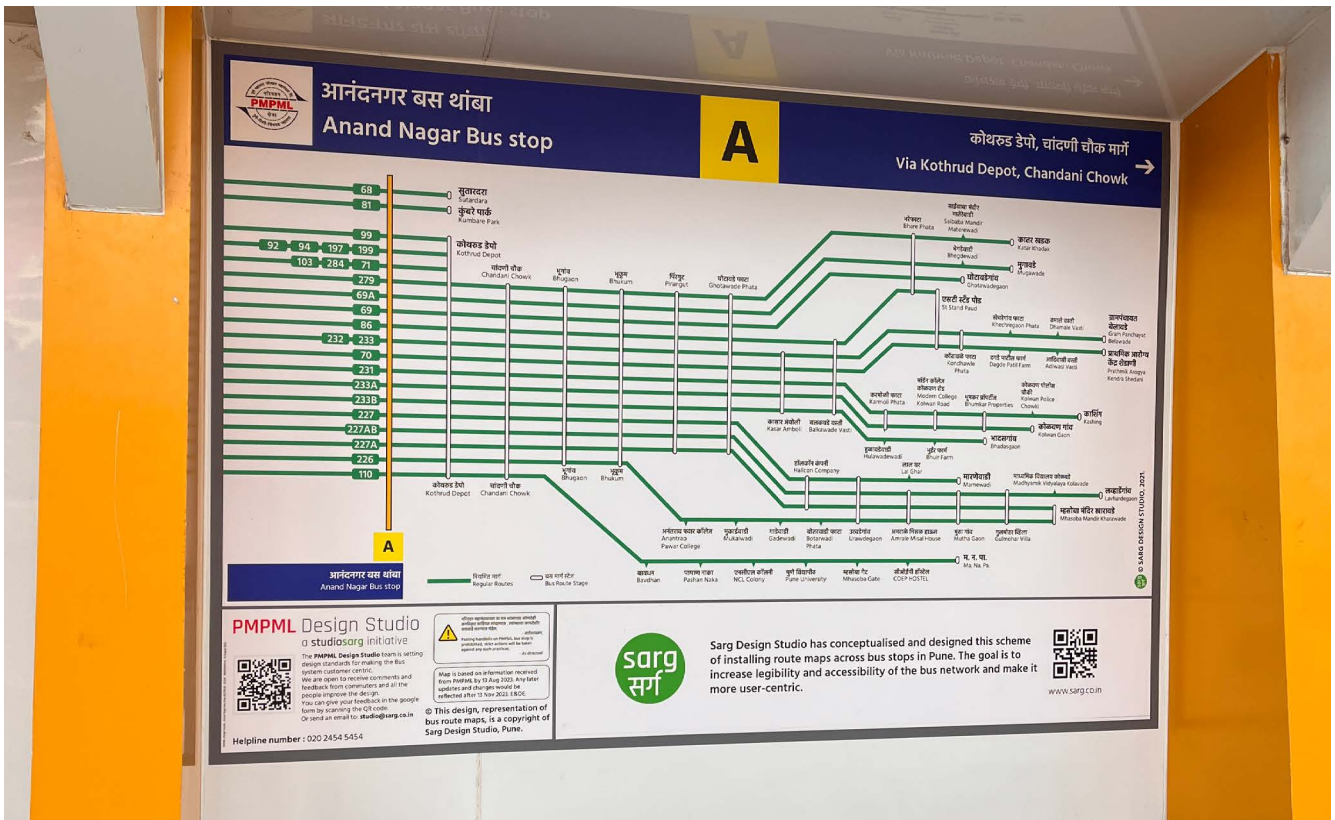
However, a common concern was the need for buses' estimated time of arrival (ETA).

Detailed information panel with route numbers, destinations, and the respective bus lane numbers
Image source: Yogesh Dandekar



Based on the success of the pilot, PMPML Design Studio is now installing route signages in other bus stops in Pune.

Route information panel at COEP bus stand (above) and Anand Nagar bus stop (below)
Image source: Yogesh Dandekar



Real-time Bus Status Information

What Does It Look Like?

- Real-time status provides riders with updates on the location and expected arrival times of buses.
- Information about delays, detours, and service disruptions keeps riders informed about any changes to their planned routes.
- Some include data on the crowd levels in buses, helping riders choose less congested options.
- Real-time status can also indicate the type of bus service or whether the incoming buses are equipped with accessibility features like wheelchair ramps.
- Buses must be retrofitted with an automated vehicle location system (AVLS) to enable real-time tracking.



Dublin's bus stop features a digital display with the estimated time of arrival (ETA)
Image source: Smart Dublin

How Does It Help Riders?

- 1 Minimising waiting times:** Riders can time their arrival at the bus stop based on real-time status, minimising wait times and making their overall journey more efficient.
- 2 Enhancing commute planning:** Real-time updates help commuters plan their journeys effectively. Riders can access live information on bus locations and expected arrival times, reducing schedule uncertainty.
- 3 Optimising route selection:** With real-time status, riders can choose the best route based on actual bus positions, decide wait times and select routes that align with their destinations and schedules.
- 4 Facilitating seamless transfers:** For multi-route journeys, real-time data highlights transfer points, enabling smooth transitions between buses and ensuring riders can easily continue their trips.
- 5 Improving services:** More accurate real-time information technology helps transport agencies track transit performance and plan for the future. The NYC Department of Transport has used data from the Metropolitan Transport Authority's bus-tracking system to improve intersections and blocks where buses moved particularly slowly.



Where Can It Be Located?

Offline

Install digital displays

- at major hubs and terminals
- at interchanges
- at bus stops
- inside buses

Online

Host the map on a website, a phone app, or integrated with a map software using GTFS

Note: The real-time status system needs to be automated such that any delay or disruption in the bus timings is instantly updated.



Edinburgh developed a common regional passenger information system incorporating multiple transport operators (bus, rail & tram) data and schedule information

Image source: SEStran

Singapore's LTA developed a passenger information display system (PIDS) that displays current bus stop, upcoming bus stop, and the destination stop in real-time, along with audio announcements

Image source: Singapore Press Holdings



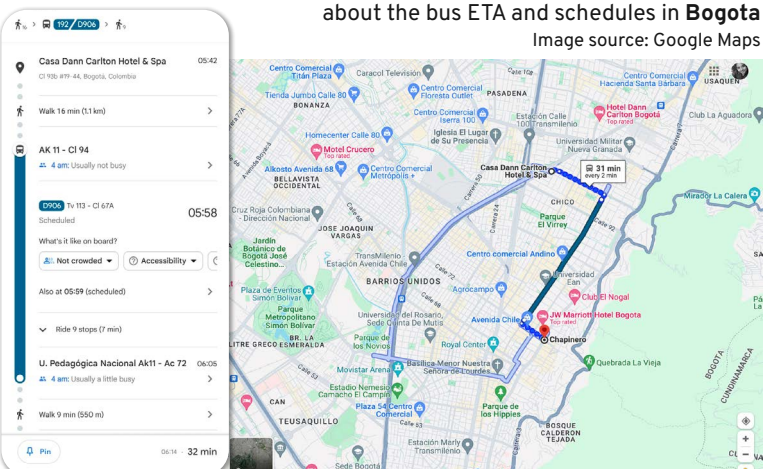
Real-time transit arrival screens at a bus stop in New York

Image source: NACTO



Integration with Google Maps offers realtime updates about the bus ETA and schedules in Bogota

Image source: Google Maps





In practice

App with Real-time Status, Ticketing, Crowd Level Indicator

Location
Mumbai

Implemented by
Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking (BEST)

Technology partner
Chalo

Timeline
Installed in 2022-23

About BEST

The BEST Undertaking provides bus transport within Brihan-Mumbai limits and also in Navi Mumbai, Thane and Mira-Bhayander areas. To tackle the decline in bus ridership and burgeoning number of private vehicles, BEST came up with a plan to implement technology to improve bus services and provide more reliability and convenience for passengers. BEST appointed Chalo as its technology partner to develop the BEST Chalo mobile app, common mobility card (CMC), automatic fare collection system (ACFS).

About the App

The BEST Chalo App empowers riders with a 'Passenger Information System' (PIS) and a mobile ticket platform - right in the palm of their hands. The app offers:

- 1 Live bus tracking and arrival times
- 2 Live crowd level indicator
- 3 Mobile tickets and passes with a secure offline ticket validation
- 4 Super saver plans on tickets

Live tracking allows riders to check the status of their bus and its estimated arrival time. The live crowd level indicator informs the rider whether they can expect a free seat upon boarding, and with mobile tickets and passes, riders can pay digitally for their bus ride, reducing small change hassles.

BEST developed a marketing campaign to promote the app and the common mobility card, and used influencers such as cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and Bollywood star Anil Kapoor to endorse the services

Image source: Chalo



About the Technology System

The technology system consists of the following components:

- 1 Automated fare collection system (AFCS):** To streamline the revenue collection through all payment modes including cash and ensure efficiency in ticketing reconciliation
- 2 Automated vehicle location system (AVLS):** To track the location of buses through the installation of AIS140-compliant GPS devices
- 3 Rupay-certified Android electronic ticket issuing machines (ETIM):** To accept contactless digital as well as cash payments and validate mobile tickets.
- 4 In-bus and doorway cameras:** To aid efficient bus monitoring and passenger safety.
- 5 Management information system (MIS):** To generate reports and analytics for comprehensive insights through the tickets and revenue data across selected time periods, bus routes or depots.

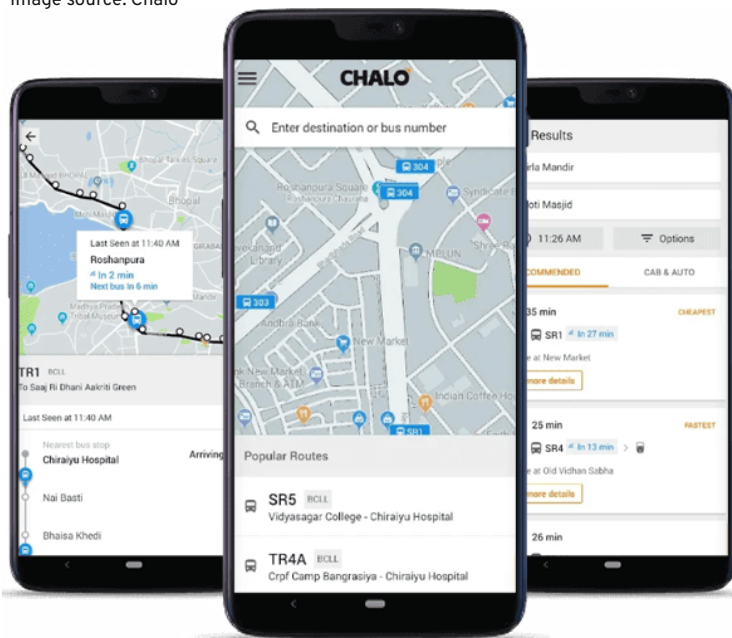
About Technology Adoption through Strategic Measures

To ensure that bus crew as well as the riders adopted the technology, BEST and Chalo adopted the following steps:

- 1 Hands-on training and support** for the bus crew, ticket-checking inspectors, depot and other staff members.
- 2 Managing daily operations** of ETIM deployment, charging, and maintenance to ensure smooth functioning by staff.
- 3 Strategic marketing initiatives** to promote the app and card amongst the public and increase ridership.
- 4 Providing customer support** to redress rider grievances.

Visuals of the BEST Chalo app

Image source: Chalo



The ticketing technology provides accurate and valuable data about the ridership, total distance travelled, and the origin and destination details, enables BEST to make data-driven decisions to improve its services.



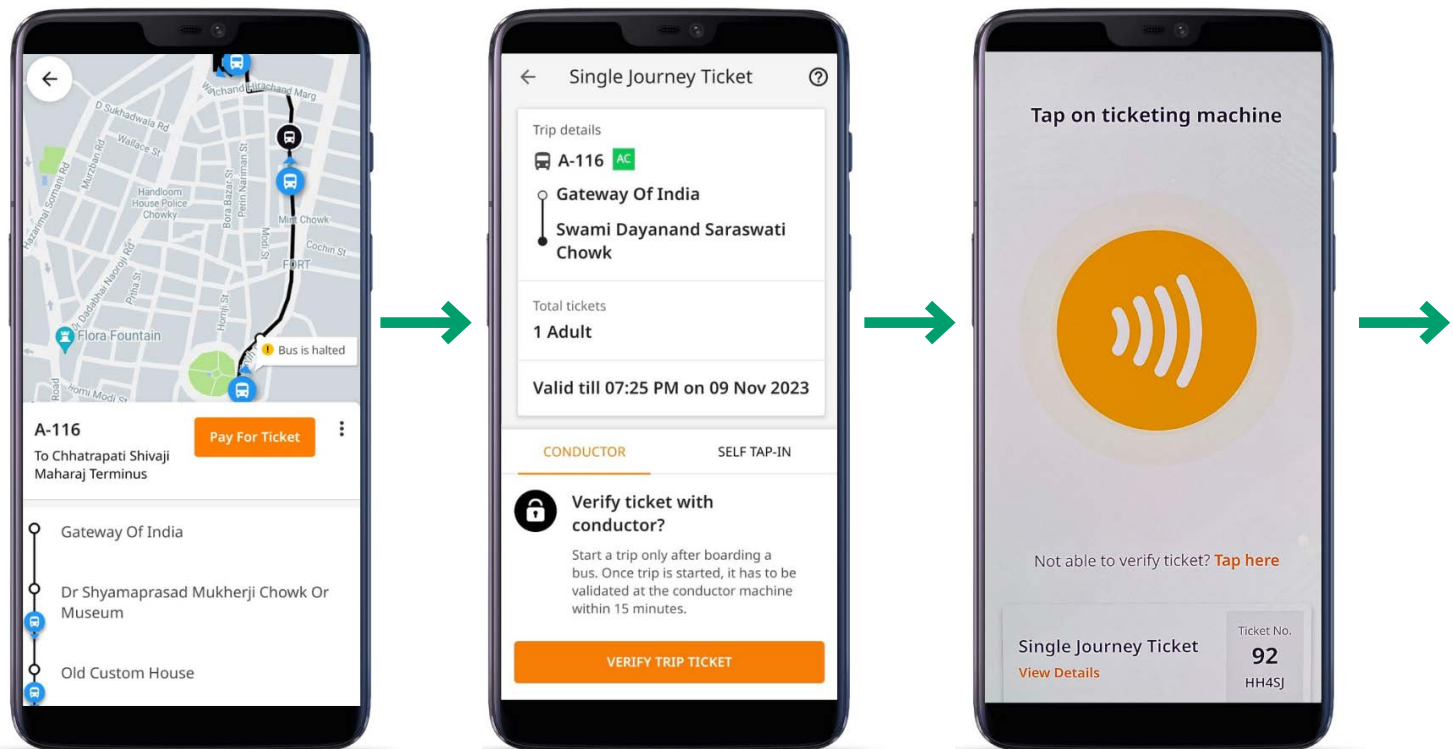
With the app, we are building reliability in the bus system and enhancing the rider experience. We want to make buses the default travel choice.

Priya Singh
Co-founder
Chalo

Keys to Success

- 1 Investing in partnership:** BEST and Chalo aim to increase ridership through collaboration. The technology partner Chalo has invested in the hardware and software needed, including GPS devices, ETIMs, AFCS, and digital tickets tech platform, without any upfront charges. At the same time, BEST pays a variable fee based on their monthly ridership to Chalo.
- 2 Improving rider experience:** BEST and Chalo have developed the app and the card technology with a focus on improving the rider experience at all points, such as the use of mobile app, super saver plans, CMC issuance and usage, and so on.
- 3 Developing integrated technology:** The BEST Chalo app and card has an integrated technology developed in-house, which makes the platform agile and flexible to meet all kinds of conditions.

Process of ticket booking through the BEST Chalo app
Image source: Chalo



Impact of the BEST Chalo App

The BEST Chalo app resulted in a substantial positive impact on various fronts. In the period from 2022 to 2023, BEST witnessed a +55% increase in ridership (from 22.5 lakhs to 35 lakh passengers daily) after the launch of the BEST Chalo app and other operational improvements. 20% of tickets issued are digital via the app or card, translating into savings in paper roll usage and time saved in cash collection and end-of-day settlement.

Through the app, BEST riders wait 30 minutes less each day, have hassle-free payments through digital tickets, and save money with super saver plans.

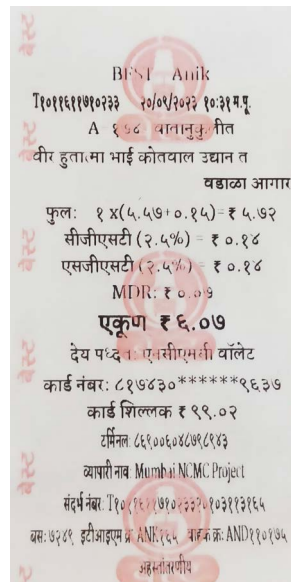
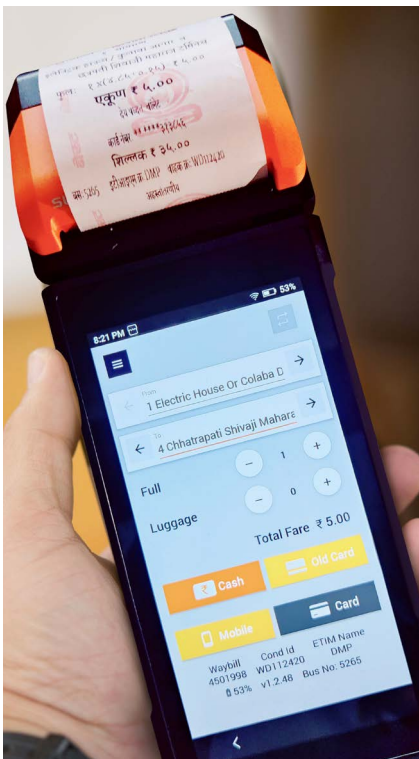
The BEST Chalo app has been downloaded 60 lakh times, and 10 lakh common mobility cards have been issued. One in three BEST passengers use the BEST Chalo app to live track their buses. The live tracking of buses ensures that 6 lakh productive person-days are saved per month.

Digital data of routes and tickets enables better demand prediction and scheduling, resulting in optimised utilisation of the bus fleet.

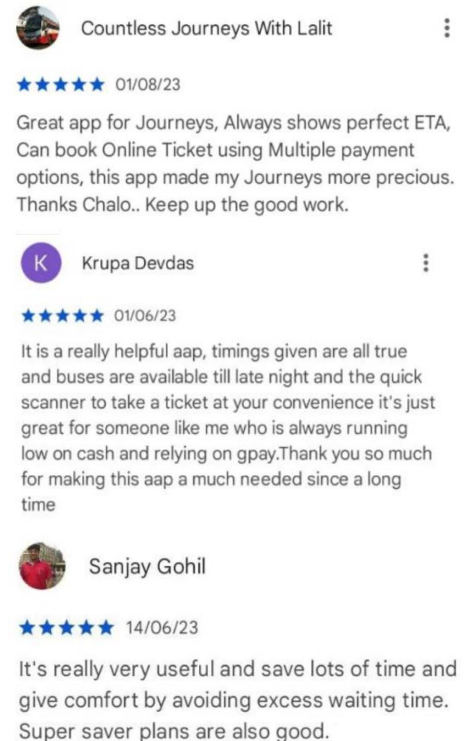
BEST witnessed a +55% increase in ridership after the launch of the app and other operational improvements

One in three BEST passengers use the BEST Chalo app daily to live track their buses.

ETIM machine generates a ticket upon ticket validation
Image source: Chalo



User reviews about the BEST Chalo app
Image source: Chalo on the Google Play store



Ticketing-related Information

What Does It Look Like?

- A bus fare list offers a detailed breakdown of ticket prices, with categories based on factors such as distance, type of service, and age of user.
- Information about concession fare for women, students, the elderly, or those with disabilities must be available at all major bus stands and terminals.
- If the transport agency has a smartcard, providing information about how riders can purchase and recharge the cards is essential.
- Similarly, if there is a smart ticketing app, the transport agency must widely publicise it to onboard riders.

MONTHLY COMMUTER SEASON TICKETS (MST)

Stage-wise fare (For 1 Adult)
[Effective from 29/01/2018] [G.O (Ms.) No.48 Dated 28/01/2018]

Start	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
NA	NA	NA	₹320.00	₹320.00	₹370.00	₹410.00	₹410.00	₹450.00	₹450.00	₹500.00	₹500.00
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
₹540.00	₹590.00	₹590.00	₹590.00	₹590.00	₹590.00	₹630.00	₹630.00	₹630.00	₹670.00	₹670.00	₹670.00
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	End				
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					

NOTE: A Stage is approximately equal to 2 kms. M.S.T. Holders are permitted to travel in all Ordinary & Express. An additional of Rs.11/- is collected to travel in Deluxe services.

Procedures for Getting New Pass

- ✓ One Pass Port Size Photo
- ✓ Address Proof Xerox Copies

Bus Pass Validity Period
Every Month from 16th To 15th of the next Month

Issuing points

1. Adyar	11. Iyyappanthangal	21. T.Nagar
2. Ambathur Industrial Estate	12. K.K Nagar	22. Tambaram (West)
3. Ambathur OT.	13. M.K.B. Nagar	23. Thiruvanniyur
4. Anna Nagar (West)	14. Mandaveli	24. Thiruvotriyur
5. Avadi	15. Pallavaram	25. Tondiarpet
6. Ayanavaram	16. Perambur	26. Vadapalani
7. Broadway	17. Poonamallee	27. Vallalar Nagar
8. C.M.B.T	18. Redhills	28. Velachery
9. Central Rly station	19. Saidapet	29. Villivakkam
10. Guindy Industrial Estate	20. Sriperumbathur	

Working Hours:
08:30 Hours to 11:00 Hours & 15:00 Hours to 19:30 Hours

Period of issue:
Monthly Season Ticket cards are issued from 1st to 22nd of every month.
Will be issued on Sunday and all Government holidays.

Chennai's MTC maintains the fare list on its website, along with information about concession fares and how and where to avail them
Image source: MTC website

Special Fare Announcement

What Does It Look Like?

- If a special fare scheme has been launched, then the beneficiaries of the scheme must be notified at bus stops, interchange and terminals, and within buses.
- The announcement must provide clear details on the beneficiaries, duration, and the type of buses on which the scheme can be availed.
- The special fare buses need to have distinct markings to help beneficiaries identify them.
- If the scheme has an eligibility criteria or needs certain documents to be availed, it must be clearly specified.
- Ensure widespread coverage through print and social media.

DH
DECCAN HERALD

Free bus rides for women from 1 pm today

BENGALURU, DHNS

Women can travel for free on government buses across Karnataka from 1 pm on Sunday as the Congress government rolls out the first of its five poll guarantees.

The free bus ride will also apply to destinations within 20 km from Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in Nanjangud, near Mysuru, on Saturday.

Authorities will paste 'Free travel for women' stickers on the windscreens of the city, ordinary and express buses that



Preparations are on for Sunday's event to launch the Shakti scheme (free bus travel for women) in front of the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO/S.K. DINESH

Ticketing mechanism



Conductors will issue women travellers zero-fare tickets. These will be normal tickets (not pink ones). The ticket will mention journey details (origin to destination), distance, fare etc. The column on the amount received from passengers will state 'zero'. The ticket details will be sent to the KSRTC server in real time. Conductors won't have to keep copies.

ಶಕ್ತಿ ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಸಬಲೀಕರಣದ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಮಸಮಾಜದತ್ತೆ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ

- ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯರೂ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲ ಪರ್ಗಣೆ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಎಸಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಲಘುರಿ ಬಸ್ಸುಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ ಇತರ ಎಲ್ಲ ಬಸ್ಸುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದೊಳಗೆ ಉಚಿತ ಪ್ರಯಾಣ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ.
- ಜೂನ್ 11 ರಿಂದ ಯೋಜನೆಗೆ ಜಾಲನೆ.
- ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯಿಂದ ಶೇ. 94 ರಷ್ಟು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಪ್ರಯಾಣಿಕರಿಗೆ ಅನುಕೂಲ.
- ಬಸ್ಸುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಶೇ. 50 ರಷ್ಟು ಸೀಟುಗಳು ಪುರುಷರಿಗೆ ಮೀಸಲು.

If the ETM malfunctions, women passengers will be given manual tickets.

Women booking tickets in advance will have to pay a reservation fee of Rs 20.

Women who want to opt out of the scheme can buy tickets. The Shakti scheme isn't compulsory.

Documents to carry

- You can carry any government-issued ID card with a Karnataka address.
- Girl students can show their school/college ID.

Anbukumar added that they would evaluate how the government order could be implemented. "Or else, we will ask for changes," he said. If there's any dispute, the benefit of the doubt will be given to the passenger, he said.

The Shakti free travel scheme for women in Bengaluru was widely publicised through print and social media, and included details on how women could avail the scheme.

Image source: Deccan Herald and CM of Karnataka X (formerly Twitter) page

Service Disruption Announcement

What Does It Look Like?

- Service disruption announcements inform riders of any expected and unexpected interruptions that may affect their commute.
- These announcements provide clear information about the issue—such as maintenance, weather conditions, road closures, congestion, or infrastructure issues—and estimate the duration of the interruption.
- Riders need to be informed of alternative stops and transportation options to adjust their travel plans accordingly.
- Safety instructions may be included for navigating the affected area.



London's TfL puts out a notice that provides information about the service disruption and where riders can avail the nearest bus services from
Image source: The Havering Daily

Code of Conduct Signage

What Does It Look Like?

- The code of conduct signage outlines expected behaviour from riders and rule compliance while using bus services.
- It includes guidelines on respecting other riders, maintaining cleanliness, and adhering to safety regulations. It also has penalties for misconduct.
- Additionally, the code may detail expectations for queuing, priority seating, and offering assistance to individuals with disabilities.



Using signage, Singapore ensures that priority seating and boarding is given to the elderly, pregnant women, caregivers, and people with disabilities.
Image source: Strait Times

Grievance Redressal Information*

What Does It Look Like?

- Grievance redressal information for bus riders includes the various channels available for complaints.
- It includes instructions on how to submit grievances, contact details for customer support.
- Riders are informed about the process for escalating concerns if not resolved at the initial stage.
- The objective is to ensure riders have access to an effective and transparent system to resolve their concerns, contributing to a positive and trustworthy bus service experience.

*Discussed in detail in chapter #8

BMTC—the bus transport agency in Bengaluru— and MTC— the bus transport agency in Chennai feature the grievance redressal details on their websites
Image source: BMTC website and MTC website

The Transport for London website has a 'Help & Contacts' tab which answers common queries and how to get help
Image source: TfL website

Information Type	Communication Channels
Bus Stop Signage	<p>Offline: Bus stop pole or shelter to be available</p> <p>Online: Integrated with map softwares using GTFS*</p>
Bus Schedules	<p>Offline: Information panels (either large prints or digital displays) at bus stops, interchange and terminals, transport nodes like metro, suburban rails, points of entry to the city–railway station, airport, inter-city bus terminals</p> <p>Online: On website, integrated with map softwares using GTFS*, on phone app</p>
Bus Network and Route Maps	<p>Offline: Information panels (either large prints or digital displays) at bus stops, interchange and terminals, transport nodes like metro, suburban rails, points of entry to the city–railway station, airport, inter-city bus terminals</p> <p>Online: On website, integrated with map softwares using GTFS*, on phone app</p>
Real-time Bus Status Information	<p>Offline: Digital displays inside buses, at bus stops, interchange and terminals</p> <p>Online: Integrated with map softwares using GTFS*, on phone app</p>
Service Disruption Announcement	<p>Offline: Digital displays at bus stops, interchange and terminals, via newspaper articles</p> <p>Online: On social media, integrated with map softwares using GTFS*, on phone app</p>
Ticketing-related Information	<p>Offline: Posters at major hubs and terminals, at interchanges, at bus stops, inside buses</p> <p>Online: On website, on phone app</p>
Special Fare Announcement	<p>Offline: Posters inside buses, at bus stops, interchange and terminals, transport nodes like metro, suburban rails</p> <p>Online: On website, on phone app, via newspaper articles, on social media</p>
Code of Conduct	<p>Offline: Signage inside buses, at bus stops, interchange and terminals, transport nodes like metro, suburban rails</p> <p>Online: On website, on a smartphone app, and on social media</p>
Grievance Redressal Information	<p>Offline: Signage on and inside buses, at bus stops, interchange and terminals, printed on tickets</p> <p>Online: On website, on phone app, via newspaper articles, and on social media</p>

*Transport agency to provide the data publically in GTFS format



The PMPML Bus Day 2022 launched free travel schemes for women and girls and offered an opportunity for them to try out the buses, and eventually turned them into frequent riders

Image source: ITDP India

#8

Promoting and Marketing Your Services

Along with providing easy-to-access information, creating a perception of the bus as a reliable, safe, convenient mode of commute through strategic marketing is equally important. The combination has the potential to attract new users, thereby increasing ridership and ultimately revenue for transport agencies.


Marketing campaigns and events also play a vital role in ensuring widespread knowledge about the available services, schemes, and routes, which attracts more people to try the buses. A well-promoted bus system can also positively impact a region and its community, as the awareness about services connects more people to work, education, sports and recreation, and places of local culture and heritage.

Building a positive image that buses are desirable and trustworthy and substantiating it with data can significantly impact the success of buses. Promoting and marketing initiatives encourage more people to try buses, ultimately increasing ridership. For example, promoting how others are benefiting from bus services can be a magnet. When individuals see a growing number of riders using buses, it reinforces their belief in the reliability of bus services. The thought process is driven by the notion that if “everyone else is doing it, it must be a sensible choice,” and is likely to nudge others to try the bus too. This aligns with a fundamental aspect of human behaviour—the tendency to choose what others are choosing for validation.

Common Ways of Promoting Your Services

- 1 Community events and on-ground activation
- 2 Influencer partnerships
- 3 Print media outreach
- 4 Social media outreach
- 5 Challenges and contests
- 6 Etiquette campaigns

Building a positive image that buses are desirable and trustworthy and substantiating it with data can significantly impact the success of buses. Promoting and marketing initiatives encourage more people to try buses, ultimately increasing ridership.



Community Events and On-ground Activation

What Does It Look Like?

- Community events offer a first-hand experience of a bus service or scheme that can encourage more people to use buses.
- Transport agencies can use these opportunities to interact with the public, gather feedback, and raise awareness about bus services, creating a positive experience.
- Set up booths or information centres, provide interactive experiences, and offer giveaways or promotional materials. These events can include free ride days, bus tours and open days, campaigns for special target groups, bus shelter makeovers, and bus festivals.



Odisha's CRUT strategically conducts on-ground events during sports tournaments when there are more visitors and tourists in the region to engage with the public and spread awareness about Mo Bus services

Image source: CRUT

1 Free ride day

- Designate a specific day or week in the year where bus services are offered for free.
- This initiative encourages people who may not use the buses to experience its convenience and benefits, potentially attracting new riders.

2 Bus tours and open days

- Organise guided bus tours or open days where the public can visit bus depots, explore the buses, and learn about their features and technology.
- This interactive experience helps to demystify the bus system and allows people to gain a better understanding of the bus operations.

3 Campaigns for special target groups

- Create targeted campaigns to promote bus services to specific groups, such as students, senior citizens, or people with disabilities.
- These campaigns can include educational workshops, discounted fares, or customised bus services tailored to the needs of these target groups.

4 Bus shelter makeovers

- Collaborate with local artists, schools, or community organisations to transform bus shelters into vibrant and attractive spaces.
- These visually appealing bus shelters can generate interest and improve the overall experience for riders, while also creating a positive image of the bus system within the community.

5 Bus festivals

- Host public transport festivals or events that celebrate the benefits of sustainable mobility.
- These festivals can include live performances, exhibitions, interactive displays, and family-friendly activities centred around buses.
- They provide a fun and engaging way to generate enthusiasm and positive associations with buses.

Influencer Partnerships

What Do These Look Like?

- Influencers can reach a broad and engaged audience, and their authentic endorsements can influence public perception and behaviour.
- Collaborate with local influencers, particularly those with a strong following in the city, such as actors, government officials, business leaders, and elected representatives, to promote bus services.
- By sharing their experiences, influencers can showcase the benefits of using buses and encourage their followers to try buses.



To promote the dedicated bus lane for BMTC buses in **Bengaluru**, the former Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao, the former BMTC Managing Director C Shikha and actor-activist Chetan participated in the #NimbusExpress Yatra

Image source: The Hindu

Print Media Outreach

What Does It Look Like?

- By proactively putting out news articles about the bus services, special fares, offers, disruptions, the transport agency can take control of the narrative and prevent confusion and negative feelings amongst the general public.
- Engage with local media outlets and journalists to highlight positive stories and initiatives related to your bus services.
- Press releases, media events, and spokesperson interviews can help raise awareness and improve the brand's reputation.

BMTC promotes its new services and facilities through active print outreach, in both English and Kannada language newspapers

Image source: Deccan Herald (above) and Vijaya Karnataka (below)

BMTC installs automated digital boards in 500 bus shelters

Passengers can access info in English and Kannada

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has installed digital passenger information system (PIS) boards at 500 bus shelters in the city, an official said Tuesday. The project, valued at an estimated Rs 40 crore, is part of the Central government's Nirbhaya scheme.

The tender for the project was called prior to COVID-19 but had hit minor roadblocks

due to the pandemic, Chief Traffic Manager Prabhakar Reddy told *DH*.

"The maintenance of the digital boards will be done by an agency with the BMTC," Reddy said. "Power is the primary pre-requisite. These have been installed in the shelters where there is proper power supply."

The signboards display the bus number, route, destination and estimated time of arrival (ETA) both in English and in Kannada.



A digital PIS board at a bus shelter in Bengaluru.

(PHOTO CREDIT: X/ @bykarthikreddy)

"The entire system is automated," the Chief Traffic Manager said, adding that the tracking works similar to the Namma BMTC app launched recently as all these are part of the same project.

These boards are different from the ones installed earlier at the Traffic Transit Manage-

ment Centres (TTCM), Red said. "They were installed another agency for advertisements, along with displaying the bus timings," he said.

However, they were not at all-time and only displayed static time as per our timetable. In the current digital board the live buses are tracked, added.

In August this year, repo indicated a hiccup in the project's implementation, stemming from one of the agencies involved in a public-private partnership with the Bru Bengaluru Mahanagara 1 like (BBMP) for maintaining the shelters, which had yet to give its agreement.

"The issues were subsequently resolved as the installations are complete now," an official said.

Kannada News / News / Mangaluru / Karnataka Govt Announces Free Bus Travel For Women From June 11

Shakti Scheme: ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಉಚಿತ ಬಸ್ ಪ್ರಯಾಣ ಯೋಜನೆ ಇಂದಿನಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯಾದ್ಯಂತ ಜಾರಿ

Edited By ಶುಭಿ | Vijaya Karnataka Web | Updated: 11 Jun 2023, 7:43 am

Social Media Outreach

What Does It Look Like?

- Social media is a powerful tool for reaching a diverse demographic of internet-savvy users.
- Showcasing the increasing usage of the bus services promotes a positive perception of the services. Develop engaging social media campaigns that leverage platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).
- Create visually appealing content, such as short videos, infographics, and user-generated content highlighting the convenience, affordability, and environmental benefits of taking the bus.



Odisha's CRUT regularly puts out ridership data every two weeks, which reinforces the growing popularity of the service

Image source: CRUT X (formerly Twitter) page

1 Interactive Q&A sessions

- Schedule regular Q&A sessions on social media platforms to engage with your audience. Cover topics like service improvements, accessibility, and future plans.
- Utilise dedicated hashtags to track questions and answers, making it easier for users to follow and participate in the conversation.

2 Customer service and support

- Extend customer support hours on social media, especially during peak travel times and emergencies, to provide timely assistance to passengers.
- Consider an AI-powered chatbot to handle common inquiries, allowing your human customer support team to focus on more complex issues.

3 Promotions and campaigns

- Create themed campaigns throughout the year to promote bus usage, such as "Ride Green Month" to highlight the environmental benefits of bus travel.
- Collaborate with local businesses and offer discounts or incentives for using your services, driving ridership and supporting the local economy.

4 User-generated content

- Establish a dedicated agency-specific hashtag, like #YourBusJourney, encouraging riders as well as bus crew to share their experiences, stories, and photos while using your services.
- Showcase the best user-generated content on your official platforms to acknowledge and celebrate your loyal riders and hard working crew, building a sense of community.

5 Safety awareness

- Create regular safety-themed weeks or months on your social media channels, providing daily safety tips, videos, and infographics to educate and inform riders, such as reporting harassment during journeys, preventing theft, and so on.
- Collaborate with local schools and organisations to organise safety workshops and events, reinforcing the importance of safe and responsible travel.

Challenges and Contests

What Do These Look Like?

- Challenges and contests provide a fun and competitive incentive for public to try bus services and discover their benefits.
- Organise bus challenges and contests that encourage people to take the bus for specific purposes, such as commuting, exploring their area, or reducing their carbon footprint.
- Offer rewards, recognition, or prizes to participants who successfully complete the challenges.



Singapore's LTA posts about offers and discounts on social media
Image source: LTA Instagram

Etiquette Campaigns

What Does It Look Like?

- Etiquette campaigns promote considerate public transport behaviour among bus riders and staff.
- These campaigns encourage riders to be mindful of fellow travellers, promoting politeness, cleanliness, and respect for personal space.
- Etiquette campaigns targeted at staff promote professional and respectful conduct towards riders.
- Through educational materials, lively graphics, signage, social media engagement, and on-ground engagement, these campaigns seek to create a more pleasant, harmonious, and inclusive commuting experience.

Singapore's LTA has created 'Heart Zones' at interchanges-designated areas where commuters in need of assistance are connected with helpful fellow commuters
Image source: Caring SG Commuter





In practice

Promoting Rider Etiquette

Location
Singapore

Implemented by
Land Transport Authority (LTA)

Marketing Partner
Dentsu, MullenLowe

Timeline
Installed in 2019

About LTA

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) spearheads land transport developments in Singapore. LTA plans, designs, builds and maintains Singapore's land transport infrastructure and systems. The Bus Services Enhancement Programme (BSEP), introduced in 2012, significantly expanded bus capacity and enhanced service levels to benefit commuters. Various bus schemes have also been rolled out to improve bus journeys in Singapore.

Over 3.6 million (36 lakh) people take the bus daily in Singapore, travelling across the island via more than 300 bus services.

Overview of the Gracious Commuting Campaign

To spread graciousness to make journeys more pleasant amidst the daily rush and to promote better commuter behaviour, LTA launched the Thoughtful Bunch in 2014.

The Thoughtful Bunch highlights the caring and considerate nature in all of us, and serves as prompts in Singapore's buses and trains as acts of thoughtful behaviour on public transport, such as giving up seats, queueing in an orderly manner, and moving in for a more pleasant commute. These characters are just like the everyday commuter, trying to do the right thing to make the travel experience more pleasant.

The Thoughtful Bunch are characters of the Gracious Commuting Campaign
Image source: LTA website



About the Characters

- 1 Stand-Up Stacey:** Gives up her seat to those who need it more.
- 2 Move-In Martin:** Moves in to make space so others can board.
- 3 Give-Way Glenda:** Queues to one side of the door and lets other riders alight first.
- 4 Bag-Down Benny:** Puts his bag down so others have more room.
- 5 Hush-Hush Hannah:** Keeps her volume down so others enjoy a peaceful, quieter ride.

The Thoughtful Bunch started with three characters—Stand-Up Stacey, Move-In Martin and Give-Way Glenda. The other two characters—Hush-Hush Hannah and Bag-Down Benny—were crowdsourced from the public.

The Thoughtful Bunch characters are just like the everyday commuter, trying to do the right thing to make the travel experience on public transport more pleasant.



Simple playful wording—such as rhymes and puns—makes the message accessible by all
Image source: LTA website (above) and Strait Times (below)





If a fellow commuter is kind, considerate and gives way, it will make other passengers enjoy the journey a lot more.

**Baey Yam Ken,
Senior Parliamentary
Secretary,
Ministry of Sustainability
and the Environment &
Ministry of Transport**

70% of commuters have noticed their fellow commuters queuing up and giving way.

67% of the commuters have noticed that more people are giving up their seats.

Keys to Success

- 1 Breaking the formality of instructional prompts:** The Thoughtful Bunch breaks the formal aspect of usual signage and posters, and pumps new energy into a behaviour nudge campaign. Before introducing (the Thoughtful Bunch), reserved seat signs that promote gracious behaviour tended to be plain-looking and filled with pictograms, looking similar to other signs or posters. They were unable to capture commuters' attention nor able to create a strong impact or influence on commuters to be more gracious, even though the messages were simple.
- 2 Humanising the LTA brand with characters:** The Thoughtful Bunch put a face to a campaign, and added personality to LTA, making it more relatable. The well-designed characters are accessible and likeable, bringing out human attributes such as empathy, curiosity, joy and humour, while conveying messages in an effective and authentic way.
- 3 Using accessible and memorable messaging:** The characters communicated the 'gracious' behaviors clearly through their gestures. In addition, the use of simple wording—such as rhymes and puns—made the message accessible by all commuters—be it an 8 or an 80-year old!
- 4 Embedding graciousness when young:** LTA also collaborated with preschool students to co-create a storybook about graciousness on public transport. The children shared their ideas and stories and these were brought to life in a storybook.
- 5 Bringing the message into everyday life:** LTA spread the thoughtfulness message beyond public transport into commuters' daily lives by collaborating with local brands to create everyday reminders of how people can foster positive social norms. The Thoughtful Bunch featured on limited editions coffee cups, creative merchandise such as magnets, cushions, mugs, badges, notebooks, stickers, etc. There were also meet-and-greet sessions at MRT stations, contests, and events.

Impact of the Campaign

The five characters have since become a familiar and endearing part of everyday commute in Singapore. The campaign has also seen a positive and tangible change in commuter behaviour.

According to the Commuter Graciousness Index 2015 – a campaign survey of 1,000 participants to measure of the perceived change in behaviour of commuters on public transport – 70% of commuters have noticed their fellow commuters queuing up and giving way. 67% of the commuters have noticed that more people are giving up their seats. 50% of respondents have witnessed commuters moving in to allow others to board the train or bus.

The Thoughtful Bunch's messaging in the buses have vibrant, eye-catching graphics that appeal to everyone—young or old
Image source: LTA website (above) and SG Times (below)





During the Bus Day 2022, PMPML—the bus transport agency of Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad— conducted on-ground surveys with riders to understand what could be improved in the bus services
Image source: ITDP India

#8

Engaging for Feedback

Engaging for feedback is key in understanding if the bus services meet the needs of people. By listening to riders' grievances and opinions, transport agencies can significantly improve the quality of their services and inculcate a stronger sense of ownership and trust among riders. The two-way communication fosters a positive relationship between transport agencies and their riders, ultimately contributing to increased ridership and the success of promotional efforts.

Riders are not only the end-users of bus services but also the best source of insights into the quality of service and areas for improvement.

Actively Seek Rider Feedback

Apart from receiving grievances, transport agencies should actively seek feedback through surveys, focus groups, and online feedback forms and collect riders' opinions and suggestions at least once every three months, especially after introducing a new service or scheme. This data can provide insights into what riders like about the service and where there is room for improvement.

Analyse and Implement Feedback

Once feedback is gathered, analyse it thoroughly and use it to identify areas for enhancement. Riders need to see that their input is valued and that transport agencies are committed to improving based on their riders' suggestions. Clearly communicate these improvements to riders to demonstrate that the transport agency continuously strives to enhance the bus experience for the benefit of all.

Encourage Satisfied Riders to Share Experiences

By encouraging satisfied riders to share their positive experiences, transport agencies can build trust and credibility among potential users. These can be in the form of testimonials or reviews. Riders often relate more to the experiences of their peers via social media, websites, and personal messages than to traditional advertising. Therefore, sharing real stories of how bus services have positively impacted individuals' lives can significantly influence others to consider using these services.

Riders are not only the end-users of public transport services but also the best source of insights into the quality of service and areas for improvement.

Please see the rider feedback and survey form template linked in the Annexure!



The Need for a Grievance Redressal System

Having an effective grievance redressal system is critical to enhance rider satisfaction, prioritise safety and security, drive operational improvements, manage and protect the reputation of the transport agency, and fulfill legal and ethical responsibilities.

Here are different ways in which having a grievance redressal system helps a transport agency:

- 1 Safety and security:** Transport agencies must prioritise rider safety and security. Grievance redressal allows riders to report safety concerns, incidents of harassment, or suspicious activities. Prompt response and action can help maintain a secure environment for all riders and enhance their trust in the system.
- 2 Reputation management:** Transport agencies operate in the public eye, and their reputation can significantly impact ridership and public perception. Addressing grievances effectively prevents negative experiences from becoming widespread and damaging the transport agency's reputation. It showcases the agency's commitment to rider welfare and quality service.
- 3 Rider satisfaction and retention:** Ensuring riders have a positive and hassle-free experience is paramount for transport agencies. Effective grievance redressal ensures that riders' issues, whether related to lost items, delays, cleanliness, or ticketing problems, are resolved promptly. This contributes to higher rider satisfaction and encourages repeat usage of bus services.
- 4 Operational efficiency and improvement:** Grievance redressal serves as a valuable source of feedback for transport agencies. Riders' complaints and suggestions can highlight operational inefficiencies or areas in need of improvement. Transport agencies can use this feedback to optimise routes, schedules, infrastructure, and services, ultimately leading to a more efficient and rider-friendly bus system.
- 5 Legal and ethical obligations:** Transport agencies often have legal and ethical obligations to ensure rider rights and accessibility. Effective grievance redressal helps transport agencies meet these obligations, demonstrating their commitment to compliance and ethical practices. It helps avoid legal complications and ensures that transport services are accessible and fair for all passengers.


It is essential for transport agencies to provide multiple channels for riders to report grievances and ensure prompt, fair, and effective resolution processes.

Grievances are issues or concerns riders raise when they are dissatisfied with the service, experiences, or conditions related to the buses.

Grievances can include complaints about ticketing, delays, overcrowding, cleanliness, rude behaviour, or any other aspect of the bus service that falls short of their expectations or requirements.

Different Modes of Grievance Redressal

- Hotlines and helplines
- Online complaint forms
- Social media platforms
- Phone apps
- Feedback boxes
- Helpdesks
- Public meetings and hearings

Let's look at all of these in detail 

Different Modes of Grievance Redressal

- 1 Hotlines and helplines:** Dedicated hotlines or helplines are often set up for riders to report issues or seek assistance. Trained staff handle calls and provide information or initiate complaint resolution processes.
- 2 Online complaint forms:** Transport agencies may have online complaint forms on their websites. Riders can use these forms to submit their grievances, providing details of the issue they encountered.
- 3 Social media platforms:** Riders can reach out to transport agencies through social media channels, messaging apps, or chatbots.
- 4 Phone apps:** Transport agencies may offer apps that allow riders to report problems directly from their smartphones.
- 5 Feedback boxes:** Feedback boxes placed at terminals or bus stops or on buses allow riders to submit written complaints or suggestions, even anonymously.
- 6 Helpdesks:** Transport agencies typically have helpdesks at key stations or depots. Riders can visit these centers to register their grievances.
- 7 Public meetings and hearings:** Some agencies hold public meetings or hearings where riders can voice their grievances directly to transport agency officials or board members.

Combine internet-based tools like online forms, social media with non-internet based tools such as hotlines, feedback boxes, helpdesks, and public meetings, ensuring the system is accessible for all.

Transport for London has a dedicated website “Haveyoursay” for all transport-related surveys
Image source: TfL website



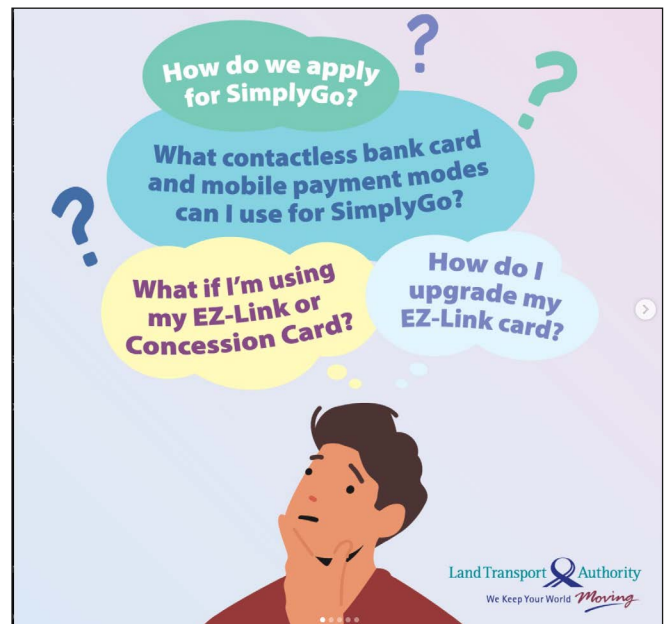
September 20, 2023

RI, R2, R3, R6 and BI4 – Orpington bus proposals

We're proposing changes to some Orpington bus services and would like to hear your views. Thes...

[Read more](#)

Based on the common questions received, Land Transport Authority created an FAQ post for the benefit of all
Image source: LTA's Instagram handle





In practice

Engaging with Riders for Feedback

Location

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, and Puri, Odisha

Implemented by

Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT)

Timeline

Since 2018

Overview of the Grievance Redressal System

In order to ensure a two-way communication, CRUT has set up eight channels through which it receives feedback and grievances. These are:

- 1** The grievance redressal email id
- 2** Bhubaneswar One helpline, a unified 24X7 number to address citizens' grievance for all civic concerns, including public transport
- 3** Helpline number managed by a CRUT staff
- 4** CM's Jana Sunani Grievance portal
- 5** CRUT's social media—Twitter, Instagram, Facebook
- 6** CRUT's website
- 7** On-ground and social media surveys
- 8** Hand-delivered letters given to the Depot Managers

Each of the feedback channels are systematically tracked to ensure timely action and resolution.

CRUT regularly conducts on-ground surveys to hear grievances directly from the riders
Image source: CRUT



Keys to Success

- 1 Being inclusive:** The channels are both internet and non-internet based. This makes the process inclusive and ensures that no one is left behind in submitting their complaints, feedback, and suggestions.
- 2 Streamlining the process:** For each of the eight channels, there is a point of contact (PoC) assigned to track the questions, suggestions, complaints, and grievances received. Valid concerns are then sent to a Whatsapp group that includes the various PoCs, Depot Managers, Communications Cell members, General Manager(s), and Managing Director to quickly decide the next steps. Depending on the type of grievance, action is taken within 1-5 working days.
- 3 Tracking periodically:** The Communications Cell maintains a database to record all the grievances, where the concerned department marks the status of resolution regularly.
- 4 Taking evidence-based disciplinary action, where needed:** For complaints regarding the behaviour of staff such as bus drivers and conductors, the Depot Manager conducts a personal investigation to verify the validity of the complaint, Action is taken against the staff according to the severity of the complaint—ranging from strict reprimanding to termination.
- 5 Closing the feedback loop:** When feedback includes new services or schedule changes, these are considered and if found viable, acted upon. This information is also shared publicly by CRUT on their social media handles, publically reinforcing that CRUT listens to its people.
- 6 Leading by example:** The leadership at CRUT strongly believes in feedback to improve and create people-centric services. For some grievances received on X (formerly Twitter), the Managing Director has personally responded and taken action.

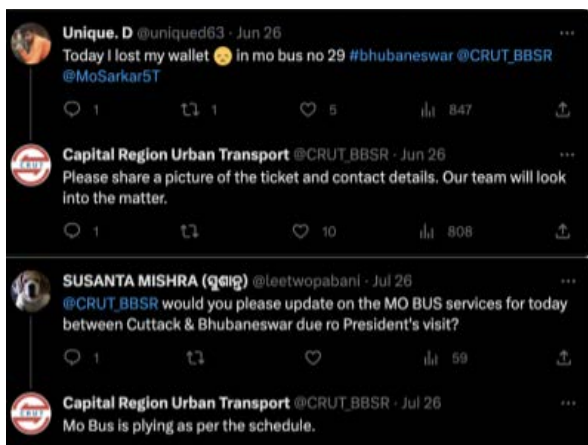


Direct communication with the commuters is essential to gather feedback which always helps in further improving the services.

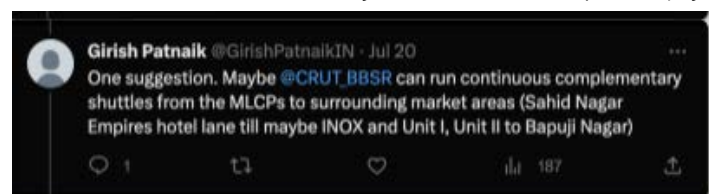
**Sanjay Biswal,
General Manager-
Operations & Maintenance
Capital Region Urban
Transport (CRUT)**

Impact of the Grievance Redressal System

More than 95% of the grievances received have been addressed.



Snippets of grievances, queries, and suggestions received on CRUT's X (formerly Twitter) page
Image source: CRUT X (formerly Twitter) page





Bengaluru's BRTC buses have the helpline number beside the door on every bus
Image source: Deccan Herald

Odisha's OSRTC website has details for customer support as well as feedback and suggestions form
Image source: OSRTC website

Odisha State Road Transport Corporation
ଓଡିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସଡ଼କ ପରିବହନ ନିଗମ

Shri Naveen Patnaik,
Honourable Chief Minister.

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days. Please contact our alternative number for seamless interaction Call- +91 7849052205"

ଓଡିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସଡ଼କ ପରିବହନ ନିଗମ
ଶ୍ରୀଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ନବୀନ ପକ୍ଷୀନାୟକ
ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ
(କରାହାଣ୍ଡି, ୦୧ ନଭେମ୍ବର ୨୦୨୩)

୩୧୦ ୧୫,୭୭,୮୭୯ ୬୩
ଗ୍ରୀନପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଲୋକ ଉପଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ମୋଟର ବସ୍

Feedback Form:
Feedback / Suggestions

OSRTC at a Glance

- Orissa State Road Transport Corporation operates under the Transport & Commerce Department of Govt. of Odisha. It is the only organization of the Government which provides passenger transport in the state of Odisha.
- In 1948, the State Govt. took over operation of bus services run by erstwhile princely states under State Transport Services (STS) of Transport Department.
- In 1950, the Central Act, R.T.C. Act was enacted (Act No. 64 of 1950) which required creation of Road Transport Corporations under respective State Governments. The OSRTC Rules were passed in 1967.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT:
OSRTC Toll-Free No: **1800-345-1122**
Support over WhatsApp: **7849052205**
E-Booking Refund No: **9513508001**
email: **complaint.osrtc@gmail.com**

Cheat Sheet: Grievance Redressal System

Setting Up the System

Identify the combination of internet-based and non-internet based channels that the transport agency will use for getting feedback



Develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) for recurring issues such as ticketing, lost property, theft, harassment, service delays, or lack of information



Create a grievance database with information such as date, details of complainant, nature of grievance, concerned department, status of grievance



Identify a point of contact (PoC) for each channel who will be incharge of monitoring the grievances on that channel



Deploy the channels and inform the public about the various ways to submit grievances

Grievances Covered in the SOP

PoCs to escalate grievance to relevant departments as outlined in the SOP



PoCs to track the status of the grievances and inform the rider when their grievance has been resolved, as per the grievance specific timelines outlined in the SOP



A compilation of grievance resolutions to be highlighted on social media to demonstrate the proactive action taken by the transport agency

Grievances Not Covered in the SOP or Needing Special Attention

The PoC will escalate it to an advisory group with senior officials such as Department Heads, General Manager, Managing Director and seek for next action steps



PoC will then contact the relevant team members to carry out the action steps



PoCs to track the status of the grievances and inform the rider when their grievance has been resolved



Special grievance resolutions to be highlighted on social media to demonstrate the proactive action taken by the transport agency



Use this cheat sheet as guidance to get started on your grievance redressal system!

#9

Monitoring and Evaluating Impact

Monitoring and evaluating are pivotal for assessing the effectiveness and impact of marketing, information, and communications strategies and initiatives. By tracking and analysing various key performance indicators (KPIs), transport agencies can gain valuable insights into how well they engage their audience and deliver their messages.

These KPIs, ranging from rider satisfaction and trust levels to media perception and social media interactions, provide quantifiable data for informed decision-making. Understanding the reach and impact of communications efforts enables adjustments and improvements, ensuring that communications strategies align with organisational objectives and resonate with the target audience.

Additionally, monitoring and evaluation help optimise resource allocation and refine communications approaches based on what works best. This iterative process ensures that transport agencies continually evolve communications strategies to maintain relevance and effectiveness in an ever-changing landscape.

An effective monitoring and evaluation framework ensures that communications remain responsive, efficient, and impactful, contributing positively to the transport agency's success.

Internal Communications: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To be evaluated using surveys

- Percent of employee awareness of the transport agency's objectives
- Percent of employee awareness of the brand objectives
- Percent of employees adopting new communications tools
- Percent of employees who attend marketing, information, and communications-related trainings
- Percent of employees demonstrating improved communications skills through training programmes
- Percent of employees who feel improved collaboration and knowledge-sharing between different departments

An effective monitoring and evaluation framework ensures that communications remain responsive, efficient, and impactful, contributing positively to the transport agency's success.

External communications: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To be evaluated using audits, perception surveys, print and social media analytics, social media listening

- Percent of overall rider satisfaction
- Percent of stops/ interchange /terminals that have up-to-date passenger information (route, time, destination, etc.)
- Percent of stops / interchange / terminals that have accessible information for people with disabilities
- Percent of riders who feel it is easy to find bus-related information
- Percent of riders who feel the transport agency provides timely and accurate information
- Number of visitors to the transport agency's website
- Number of page views on the transport agency's website
- Number of downloads of the transport agency's mobile app
- Percent of active users of the transport agency's mobile app
- Percent of positive vs. negative news stories about the agency
- Percent of positive vs. negative comments posted on social media
- Number of followers on social media channels
- Reach of social media posts
- Percent of satisfaction among those who participated in the transport agency's on-ground activities
- Overall public sentiment regarding the transport agency expressed through online interactions and posts
- Percent of riders who feel that fellow riders and bus crew are respectful and helpful
- Percent of grievances received and responded to every week
- Average number of days to resolve grievances raised by riders
- Percent of riders who felt their grievances were responded to in a timely and courteous manner



A child boards a Mo Bus in **Bhubaneswar**
Image source: Elements Creative

#10

Making Buses Great Again

We recognise that the strategies outlined herein are not one-size-fits-all. They serve as guiding principles, adaptable to the unique needs, goals, and regional context of your transport agency. The ultimate aim is the same: to encourage as many individuals as possible to choose buses as their preferred mode of transport, regularly.

Transport agencies face the challenge of competing against modes that promise comfort but are detrimental to our planet. To succeed in this dynamic landscape, transport agencies must embrace innovative approaches that prioritise the delivery of high-quality services that are reliable and comfortable by paying attention to riders' experience.

While operational efficiency is paramount, it cannot exist in isolation. The approach needs to be much more holistic, acknowledging that the key to sustained ridership lies in shaping a positive and comprehensive rider experience, as outlined in Chapter #1 - Shaping Your Rider's Experience. The ideas in this guidebook focus on just the aspects of marketing, communications, and information, along with feedback mechanism, but other aspects are equally important. By focusing on every aspect, we lay the groundwork for an enduring connection between the transport agency and its riders.

In this pursuit, we encourage you to leverage the guidance provided and tailor it to the specific circumstances of your transport agency. Embrace innovation, embrace change, and above all, embrace the idea that buses can offer not just a mode of transport but a lifestyle choice—one that is environmentally conscious, efficient, and community-driven.

As we embark on this collective journey, let us remember that through collaborative efforts, we have the power to shape a future where choosing buses is not just a preference but a conscious decision for the well-being of our planet and our communities.

Together, we can make buses great again.

While operational efficiency is paramount, it cannot exist in isolation. The approach needs to be much more holistic, acknowledging that the key to sustained ridership lies in shaping a positive and comprehensive rider experience.



**Together,
we can make
buses great
again!**

**Wish you the
very best,
Cavi**

Annexure #1

Detailed Checklist for Assessment of Current System

Detailed
CHECKLIST
for Assessment of the
Current System

1

This is a suggested checklist to assess your current system. Please edit it as per your need.

Contains checklists for:

- 1** Visibility and brand recognition of the bus system
- 2** Availability and reliability of passenger information system
- 3** Accessibility of passenger information system
- 4** Communication channels with riders
- 5** Feedback methods and grievance redressal
- 6** Perception of the transport agency and bus services amongst riders
- 7** Perception of the transport agency and bus services amongst employees

Annexure #2

Request for Proposal for Selection of an Agency for the Communications Team

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
for
Selection of Agency for
Communications Cell
in
Transport Agency

2

This is a suggested RfP* to onboard a Communications Team. Please edit it as per your need.

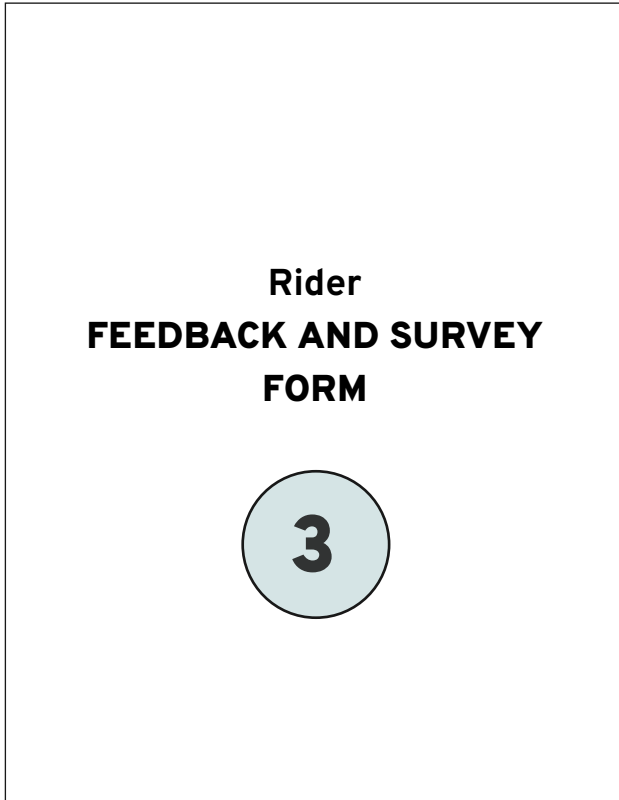
Contains details on:

- 1** Terms of reference
- 2** Timeline and deliverables
- 3** Expected resources
- 4** Contract period

*Based on CRUT Odisha's RfP

Annexure #3

Rider Feedback and Survey Form



All annexures available on:
bit.ly/reaching-your-riders



**This is a suggested rider feedback and survey form.
Please edit it as per your need.**



Association of
State Road Transport Undertakings