**Best Marketing & Communications to Support Ridership or Sales**

**Shoestring Tactic: 5-Day Flex Pass**

**Who was the target audience for this entry?**

* Existing Metrolink riders: Riders who continued to take the train during COVID-19
* Past Metrolink riders: People who stopped riding due to COVID-19
* Potential Metrolink riders
* Potential Corporate Partner Program members: regional businesses who are looking for flexible transportation solutions for their employees. 69% of Corporate Partners indicated they will have a slow return to the office with either a modified work scheduled or prolonged telecommute policy

**What was the situation/challenge that necessitated creating this entry?**

Due to COVID, the unemployment rate across the SoCal counties we serve is in the double digits. And while essential workers continue to rely on Metrolink to get to work, many of those who remain employed are working from home – leading to a drop in ridership, which is hovering at around 15 percent of pre-COVID ridership.

While companies are still determining “when” they will go back to work, they are also evaluating ‘how”– and we know from workplace trends – as well as primary research of our riders and corporate partners – that many of them are considering allowing their employees to telecommute more often for the long term. We’ve also seen a dramatic shift with riders purchasing one-way and round-trip tickets instead of monthly passes, reflecting their more infrequent ridership to get to work.

**What was the strategy/objective of this entry?**

We know pricing can be a strong ridership driver of our riders who cite “saving money” as a reason they prefer to take Metrolink over driving their own car. 45% of riders who responded to the April 2020 survey indicated that fare discounts would incentivize them to return to Metrolink. We know that former Monthly Pass holders value the ability to purchase their passes in advance, rather than taking time in the morning to purchase their ticket. Our solution was a 5-Day Flex Pass – perfect for telecommuters or those companies and riders who are uncertain about the “when” and “how” to return to the workplace. The pass enhances our customer experience by offering the buy-ahead convenience, and at the same time offers a 10% discount off one-way or round-trip tickets: perfect for telecommuters.

**What results/impact did this entry have? (e.g. increased ridership, higher sales, greater public awareness, etc.)**

In April, Metrolink retained 10% of normal ridership. Since the launch of the campaign, system ridership recovery has increased to 17% and some lines have recovered by up to 23%. Pass sales peaked in November with 520 passes sold. 58% of buyers have bought more than one pass. The average pass is used for 1-2 days per week. The 5-Day Flex Pass is most purchased by senior or disabled riders. Campaign Results Include:

**Emails:**

* Emails Delivered: 153,911
* Email total Clicks: 4,203
* Email Avg Open Rate: 31.13%
* Email Avg Click Through Rate (CTR): 2.27%

**Website:**

* Total Webpage views: 21,202

**Social Media:**

* Paid Facebook/Instagram: 12,017 Clicks, 930,025 Reach
* Facebook: 2,634 Reach, 88 Eng, 2.74% Eng, 32 Clicks
* Twitter: 3,106 Reach, 68 Eng, 2.25% Engt, 45 Clicks
* Instagram Feed: 2275 Reach, 175 Eng, 7.66% Eng, 7 Clicks
* Instagram Story: 1,056 Reach, 23 Eng, 2.18% Eng, 21 Clicks
* LinkedIn: 1,327 Reach, 62 Eng, 4.67% Eng, 31 Clicks

**Please tell the judges why this entry was submitted and why it should win an AdWheel Award.**

COVID-19 ushered in a revolution in how, when and where people work. Many who have been telecommuting since March will continue to telecommute when possible, while essential workers continue to rely on the Metrolink to get to work.

Following MBTA’s lead, Metrolink quickly recognized and responded to the needs our current and potential riders with the development of a five-point Recover Plan. The plan framework outlined the reinvention of the agency’s business model and position the agency as a smarter, better, essential service for all, not just commuters. New fare types, discounts, and service options are part of that plan. The new 5-Day Flex Pass provides a convenient and flexible fare option for traditional telecommuters who plan to return to Metrolink less frequently than before, as well as essential workers currently still riding Metrolink.