



# **INFLUENCING RIDERSHIP:**

COMMUNICATING THROUGH  
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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**SB1  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
ENGAGEMENT**

# OVERVIEW

## IT IS OUR MISSION AND DUTY TO SPREAD THE PUBLIC BENEFITS OF SB1

Senate Bill 1 (SB1), the landmark transportation funding package passed by the Legislature on April 6 and signed into law by Governor Brown on April 28, represents the biggest new state commitment to public transit in more than 40 years. The funding package is a huge step forward for our membership and a significant win for the Association's advocacy efforts, as well as every Californian who relies on our state's transit services.

In failing to defeat the measure through normal legislative processes, opponents continue to attack SB1 through a variety of tactics including seeking a statewide ballot measure to repeal, and a recall campaign against a legislator who voted in support of the bill.

It is incumbent upon the whole of the public transit industry to combat such efforts by communicating and promoting the benefits of SB1. While communities across the state are likely to strongly react to the "gas tax" narrative, they receive messages that relay the numerous benefits SB1 will bring.

# WHAT WE SHOULD SAY ONLINE

We use original content, reposts of other people's content, event or campaign promotion, community highlights, and other types of content to increase the reach of our pro-SBI messaging. To achieve these goals, we focus on the following types of content.

- News and announcements about SBI and pro-transportation events.
- Positive, optimistic, enthusiastic news and reports about SBI funding implementation.
- Engaging, upbeat user experiences with public transportation, with an emphasis on rider diversity.
- We will not make divisive posts. We want to welcome diverse transportation supporters regardless of their reasons.
- We do not highlight negative propaganda. Other organizations can work on countering biased and misleading stories.
- We do not in any way promote, share or comment on anti-SBI funding content.
- Include our hashtags in every post to maximize content exposure.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE POSTING

1. Does the post promote SBI, amplify awareness of SBI, and/or convey community benefits of SBI?
2. Is this post interesting and timely?
3. Does this post fit into a schedule that achieves posting frequency goals?



# **POST FREQUENCY**

# BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ We want to maintain an active social media presence, but not drive away followers with excessive posts.
- ✓ During specific campaigns, more posts may be appropriate.

# FACEBOOK

- Spacing: Ideally leave at least 2-3 hours between posts.
- Number: Minimum one post per day, maximum four.
- Posts can be scheduled in advance to meet our frequency goals.



# TWITTER

- Spacing: Ideally leave at least several minutes between tweets so they don't show up consecutively in a user's feed.
- Number: Minimum one tweet per day, probably no maximum, as long as tweets are good quality and relevant
- Tweets can be scheduled in advance to meet our frequency goals.

On social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#) is used to identify messages on a specific topic. Using hashtags allows social media viewers to search for content by topic and makes your messaging more accessible.

**HASHTAGS**



# CREATE COMMUNITIES

The essence of community is the idea that it exists so that you can support others and they, in turn, can support you. We will balance personal and professional information, and be mindful of the important role that transparency plays in building a community. Our community shouldn't be an environment where competition is encouraged or emphasized, but rather a platform where our followers or users feel comfortable sharing, connecting, and receiving help.



**EFFECTIVE  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
POSTS**



**ITransit**

June 8 · 🌐

Our sincerest thanks to @RendonAnthony for his leadership in securing new transit funding for all Californians. ITransit and California Transit Association staff appreciate your steadfast efforts to help #KeepCAMoving. Read our thank you online: <https://tinyurl.com/SB1thankyou> #SB1



👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share



## FACEBOOK

This is a photo post. Photos provide a more interactive user experience and often times generate the most post views. This photo post also provides a good example of a truncated URL. Also of note, two organizations are at-referenced, as well as Speaker Anthony Rendon – all of which helps to amplify visibility.



**iTransit** @iTransitCA · Apr 10

Sonoma County roads, bridges, [#publictransit](#) among uses for new California road tax [#KeepCAMoving](#) [#FixCARoads](#)



**Sonoma County roads, bridges, public transit amo...**

Local transportation planners who are giddy over passage of Senate Bill 1 are now pondering what to do.

[pressdemocrat.com](http://pressdemocrat.com)



## TWITTER

This tweet is a prime example of a positive story share. Positive stories foster goodwill in the public sector and support efforts to push back on opposition messaging.



# **SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

# ADOPT AN APP-BASED MENTALITY

A 2016 study released by APTA revealed that people who use transportation apps like Uber and Lyft are more likely to use public transit than those who do not. In order to keep ridership high, public transit should focus on a customer-first approach. Implementing an app-centric experience for the customer encourages riders to participate in the entire transit ecosystem by creating an easy and accommodating experience.



# PROVIDE REAL TIME UPDATES

Findings suggests that marketing strategies for real-time information should be targeted not only to transit users but also to transit non-users in order to bring about larger increases in transit ridership. Furthermore, since one major purpose of providing real-time transit information is to increase transit mode share and attract transit non-users, greater effort is needed to promote this system among those transit non-users.

# THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Transit agencies across the state can leverage partnerships with local businesses and law enforcement to help spread their marketing messages. Consider also reaching out to local university programs to create marketing internships for students.



# **CASE STUDIES**

# WHEN SOMEONE SAYS THEY TAKE PUBLIC TRANSIT, WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND?

*That the transit system is moving the person from point A to B?*

When The Rapid launched the There's More to the Ride campaign, they were aiming to introduce their riders to a new way of thinking about public transit. The agency wanted the public to understand that together, they are able to build stronger communities through transit. In turn, they managed to tug at our heartstrings by highlighting stories from people who come from different walks in life such as this one that showcased how public transit supports people with disabilities.



## CASE STUDY 2 TORONTO, CANADA

Takeaway: Emotional triggers will create attachments that lead to user conversion. When your passengers are able to see and resonate deeply with what your agency stands for, they are more willing to encourage their network to utilize public transit more often.

# **IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT YOU FIND A TRANSIT AGENCY PARTNERING WITH A TOP CULTURAL ORGANIZATION TO CREATE A MEMORABLE CAMPAIGN.**

TTC's We Move You campaign featured videos of various artists performing at different subway stations and then posters of the artists in the middle of a movement. Overall, they succeeded in moving us with their beautifully choreographed marketing communication that injected positive artistic energy into an otherwise long commute.



## CASE STUDY 2 TORONTO, CANADA

Takeaway: Partnerships create social communities that expand beyond the reach of one agency. Form unthinkable partnerships and leverage them so they align with the overarching issues that your agency is trying to resolve.

# **SOMETIMES IT'S DIFFICULT TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC BUT NOT FOR GOOGLE.**

They worked with a digital agency to roll out interactive posters across the San Francisco Bay Area encouraging the general public to vote on which non-profit would get top funding from the tech giant.





## CASE STUDY 3 SF BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

Takeaway: For transit agencies, this is a great opportunity to leverage existing resources, such as bus stops and streetcar stops to name a few, and to partner with local non-profits. This type of campaign can be integrated with existing community building efforts or help highlight understated non-profits that are seeking to make a big impact on the local community and beyond.



**THANK  
YOU**

**PATRICK HARBISON PUBLIC RELATIONS**