SMART BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Welcome Back Campaign
April 21, 2021
Welcome Back Campaign

Introduction

• Sonoma and Marin Counties are opening back up

• Reduction on pandemic driven restrictions is having a positive effect on our ridership

• February ridership compared to January was 10% more and March ridership compared to February was 35% more, so we're clearly seeing that there is a movement
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During The Past Year

SMART continued to move forward:

- Provided passenger service to nearly a quarter million essential workers this past year
- Refinanced its construction debt saving nearly $3.5 million per year
- Created new in-house Signal Technician training program
- Led the industry in train sterilization by installing ultraviolet (UV) light sterilization upgrades on all 18 of its train cars
- Joined Bay Area low-income fare program offering 50% discounts to qualifying passengers
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During The Past Year

SMART continued to move forward:

- Conducted SMART Board of Directors “Listening Tour”
  - League of Women Voters
  - City of Santa Rosa
  - Town of Windsor
  - City of Cloverdale
  - City of Healdsburg
  - City of Novato
  - City of Larkspur
  - City of San Rafael
- Offering free rides to those traveling to vaccination appointments at the Marin Center and at the GGT Larkspur Ferry parking lot
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Laying the Groundwork for a Welcome Back Campaign

What SMART has been working on:

- 4-month multimedia marketing campaign to enhance the narrative regarding SMART’s benefits to the North Bay
- Utilized expert marketing consultants to increase social media engagement by nearly 100 percent
- Ramped-up SMART briefings to Chambers of Commerce and civic organizations
- Produced marketing video to kick-start welcome back campaign
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Planning & Preparation

• Inclusion of marketing experts to increase and leverage social engagement

• Engage market research to identify what connects with the local and regional community

• Kick-off “Welcome Back Campaign” brainstorm ideas:
  • “You have a lot of catching up to do”
  • “Return to fun”
  • “Tips on trips”

• Partnerships:
  • Tourism bureaus in Marin and Sonoma
  • Other transit agencies
  • Local commercial sectors
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Messaging & Media

- Target past riders & new riders alike
- Utilize multimedia approach to reach people where they are:
  - Targeted digital advertising
  - Social media
  - Cooperative advertising with transit partners
  - Downtown signage and banners at key spots in San Rafael, Novato, and Santa Rosa
  - Electronic billboard on 101 in Rohnert Park
- Develop fresh art for ads & digital ad campaign
- Increase focus on Latin-X social media channels
- Promote safety & comfort of traveling by train
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Public Relations/Media Relations

- *Feet on the Street* events such as Concerts in the Park and Farmers Markets
- Public speaking (civic and community organizations)
- Press kick-off event, reach out to Marin IJ, Press Democrat, Pacific Sun, El Tocólate, La Voz
- SMART #CommunityTies video to play on Marin TV and Sonoma TV (English & Spanish)
- Include San Francisco and East Bay markets for recreational trips
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Campaign Kickoff

- Tied to levels of service restoration
- “Get on Board” free fare day/weekend/week with strategic partners, such as Convention and Visitors Bureau, live event promotions, local event producers
- Leverage local influencers already contacted for campaign
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Weekend Service & Promotions

• Cross-promotional opportunities with Golden Gate Transit, Marin Country Mart, National Park Service, and others

• Customer service and social media comments indicate significant pent-up demand for the restoration of weekend service

• Revisit SMART’s success with the Sail & Rail ferry/train combo pass that can be purchased on the SMART E-ticket app.
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Staff/Consultant Roles

- **Staff**
  - Partnerships & cross promotions
  - Press & media relations
  - Public speaking
  - Localized signage
  - Contract management

- **Consultant**
  - Market research
  - Creative (art)
  - Ad buys (digital/print)
  - Social media platforms
  - Local/regional influencers
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The Public is Excited About Getting Back & So Are We!
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Questions/Comments