



NEWS

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100 WAYS TO IMPROVE BUS SERVICE

Sometimes it is so easy to overlook the simple, common sense ideas that can add up to make things better in our daily lives.

The MTA was looking for ways to make improvements in the bus system as part of its "Customer First" campaign, and asked MTA employees for suggestions.

Why employees? Well, they are the closest to the daily needs of the operation, many of them use the Metro buses and trains themselves every day, and they meet the customers face-to-face. They see the practical things that can make life easier, the kinds of things that often get lost or forgotten.

So when the employees were asked what they thought, they responded with a stream of pure and obvious common sense:

A customer comment card on every bus. A book containing bus routes and maps. Route maps at bus stops. Pocket-size information cards. Customer information on the internet. Operate buses with headlights on 24 hours a day. Improve signs at the LAX Transit Center. Hand-clean bus interiors. Sell passes through ATM machines. "Smart Card" debit system for paying fares. Sell tokens in vending machines. Grip strips on bus stairs.

The top 100 ideas were selected, and even before the winners were announced, the MTA started working on ways to implement them. The agency hopes to put at least two-thirds of the ideas into effect in the next year.

For example, there will be a Customer Comment Card on buses by January 1.

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Driving with lights on during the day is a proven safety device that has been partially implemented in the past. By the beginning of the new year, the practice will be system-wide on Metro buses. A debit card system for paying fares, a way to sell passes through ATM machines, and many other ideas, are under study for possible implementation.

"Our customers have been asking for an easy way to reach us with their ideas, and their requests and issues," said Larry Zarian, MTA Chairman. "Printed suggestion forms, or comment cards, are not uncommon in restaurants or hotels. But this is an important step forward for us in opening up a quick, convenient avenue of communication with our passengers. We're saying, 'We want to hear from you.'"

Employees who submitted the Best Overall Idea, the Most Practical, the Most Innovative, the Most Customer-friendly, Most Time Saving, Most Cost Saving, and Most Image Building Idea will receive prizes at a December 3rd luncheon. All those whose suggestions were accepted by the 100 Ways Committee will be recognized.

The Customer Comment Card, considered the Best Overall Idea, was submitted by six employees who will split the top prize of \$1,000.

The 100 proposals include references to obvious needs such as extra buses and more security that already are being met through the Bus System Improvement Plan, as well as the "Customer First" campaign. "Customer First" is an extensive program launched this year to focus resources on MTA services, and to better serve the transit riding public.

"Most of these 100 ideas represent a lot of practical ways to make improvements," said Joseph Drew, MTA CEO. "They are the kinds of things you notice when you are on the job day in and day out, and recognize changes that could make public transportation a little easier, a little more efficient, more attractive to customers."