

New Communications Chief: MTA Will Take Aggressive Stance to Tell its Story

(March 21, 2002) Almost since its creation in 1993, the MTA has maintained a low advertising profile. Now, the MTA is poised to take a more aggressive posture in telling its story to the public, the agency's new chief communications officer says.

Matt Raymond, a veteran of 11 years in transit marketing who joined the agency in February, plans to significantly increase the MTA's advertising in FY 2003 – especially in community newspapers and on radio. He expects to introduce new employer programs that will encourage more commuters to use transit.

Raymond, 38, who reports directly to CEO Roger Snoble, served for six years as assistant vice president of marketing and advertising at Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). He anticipates becoming a player in the design of new transit services.

"It doesn't work to design service in a vacuum," he says, "and, since we're going to have a lot of customer information, this is one of the areas where we can contribute."

A primary goal of the advertising initiative will be to implement "base-line communications," says Raymond. "It will be straight-forward in terms of the progress the MTA is making."

A balanced view

Advertising and other communication efforts will present a balanced view of the MTA, emphasizing the positives while addressing any negatives.

"Hype isn't necessary," Raymond emphasizes. "There are so many positive aspects of the MTA that just need to be communicated. Once they are, it will be good news about the MTA."

During his five years as manager of marketing for Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD), Raymond found through patron surveys that when an employer subsidizes 50 percent or more of employees' transportation costs, they're three times more likely to use public transit.

P R O F I L E



Matt Raymond

Chief Communications Officer

- Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Advertising, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Nov. 1995 to Feb. 2002.
- Manager of Marketing, Public Relations and Public Information, Regional Transportation District, Denver, Oct. 1990 to Nov. 1995.
- Previously served in account management at two Denver advertising agencies and as advertising manager for a hotel management company in Denver.
- Earned a bachelor of science degree in marketing and management (1985), a master's degree in marketing and management (1991) and a master's degree in public administration (1997) from the University of Colorado.
- A native of Newport Beach, Raymond and his wife Laura, a banking consultant, plan to move to the Los Angeles area with their two dogs, Kaci and Billie. He likes music, sports and skiing.

Noting that typically 70 to 80 percent of a transit agency's patrons are daily commuters, the communications chief says, "Our employer market is critical." He intends to develop a "one-stop shopping concept" for employers. "We have a complete line of services we can provide them."

Because he will focus on bringing the customer and the MTA together, Raymond has been given overall responsibility for communications, including marketing and research, advertising, media and public relations, employee communications, graphics and Metro Art.

He also oversees customer relations and customer information, the MTA's six service centers, transit pass production and sales, and distribution to the 812 pass sales outlets.

Supporting the service sectors

"We also will be supporting the service sectors," he says. Although marketing and advertising, external and internal communications will remain at Headquarters, "We'll structure our department so we can serve their immediate needs."

Raymond encourages employees to offer ideas for new programs and services, for increasing ridership, for avoiding crowding on buses, improving customer service or for improving the MTA's image with the public.

"It's a two-way communication with employees. They're the ones who are experts in the areas they deal with on a daily basis," he says, adding that he wants to make sure the department is "addressing the issues that are brought to our attention."

"It doesn't matter where a good idea comes from," Raymond says. "If it's good, we're going to use it to our advantage."

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