

OVERVIEW

Marketing is an important tool in sharing the existence, benefits and details of bike share equity programs, such as available discounts. This is especially important to bringing in new users. How do you get the word out about your system, communicate that it is fun and useful, and do so in a way that connects meaningfully with the community members you are trying to reach? A successful marketing campaign understands where people are at - both in terms of their information and views on bike share, as well as how and where they get their information.

CURRENT APPROACHES

In our recent survey of cities and bike share operators, half of the systems with equity programming had a program with a primary focus on marketing. Their marketing campaigns used a variety of mediums, including social media, press releases, billboards, bus-stop displays and bike station panels, flyers and promotional materials for ambassadors and community partners to distribute, emails and more.

Reach riders where they are: Bike station kiosks are the first place many people learn about bike share. All the information people need to get started, including equity program information, should be featured there. Bike share systems have also advertised elsewhere around the neighborhood and city landscape, including bus stop shelters and on transit.

Connect in person: A lot of marketing of equity programs happen in-person, such as when bike share ambassadors or other representatives present in the community, table at events, etc.

Get creative online: Social media is a common approach, direct from the bike share system and partners, but also through organic avenues to create buzz. A recent example is creating unique bike frame designs applied to only a limited number of bikes, and encouraging people to seek out these "unicorns" in the system. Often, these "unicorn" bikes are part of a series of unique designs, which can be used to highlight particular neighborhoods, communities, cultural histories, and more.



(Photo Credit Nathan McNeil) Indego's "Faces of Indego" campaign highlighted their ambassadors.

CONSIDERATIONS



Don't discount the value of traditional media, including stories in local news. Our prior research* found that people of color were less likely to learn about bike share from online sources, but were more likely to learn about it from television or radio.



Marketing can help overcome key information gaps. Lower-income individuals and people of color may be less likely to have friends or family that have used bike share*. Social connections are an important way for people to discover bike share and envision themselves using it. Marketing and programming will have to do more to engage these communities and to make bike share a viable option for transportation and/or recreation.



People need to see themselves in promotional materials. Whether or not it's the explicit objective of the marketing campaign, promotional materials need to convey to people that bike share is for them. The people featured in the materials should be representative and inclusive of the community you're focused on reaching. The material should be in a language that the community understands. Materials can also be targeted to the specific needs or use scenarios- for example explaining how bike share could help people with limited transit options make first and last mile connections to transit stops.



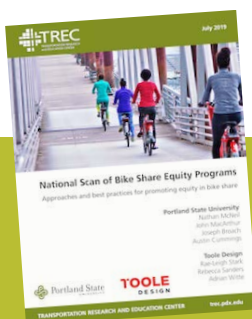
Once might not be enough. The concept of "effective frequency" in marketing suggests that people need to hear about an idea or product more than once before they really start to consider taking action. To get the message across, someone might need to see a billboard, talk to someone at a community event, and then hear a news story about bike share before they give it a try.

Many bike share operators couple their equity programs with targeted marketing and public outreach to increase awareness. Information isn't enough. The marketing should also offer motivation and confidence for people to see themselves using bike share. As one system representative put it: "Marketing is key! What good is a program that no one knows about?"

RESOURCES

[NACTO's Strategies for Engaging Community](#) report offers ways to advance community-oriented mobility goals. While the entire report is recommended reading, section three is focused on increasing awareness and community support for bike share.

*[Breaking Barriers to Bike Share: Insights from Residents of Traditionally Underserved Neighborhoods](#) is a report released by members of this research team back in 2017.



MEASURING AND EVALUATING

Metrics that speak to simple engagement (e.g. number of views, clicks, etc.) can be useful if paired with outcomes. Which marketing efforts result in more people signing up and more use of the system (particularly for equity target members)?

- Analytics on social media campaigns
- Tracking promo code redemption rates
- Surveying users on their information source or reason to join / ride; perception of messaging and the equity program.
- Holding focus groups on how people perceived messaging.
- # of enrollees by language (particularly for in person sign-ups or via non-English language web page or click-through source).

Adapted from the "National Scan of Bike Share Equity Programs" report, this is part of the "Breaking Barriers to Bike Share" resource series. Comprised of ten topics, this series looks at bike share through an equity lens and provides successful approaches and recommendations for stakeholders to implement.