ITDP India
Media Outreach
&
Think Like a Reporter.

June 2011 – Bogota, Colombia
IN BRTS WE TRUST, SAY AMDAVADIS
As Many As 35,000 Commuters Ditch Cars, Two-Wheelers And Rickshaws To Hop Onto BRTS, Reveals CEPT Survey

Ahmedabad: Six out of every 10 bus travellers have adopted the new mode of public transport system, popularly called Janmarg in the city. This is a green signal for the metallic silver-coloured Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS).

The award-winning project completed one year of its operations in July this year. Sharing the impact of BRTS on daily commuters, associate director, CEPT University and chief planner, Janmarg, Shivamand Swamy said, "A CEPT University study reveals that 60 per cent BRTS users are not regular bus users, which means that 32,000 commuters have left either cars, two-wheelers and three-wheelers for BRTS."

CEPT university conducts performance assessment and public feedback survey for BRTS. As per the survey, the system has seen an increase of 216 per cent in daily ridership (passengers boarded) and 251 per cent increase in daily fare collection in last eight months of BRTS operations. Janmarg is run by Ahmedabad Janmarg Limited (AJL), a special purpose vehicle (SPV) earning Rs 8,000 per bus.

It started running their trial runs in July 2009. BRTS commercial operation kicked off after three months of free trial runs on October 15.

"Success of BRTS project can be gauged by the fact that the number of passengers has increased from an initial 20,000 per day to 65,000 per day. The two crucial aspects of the project are people participation in this green initiative and shifting of passengers from private vehicles to BRTS," said municipal commissioner IP Gautam.

The project has major financial support from the Centre — about 35 per cent — and the rest is shared by Gujarat government and AMC. Present Janmarg is operational on a 31-km stretch and will be extended up to 88.50 km in the next few years.

BRTS corridor starting from RTO, a transport hub in the western side of city to Kankaria Lakefront, a major entertainment zone in heart of the city and now connected to Narol, Danilimda, the eastern fringes of the city has become a sustainable mode of transport.

Swamy said, "Ahmedabad image has gone global and BRTS has a significant role in doing so. Jamnagar has attracted many global visitors, who want to study the project and its implementation strategy."

He added that visitors from US, Tanzania, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, among others have come to examine the model and other cities in India can also take a leaf out of Ahmedabad's BRTS story.

**AWARDS IN KITTY**
- Mass rapid Transit (MRT) of GoI Award 2009
- Sustainable Transport Award 2010
- Joint runner-up for award for "Outstanding Innovation in Public Transport" by The International Transport Forum (ITF) and International Association for Public Transport (UITP)

**WHAT MAKES BRTS TICK**
- 38,000- 40,000 Average passengers per day
- 3 lakh Average BRTS revenue per day
- 31 km Total length of operational BRTS route
- 41 buses Total buses plying the corridor
- Over 650 employees Total workforce
- Rs 35.6 per km AMC payment to BRTS contractor
- Rs 1.08 crore Advertisement revenue on BRTS for two years
- 3 minutes BRTS bus frequency during peak hours
- 8 minutes Bus frequency off peak hours

BRTS buses have a good frequency and we don't have to wait for a long time. But, one major problem is direct connectivity of BRTS to off route city localities. I stay in Vejalpur and have to change buses thrice.

Bhavin Vadvadarya | NGO Official

I have a two-wheeler but choose to travel by BRTS because of its speed and fare. The frequency is good, but they should monitor the number of people boarding the bus. It gets a bit crowded sometimes.

Lata Verma | IT Employee

I commute by BRTS everyday for my tuition classes in Vastrapur. The bus is comfortable and apart from that, my parents are relieved that I don't drive during peak traffic hours.

Himalaya Singh | Student
A normal day in life of a Reporter begins at NIGHT.
Reporters are news hunters!

• Umpteen calls to **reliable sources** to get a news angle or an interesting news.

• Scavenging through numerous **press notes or press releases** in mailbox and faxes.

• Taking calls from **public relation officials** from different organizations to get a story.

• **Organizing appointments** with experts, government officials, corporates and other concerned persons for one particular story.

• Following up on **leads and new developments** in respective beat.

• The challenge is to bring some thing **NEW** every other day.
After the story gets approved

• Identifying the **people of interest** for the particular story.

• Sourcing **contact numbers and making appointments** to talk or meet up.

• **Jotting notes or recording** the conversations with interviewees for future reference.

• Coordinating with a **photographer or cameraman** for visuals to go with the story.

• **Cross-checking** and double checking the facts and figures mentioned in the article.

• Writing a **balanced article** with relevant data, quotes and views.

• Reporter are expert in **multi-tasking**.
Reporters are always running against TIME.
Deadline is Sacrosanct

- Reporters don’t like having time wasted with something that isn’t news.

- They prefer written communication through emails - easy to copy and paste (quotes, background information and other details) which saves time.

- Keep the conversation short and simple.

- Reporters have to deliver stories in a complete package on deadline.
What does a reporter want?
Reporters are neither friends nor enemies, they must gather news which is NEWSWORTHY and know what’s important to readers and provide information that helps them make better decisions.
You can provide them information that is new, unique, gives a different perspective including: interesting case studies, progress reports on projects, facts & figures.
Answer their **five Ws**' and one H (How).
Reporters are generally skeptics. It takes time to get them convinced about anything. Answer all their queries promptly with accurate information.

If you don’t know an answer, say “I don’t know” and then try to find the correct information and follow-up.
Encash opportunities

Create Opportunities

‘Make walking safer, people will enjoy it’

Says Dani Simons of New York City’s dept of transportation; sees more pedestrian space

WHAT SIMONS SAID

A lot of awareness programmes are needed for popularizing walking and cycling in the city.

In the initial phase, people will oblige to the taking away of space which they need for driving and parking their motorized vehicle.

However, they will soon recognize the real value of pedestrian space in the future, said Simons.

There must be traffic islands at crossroads on both sides so that senior citizens can walk on these elevated islands thus increasing their safety while crossing roads.

Jitendra Dave

Ahmedabad does have footpaths, but not too many pedestrians. It is because of encroachment on pedestrian spaces discourages walkers.

“Make walking safer, people will enjoy it,” believes Dani Simons, Director of Strategic Communications, New York City Dept of Transportation (DoT) believes that concepts like Summer Street may become catalysts in promoting cycling and walking in the city.

Simons was disappointed by the lack of dedicated pedestrian spaces in Ahmedabad. “Some new progress and trade activities are necessary but pedestrian space is a must for any progressive city,” he said.

Simons was part of the team working for the permanent capital reconstruction project of ‘Tinum Square’. DoT was instrumental in launching the concept of Summer Street, wherein Park Avenue and connecting streets from the Brooklyn Bridge to Central Park are closed for motorized vehicles so that people can walk, run and ride bicycles.

A lot of awareness programmes are needed for popularizing walking and cycling in the city. She said that in the initial phase, people will oblige to the taking away of space which they need for driving and parking their motorized vehicle. However, they will soon recognize the real value of pedestrian space in the future, said Simons.

She was also impressed by the rich heritage of the city. She felt that narrow lanes of walled city were safer from a pedestrian’s point of view. Though there is no clearly defined walk space it is safer to walk without much traffic,” she said.

Simons was all praise for the BRT project in the city for being a dedicated path making it faster compared to New York City where the buses have to juggle through mixed traffic. “Here the system of ticketing is very simple. Moreover, the information display and announcement of upcoming stations make commuting easy for even foreigners like us,” said Simons.

She also stressed upon the need for safe routes for school children and senior citizens. She said that senior citizens find it difficult to cross roads which are wide due to their slow pace walking. “There must be traffic islands at cross roads on both sides so that they can walk on these elevated islands increasing their safety while crossing roads.” Simons said.
Communicating with Media....

PRESS RELEASE

PROJECT-DEVELOPMENT

REPORT, SURVEYS

MEDIA INTERACTION

EVENTS

COLUMN, FEATURE, MEDIA-CAMPAIGN
The way forward....

- **Establish goals**: Clearly articulate your goals, program goals will drive communications plans and media relations work.

- **Identify NEWS**: What reports, surveys, or briefing papers can we produce or release that provides a new perspective? What media event will communicate our news in a novel and effective way? What information can we provide that offers a new ‘take’ on the issue?

- **NEWS is bigger and broader** than one organization or its issue/cause. News is about the drama of everyday life. How can we present the issue in a way that will be informative and dramatic without becoming sensational?

- **Craft your messages**: Create a small number (2-3) of manageable, easy-to-explain and understand key messages.

- **Appreciation**: Send reporters a quick thank
Reporters are humans. They have a job to do.
Learn More

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