Public Transport and Complementary Services

Importance of Communications, Marketing and Branding

The World Bank — Australian Government AusAID — ESMAP Energy Sector Management Assistance Program — PPIAF Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility

Cluster 4/Module 3 (C4/M3): Importance of Communications, Marketing and Branding.

This presentation is one of the support materials prepared for the capacity building program **Building Leaders in Urban Transport Planning (LUTP).**

Support for LUTP was provided by:

- The World Bank,
- Australian Agency for International Development Aid,
- The Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), and
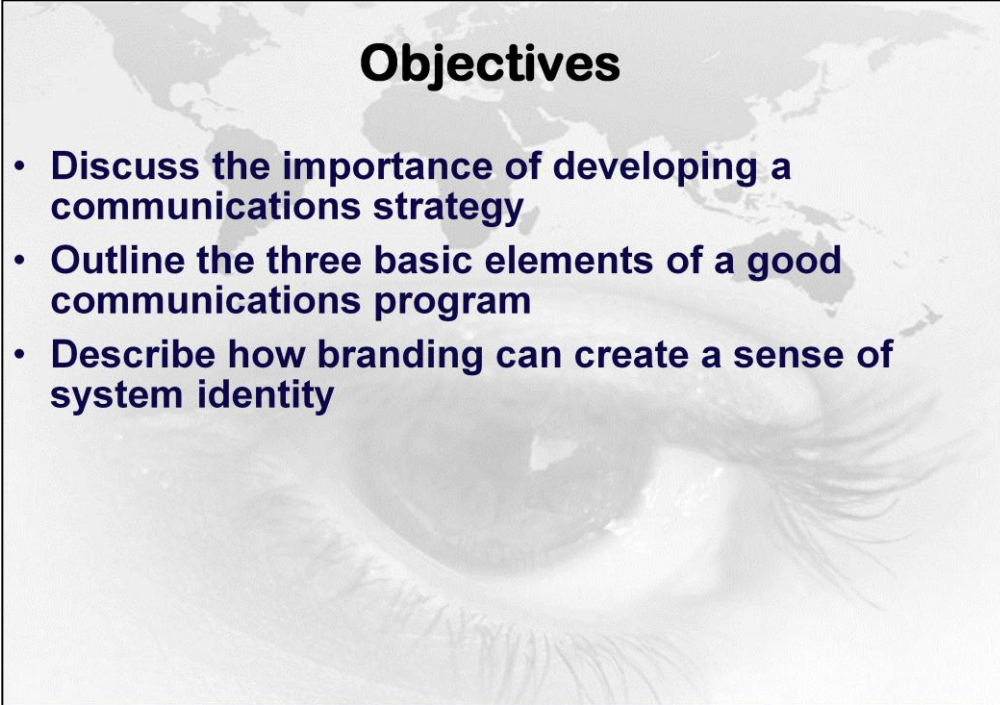- Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF) .

In previous modules we looked at the complexity of urban transport and saw how urban transport is becoming a major problem in many cities. Any effort to address this issue requires a comprehensive approach cutting across many interest groups, both in government and the general public.

In this presentation we will examine the importance of communications, marketing, and branding in the successful implementation of a project. We will outline the elements of a good communications program and provide examples of how branding can create a sense of system identity.

Our opening exercise is designed to get you to start thinking about the development of a communications program for a major transport initiative.

You are in the process of planning a new formal bus system for a medium-sized city. The city is now served only by mini-bus taxis operated by the informal sector. The mayor has asked you to design a communications program to support this effort.

As part of this effort, please answer the following questions:

- What groups of people should be targeted?
- What kind of messages do you want to communicate to each group?

Take about 5 minutes to do this exercise.

Communication, Marketing and Branding

- **WHAT is communication?**
- **WHY should it matter to urban transport professionals?**
- **WHO are the stakeholders?**
- **HOW to manage stakeholders and communication?**
- **HOW to adapt to public needs and to changing environment?**

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Communications, consultation, marketing, and branding are at the heart of the successful implementation of urban transport projects.   This is because of the sensitivity of urban population to transport issues and their impact on day-to-day life.   The key focus of this discussion will be on five general areas:

1. What communication is, and what communication is *not.*
2. Why communication should matter to urban transport professionals.
3. Who are the stakeholders and why is a particular project important to them.
4. How to manage stakeholders and communication.
5. How to adapt to public needs and to the changing environment.

Let us try to understand what we mean by "communications".

In some urban transport organizations, "communications" is thought of as something managed exclusively by marketing people, involving pretty pictures and advertising to "inform" the affected population regarding the proposed project. A commonly held belief is that communications is planned separately once the engineering, construction, and other "real" parts of a transportation project have been developed.

- This attitude can lead to serious problems for any project.
- Communication must be seen as an integral part of the project from inception through to launch of services
- "Project" is broadly defined. Examples include traffic redesign, the restructure of bus routes, rearrangement of parking concepts, and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit systems (BRT).
- "Communications" are defined as *anything* that describes, explains, or otherwise discusses the project with interest groups.

In the following presentation we will discuss why communications must be seen as a core part of transportation projects.

WHY Stakeholder Management and Communications Matter?

- **Communications WILL happen**
  - either by design or informally
- **Urban travel demand expectations are changing**
- **All communications shapes how you are seen by the public**
- **Even silence tells a story—and lets someone else fill in the vacuum**
- **It is an opportunity to influence, shape, and control**

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Why does communications and public involvement matter to urban transport projects?

Urban transport projects are very visible—both to users and non-users. Implementation of a BRT project, for example, impacts not only those who use the system but also those who do not (car users, for whom a lane may get taken away, pedestrians, people living along the route, etc).

Due to the sensitivity of the population to transport issues and their impact on day-to-day life, any changes in urban transport systems are widely reported by the press and other media and often make national news. Because the majority of the population in developing countries depends on public transport, any proposal suggesting a change in the existing arrangements evokes a strong response. The externalities generated by urban transport (including congestion, road accidents, pollution emissions, and crime) within the confines of an urban area are a visible manifestation of the impact of urban transport policies. The impact is made more poignant because of the nature of transport demand, which is concentrated both in temporal and spatial terms.

As a result, people WILL hear about and think about a project involving any change in the urban transport system.

- Communications will take place whenever someone hears or sees something about the project. Communication is not just about advertisement, written notice, or a specific public forum.
- Based on what people see and hear, they will draw conclusions (right or wrong) and often share that information with other people.
- It could be the case of misinformation, miscommunication, or even a conscious attempt on the part of some (who may be adversely impacted by the project) to thwart project implementation

This is why communication must start at the very beginning of preparation and continue through every detail of project development. There are two options in dealing with communication: Either you can plan your communication, or the public will carry on their own communication and develop their own ideas.

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The risk with the latter is that the public could be wrong, they could be missing key information, and they could be affected by someone else's agenda in attempting to derail the project. The lesson here is that communication will happen. It is in your interest to plan for it rather than letting it happen.

Public Involvement Increases Your Chances of Success
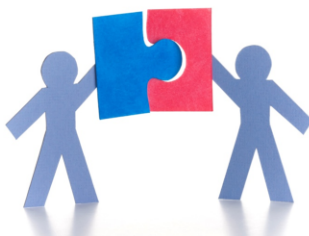
- **Increase buy-in/support**
- **Better understanding/anticipate issues**
- **May learn new ideas**
- **At the very least, the efforts will be appreciated**

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Communication is not entirely about managing risk. It is about engaging the public, which can strengthen the project in a number of ways.

- Engaging people in project development and involving them in planning can actually improve the project's outcome as well as create buy-in
- Consulting with people up front will let you know what they are most concerned about
- Early public involvement provides an early opportunity to change things
- Even engineering decisions can be informed through public involvement and consultation. Location or design of pedestrian access facilities or provision of universal access, for example, can benefit greatly from early discussions with the people most affected

Overall, communication and consultation will build respect for the project and will improve its chances of success.
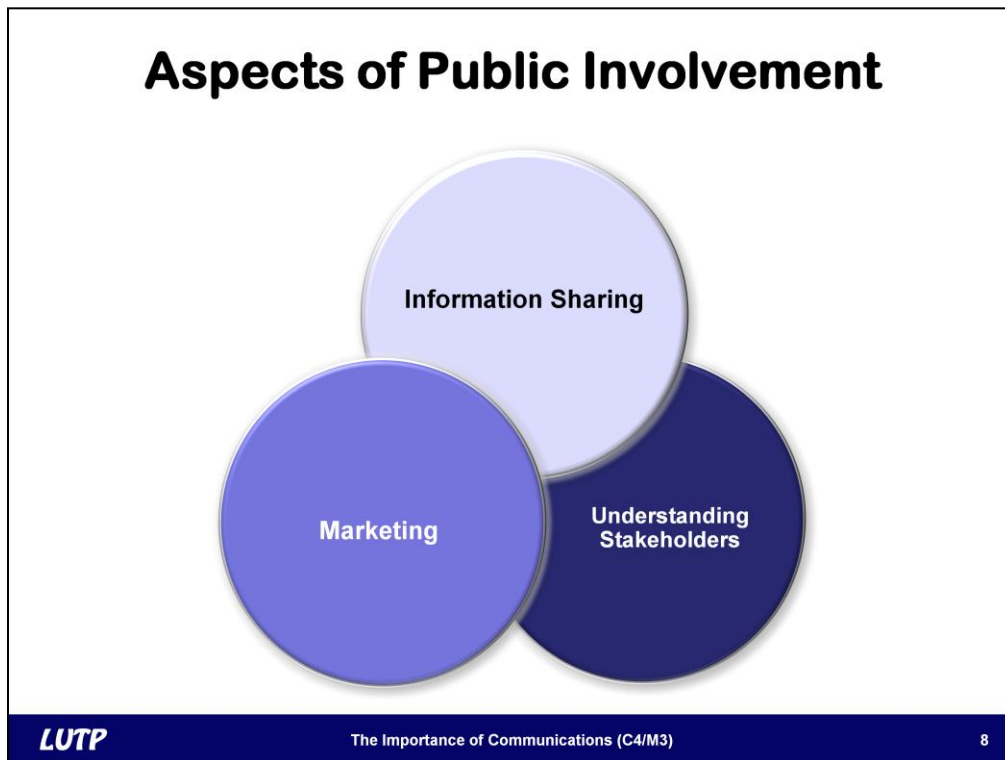
Now that we understand that communication and public consultation are central to the success of project design and implementation, let us further develop our understanding of communication.

Good communication involves three inter-linked and mutually dependent dimensions. All three dimensions will need to be addressed for a successful communications effort. Those dimensions are:

1. Information sharing
2. Understanding stakeholders
3. Marketing

All three are crucial to successful communications and should be utilized in all urban transport projects.

1. Effective Information Sharing

- **Information sharing is one of the core objectives for most communication efforts**
- **Two issues to be borne in mind:**
  1. **One size does not fit all**
  2. **Information sharing differs from one project to another**

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1. Effective Information Sharing

Information sharing is one of the core objectives for successful communication efforts. Information can be shared in a number of ways:

- TV, radio, and newspaper ads
- Flyers, brochures, or posters distributed at or near the site
- Public meetings, forums, and presentations
- A booth or event held at a market in or near the project area
- A website

Key issues to keep in mind: One size does not fit all—Information sharing can be carried out in a wide number of ways and is influenced by the specificity context. In the design and implementation of BRT projects in Lagos, Johannesburg, and Jakarta, for example, there were different priorities for each of the cities when first communicating the benefits of BRT.

- In Lagos, the focus was to design the system around users, therefore focus groups were undertaken to establish user needs to ensure that the end product best suited their needs.
- In Johannesburg, the key focus was on negotiations with taxi operators as they were potentially a significant barrier to the successful implementation of Rea Vaya.
- In Jakarta, public apathy toward grand and unsuccessful projects in the past led to the early communication strategy being centred on engaging with the public and enthusing them with the benefits the system could bring.

Information sharing differs from one project to another—different approaches are needed for

different audience and circumstances. The key is to use language that is understood by the audience, e.g. avoid using too much "engineering" or "economic" language and acronyms in communication targeted to the general public.

2. Understanding Stakeholders

To share information, it is critical to understand who the stakeholders are and how the particular project is relevant to them. Some important questions to consider:

- Who will likely have an interest in the project?
- Who will be talking about the project?
- What are the issues of specific concern to them? (Examples include fear of change, loss of income, displacement, and short term versus long term interests.)

Stakeholders are defined as organizations or groups that have an interest (positive or negative) in the project and can impact the success of the project. Examples include:

- The public
- Transport operators, including current and future operators
- Government (city, regional, and national)
- The private sector, including international financing partners and NGOs.
- Local media

Understanding stakeholders is essential to developing a successful communications strategy and approach. It will help in:

a) Getting the right information
b) Targeting the right audience

c)   Ensuring that all people impacted by the project are well informed.

3. Marketing Strategy

Marketing refers to the disciplined implementation of the communications plan—it is **the how** and **the what** of communication.

A marketing strategy is built up from layers of knowledge and information. Key aspects include:

- **Clear Vision**: What will the project do for the community? How will it affect current and past usage and problems? How will it improve the future? Why is this the proposed change? What are the key obstacles that must be overcome? How does the proposed project fit within the overall development plan for the city?

- **Project Objectives**: What is the specific objective the project will achieve? How will the project affect the city's transport? (this includes the following: bus service quality, integration of land use-transport plans, parking provision, traffic flow regulation, public transport services, congestion, environmental pollution, etc).

- Development of a **Communications Strategy**: the vision must be clearly communicated to stakeholders in order to meet the project objectives.

- **Leadership**: this is critical to ensure that there is political support to implement the project and achieve the project's objectives. Implementing a change in the current practices may invoke a strong opposition from vested interests; thus it is important for political leadership to be able to deliver the message and provide support to the technical team.

In developing a communication strategy it is important to:

- Understand the key principles of the project – what it seeks to achieve, how it will achieve it and how it will offer benefits

- Understand the motives and positions of the organizations and people (in other words the stakeholders) involved

- Build and maintain the stakeholders' active support and commitment to adapt the project to best meet the community's needs, as well as to facilitate the delivery of the project

- Take into account, both at project definition level and implementation level, of the different interests, issues, and concerns of each of the stakeholders

- Plan regular engagement with stakeholders to keep them informed, negotiate changes, receive feedback, and to adapt the project accordingly

This slide contains examples of the communication strategy used in the implementation of Ahmedabad, India's BRT system.

This slide contains key pieces of the communications stratetgy utilized in Lagos, Nigeria in its impletmentation of a BRT project.

This slide illustrated key components of London's Transport Strategy, led by the Mayor's office in 2009.

Some examples from London's consultation process on urban transport strategy, led by the Mayor's office in 2009.

How to manage stakeholders and communication?

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder – individuals or groups	Likely Impact of the change on stakeholder	Potential Issues & Concerns	Potential risks to the change if concerns not addressed

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This will involve conducting a detailed stakeholder analysis, with a clear understanding of:

- Who are the stakeholders?
- What is the likely impact on different segments?
- What are the key political issues and concerns?
- What is the potential risk to change if concerns are not properly addressed?

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Branding

- **Use of branding to develop system identity, brand recognition, and pride among service providers**
- **Helps to create:**
  - Value of the project in the minds of passengers, stakeholders, and members of the general community
  - Gives the project management and staff a sense of identity and pride that inspires and motivates them to give their best
- **Some examples:**
  - Lagos — BRT Lite
  - Ahmedabad — Janmarg
  - Jakarta — TransJakarta

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One of the elements of communication strategy is the use of branding to develop system identity, brand recognition, and pride among service providers. Over a period of time, it not only helps in creating value for the project in the minds of passengers, stakeholders, and members of the general community, but also gives the project management and staff a sense of identity and pride.

The following three slides show examples of the use of branding to create a sense of ownership in projects in Nigeria, India, and Indonesia.

Branding Examples: BRT project in Lagos, Nigeria.

- BRT Lite: In Lagos, branding was used prior to implementation, and was intensified post-implementation. All BRT staff (as well as many other community members) were issued BRT-Lite branded polo shirts and baseball caps. This has ensured that BRT and LAMATA are brands that have a high awareness throughout Lagos.

Branding Examples: BRT project in Ahmedabad, India.

Janmarg, Ahmedabad: In Ahmedabad, an effective tool of communications strategy in the successful implementation of a BRT system was to build strong project branding from the very beginning.

- The project was named 'Janmarg' (Peoples Way) to touch a chord in the heart of the common man so that he immediately established a bond with the facility. The project authorities commenced branding 'Janmarg' from the design stage. Ever since that time, this name and logo has been effectively used in advertisements, stationery, and sign boards.
- Janmarg branding is affixed to all components of corridor infrastructure, rolling stock, and staff uniforms.
- Standard designs were used for all staff uniforms, including workshop, control centre and system operators.
- Project authorities also published print material in the form of booklets, brochures, and newsletters for distribution among the stakeholders, passengers, and visitors.

Branding Examples: BRT branding in Jakarta, Indonesia.

- In Jakarta, the provincial government enlisted the help and support of NGOs to help communicate the benefits of BRT in both the printed and electronic media. There was a determined approach to follow the TransMillenio model in developing the TransJakarta Busway brand. This involved development of a brand logo which was (and still is) used on all elements of the system that come into contact with the public, for example, at stations, on the side of buses, on employee uniforms, on all publicity materials, and on electronic portals such as the website.
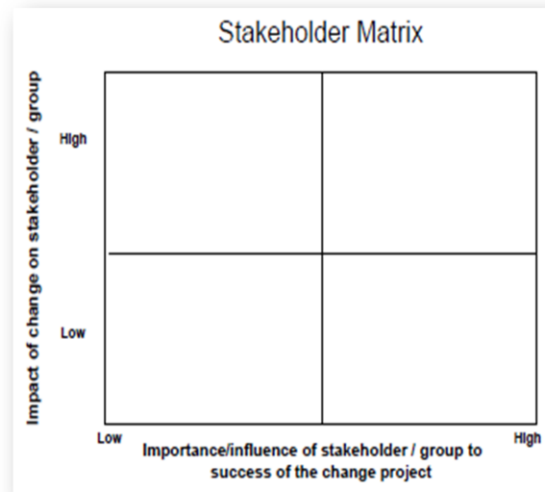
Having identified the stakeholders and a communications strategy, it is useful to develop a matrix mapping influence of a particular group against the likely impact on the group. The group in the upper right quadrant is the most important with a high potential stake in the success of the project. On the other hand, the group in the lower left quadrant is the least important in terms of potential change.

When resources are constrained, it is also beneficial to define focus of interventions with the most impact on success of the project.

Fundamental to the design and implementation of an urban transport project is the need to develop a participation framework driven by open communications across a wide spectrum of stakeholders. This communications strategy will build on the strong elements of the current operations while putting an agenda for change in place while also developing ownership and managing any resistance. Such an approach will enhance legitimacy, build stakeholder participation, and improve quality of decisions, making them more reflective of the interests of the public as a whole.