

# TCRP

## REPORT 103

TRANSIT  
COOPERATIVE  
RESEARCH  
PROGRAM

### Public Transportation Operating Agencies as Employers of Choice

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TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

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**TCRP REPORT 103**

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**Public Transportation  
Operating Agencies as  
Employers of Choice**

**WATSON WYATT WORLDWIDE**  
Washington, D.C.

AND

**FOCUS GROUP CORPORATION**  
Alexandria, VA

**SUBJECT AREAS**  
Public Transit

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Research Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration in Cooperation with the Transit Development Corporation

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**TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD**

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
2004  
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The nation's growth and the need to meet mobility, environmental, and energy objectives place demands on public transit systems. Current systems, some of which are old and in need of upgrading, must expand service area, increase service frequency, and improve efficiency to serve these demands. Research is necessary to solve operating problems, to adapt appropriate new technologies from other industries, and to introduce innovations into the transit industry. The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) serves as one of the principal means by which the transit industry can develop innovative near-term solutions to meet demands placed on it.

The need for TCRP was originally identified in *TRB Special Report 213—Research for Public Transit: New Directions*, published in 1987 and based on a study sponsored by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration—now the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). A report by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), *Transportation 2000*, also recognized the need for local, problem-solving research. TCRP, modeled after the longstanding and successful National Cooperative Highway Research Program, undertakes research and other technical activities in response to the needs of transit service providers. The scope of TCRP includes a variety of transit research fields including planning, service configuration, equipment, facilities, operations, human resources, maintenance, policy, and administrative practices.

TCRP was established under FTA sponsorship in July 1992. Proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, TCRP was authorized as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). On May 13, 1992, a memorandum agreement outlining TCRP operating procedures was executed by the three cooperating organizations: FTA, The National Academies, acting through the Transportation Research Board (TRB); and the Transit Development Corporation, Inc. (TDC), a nonprofit educational and research organization established by APTA. TDC is responsible for forming the independent governing board, designated as the TCRP Oversight and Project Selection (TOPS) Committee.

Research problem statements for TCRP are solicited periodically but may be submitted to TRB by anyone at any time. It is the responsibility of the TOPS Committee to formulate the research program by identifying the highest priority projects. As part of the evaluation, the TOPS Committee defines funding levels and expected products.

Once selected, each project is assigned to an expert panel, appointed by the Transportation Research Board. The panels prepare project statements (requests for proposals), select contractors, and provide technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project. The process for developing research problem statements and selecting research agencies has been used by TRB in managing cooperative research programs since 1962. As in other TRB activities, TCRP project panels serve voluntarily without compensation.

Because research cannot have the desired impact if products fail to reach the intended audience, special emphasis is placed on disseminating TCRP results to the intended end users of the research: transit agencies, service providers, and suppliers. TRB provides a series of research reports, syntheses of transit practice, and other supporting material developed by TCRP research. APTA will arrange for workshops, training aids, field visits, and other activities to ensure that results are implemented by urban and rural transit industry practitioners.

The TCRP provides a forum where transit agencies can cooperatively address common operational problems. The TCRP results support and complement other ongoing transit research and training programs.

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## NOTICE

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The members of the technical advisory panel selected to monitor this project and to review this report were chosen for recognized scholarly competence and with due consideration for the balance of disciplines appropriate to the project. The opinions and conclusions expressed or implied are those of the research agency that performed the research, and while they have been accepted as appropriate by the technical panel, they are not necessarily those of the Transportation Research Board, the National Research Council, the Transit Development Corporation, or the Federal Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Each report is reviewed and accepted for publication by the technical panel according to procedures established and monitored by the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee and the Governing Board of the National Research Council.

To save time and money in disseminating the research findings, the report is essentially the original text as submitted by the research agency. This report has not been edited by TRB.

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The **Transportation Research Board** is a division of the National Research Council, which serves the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering. The Board's mission is to promote innovation and progress in transportation through research. In an objective and interdisciplinary setting, the Board facilitates the sharing of information on transportation practice and policy by researchers and practitioners; stimulates research and offers research management services that promote technical excellence; provides expert advice on transportation policy and programs; and disseminates research results broadly and encourages their implementation. The Board's varied activities annually engage more than 4,000 engineers, scientists, and other transportation researchers and practitioners from the public and private sectors and academia, all of whom contribute their expertise in the public interest. The program is supported by state transportation departments, federal agencies including the component administrations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and other organizations and individuals interested in the development of transportation. [www.TRB.org](http://www.TRB.org)

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## FOREWORD

By *Gwen Chisholm*  
Staff Officer  
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*TCRP REPORT 103: Public Transportation Operating Agencies as Employers of Choice* documents principles, techniques, and strategies that are used in workforce recruitment, development, and retention. The report includes a companion document, *Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan, Positioning the Public Transportation Operating Agency as an Employer of Choice* that describes strategies and solutions that offer the greatest potential for positioning public transportation operating agencies as an employer of choice. The *Toolkit* will assist transportation policymakers and practitioners in implementing more effective human resources business-planning processes.

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The success and overall competitiveness of the public transportation operating agency is directly tied to its human resources—the quality, responsiveness, and commitment of its employees at all levels. At a time of sharply increased demand for its services, the public transportation industry faces serious problems in recruiting, developing, and retaining a skilled workforce. The public transportation industry would like to be positioned as an “employer of choice.”

Research reveals that public transportation operating agencies have struggled with integrating human resources into strategic business-planning processes. Today, public transportation operating agencies are facing workforce changes that threaten their traditional patterns of recruitment and retention. Some of these are general trends in the society: demographic changes, changes in worker expectations, and changes in education and training. Other challenges are more specific to the public transportation operating agency. The public transportation operating agency is increasingly less attractive as a career choice in part due to its image, work culture, and compensation. Traditional sources of transit recruitment are no longer as productive as they were in the past. Today, operating agencies are also challenged to use technology to recruit and develop their workforce.

Although research has been completed on workforce challenges in public transportation, there are still significant gaps. Building on the work that has been completed to date, the *Toolkit* is designed to provide U.S. public transportation operating agencies with a variety of resources, methods and techniques for workforce recruitment, development, and retention.

Watson Wyatt Worldwide prepared this report for TCRP Project F-11. To achieve the project’s objective of assembling a toolkit—based on principles, techniques, strategies, and available resources—that can be used to recruit, develop, and retain the public transportation workforce, thereby positioning public transportation agencies as employers of choice, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken to identify factors that positively affect public transportation operating agency workforce recruitment, development, and retention.

To ensure that the *Toolkit* would be responsive to the needs and concerns of the transit industry, Watson Wyatt Worldwide conducted interviews, surveys, and focus groups to solicit input from public transportation operating agency employees on their perceptions of (1) the positive aspects of the public transportation operating agency as an employer and (2) the obstacles preventing the public transportation operating agency from being an employer of choice. The information gathered from the data-collection effort shaped both the content and organization of the *Toolkit*. The *Toolkit* includes strategies and best practices that address how a public transportation operating agency can become an employer of choice.

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# COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## *Positioning the Public Transportation Operating Agency as an Employer of Choice*

### ■ INTRODUCTION

In September 2002, the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) embarked on a journey to evolve the transportation industry into the next millennium as an “Employer of Choice.” The first step was to select a partner to develop an Employer of Choice (EOC) Toolkit that can be tailored by any transit agency regardless of size. Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a human resources consulting firm, along with Focus Group Corporation, worked with an expert panel selected by the TRB to develop the Employer of Choice Toolkit. This project was completed on October 1, 2003, and the *Public Transportation Agencies as Employers of Choice Toolkit* (Toolkit) was delivered to the panel for final distribution. The “Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan” (Plan) is a companion document for the Toolkit.

As discussed in the Toolkit, the designation of Employer of Choice is achieved by an individual agency, not an industry. It is acknowledged that an industry’s reputation can assist in attracting potential employees, however, keeping and motivating them depends on their day-to-day experiences at the agency where they work. As such, the objective of this Plan is two-fold.

1. At an industry level, the intent is to provide direction and tactics for developing a communications program that creates industry awareness for maximizing roll-out of the Toolkit—an awareness that will facilitate not only the distribution and use of the Toolkit, but also will encourage the development of opportunities to dialogue about strategies, exchange learning, and share successes and evolving best practices among the agencies that are actively pursuing this designation.
2. At an agency level, the Plan highlights the communication needs for the individual transportation agency. The transportation agencies will need to customize the Plan to reflect their unique organizations.

The Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan offers guidelines on the key messages and primary stakeholders with recommendations on how to convey the appropriate messages. The industry-view includes a wide range of stakeholders such as national partners, associations, unions, suppliers, federal jurisdictions, and politicians. The agency-view looks at communications and implementation from a smaller geographic domain with more issues and concerns outlined at the state, local, or community levels. For an effective communications plan, it is essential that the two are aligned and not at cross-purposes. As the EOC journey begins, the industry-view focuses on the rollout of the Toolkit across the agencies for specific success stories, lessons learned, and other opportunities to share best practices, which will enable other agencies to follow quickly or at least to avoid some common pitfalls. Each agency will ultimately decide the best way to reach their intended audi-

ence and what messages are important to convey based on their specific direction, capabilities and resources.

Any transportation agency interested in institutionalizing the EOC programs should first closely review the contents of the Toolkit. The researchers' recommendation is to read and fully understand the EOC materials and concepts starting with the Toolkit Introduction and EOC Boot Camp. It is essential for the transportation agency to understand their location on this EOC journey, because actions and steps will be different. Each transportation agency will have their own assessment of their starting point, needs, priorities, strengths, and weaknesses. Section II, "Building Your Agency's Employer of Choice Strategy," is critical if none exists, or essential for aligning the EOC objectives to established operational goals. The Toolkit also provides additional information on effective communication under the Program Areas.

The Communications and Implementation Plan does not intend to provide details on the contents of the Toolkit but highlights the key messages that should be communicated to *whom*, *how often*, and *in what way*. The Plan starts with the objectives for the first year and offers suggestions beyond the Year-1 time frame. It also focuses on the communications and collaboration between the transportation industry and individual transportation agencies and offers suggestions on how to measure effectiveness. Sample key EOC messages are included as a framework for starting the communications and subsequent implementation. A Tactical Plan for Year 1 begins the process for implementing the EOC changes and identifies some of the key messages, suggested timings, channels, and responsibilities.

While the Plan focuses primarily on the communications for the first year, it also provides suggestions for measuring effective communications, communications for beyond Year 1, and implementation guidelines.

## ■ COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan objectives for the first year focus on understanding the characteristics and key issues of being an EOC. Industry and agency representatives can find an overview of the EOC concept in the Toolkit Introduction section. In addition, the Toolkit's Program Area for Communications provides additional suggestions for establishing the communication strategy and guidelines for effective communications.

For both the industry and the individual agency, Year 1 is about raising awareness of key audiences. For the industry, awareness means educating audiences—what is an EOC, why is it important, how does an agency become one, and what resources are available to assist an agency who wants to embark on the journey? The industry communications should be developed to create broader understanding and support for the EOC transformation. They target transportation industry partners, unions, and related associations such as APTA. Industry's role is to inform its constituents and members, to facilitate sharing across transportation agencies, to develop outreach programs, and to create committees that focus on specific transportation issues. Other key stakeholders in the industry include lobbyists, politicians, and media members.

At the agency level in Year 1, the agency will want to focus on creating awareness for the audience, so that everyone knows that the agency has embarked upon an EOC journey and that change will occur. Each transportation agency will have to tailor the messages, audience, and communications channels that fit best within their organization, culture, budget, and resources.

All communications and implementation plans need an owner or an EOC Champion, someone who is responsible for the overall development, deployment, metrics, and

enhancements. The role of leadership is one of the major tenets for becoming an EOC; Section I of the Toolkit, entitled “EOC Boot Camp,” details the important role that leadership plays in building commitment, energy, and productivity. At an agency level, without organizational and senior managers steering the process and agreeing to be accountable for the results, the transportation agency should not embark on the EOC journey. Aspects of the Plan can be delegated; however, successful communications and implementation should have one responsible champion for the EOC journey. For an agency, the champion must be a visible leader in the organization and respected by peers, subordinates, and senior management.

Likewise the industry needs to identify champions for EOC communications. These champions need to work closely with transportation agency leaders in developing and highlighting the EOC journey success stories and best practices. Using industry groups (such as subcommittees within the APTA) to serve in this capacity can springboard the ability to communicate.

The best way to begin crafting the awareness message—the **EOC Awareness Campaign**—is to begin with the Toolkit. The Toolkit contains all the key EOC messages, the *what* and *how to*’s during the first year for any agency communications focusing on becoming an EOC. The key topic areas below highlight the critical messages that should be communicated for all transportation stakeholders. Specific tailoring of these messages should be done for each constituency as to detail, length, roles and responsibilities, and communication channels and frequency. Communications for the first year are focused on the following messages, which frame the EOC Awareness Campaign:

- What is an EOC employer?
- What are the fundamental concepts for an EOC?
- Why is a capable, committed, diverse workforce so important?
- What is an EOC Toolkit?
- How was this Toolkit developed?
- How do we use the Toolkit?
- What is our agency’s strategy for becoming an EOC?

Exhibit A contains sample key message for the questions highlighted above.

The industry and each transportation agency have identified their most effective forms of communication, such as newsletters, association magazines, emails, bulletin boards, or weekly staff meetings. The risk of over-communicating is small. Adopting a creative approach that solicits feedback can not only effectively communicate the message but can also help model the desired ways in which EOCs operate. This approach may mean using different forms or styles of communication or simply different ways of expressing the message using the usual communication approach. For example, a town hall meeting may represent a typical communication vehicle for an agency. This approach could be structured so that the entire meeting is devoted to targeted employee questions, which could be submitted in advance or taken during the meeting so that the town hall meeting becomes an “Ask the General Manager” session. Moreover, new ways of communicating will demonstrate that “it’s no longer business as usual.”

Transportation industry partners play an important role by providing a platform to collaborate and share agency lessons learned and success stories. Future industry meetings should focus on capturing, sharing, and disseminating experiences across the transportation industry. In addition, the EOC Champions and transportation-transformation subject matter experts can be identified to assist other transportation agencies in their EOC journey. The industry associations and unions should leverage existing communications such as newsletters, websites, and trade magazines to promote and

support the transportation EOC transformation efforts. Specific committees and meetings of transportation General Managers, Board Members, and HR Leaders should allocate time for the EOC Awareness and Collaboration Campaigns. During these meetings, specific roles and responsibilities should be discussed on what and how they can contribute to the overall success of the industry evolving to an Employer of Choice.

Exhibits B and C contain sample Year-1 communications plans for industry and agency, respectively.

After the first year, when the EOC Awareness Campaign is complete, the industry and individual agencies should perform a “year in review” by evaluating and trending feedback, measuring effectiveness, and assessing impact of the communications against stated objectives. At an industry level, the next step begins the **Collaboration Campaign**, where transportation agencies work together to address specific EOC issues and solutions. An organized effort to actively capture and share EOC experiences is developed and maintained at the transportation agency and industry levels. Communities of transportation constituents begin to focus on the codification of the EOC experiences into Transportation Industry Best Practices that become the basis for the ongoing Communications and Implementation Plan.

## ■ MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF INITIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The measure of effectiveness will depend on the communication objective. In the initial EOC Awareness Campaign, the objective will be awareness. As the Industry embraces EOC issues and the agency pursues its EOC journey, the objective will shift away from awareness to measuring impact and outcomes.

For agencies where measuring progress in the EOC journey will take on a critical roll, the Toolkit offers more details in developing EOC metrics and linkage to the strategy and action plans in Section II, “Building Your Agency’s Employer of Choice Strategy.” In this section, an agency will find instructions for developing a process and examples of metrics to monitor its journey. The researchers recommend that an EOC Scorecard be developed by each individual agency that includes metrics that track the overall success of the communications program. An action item for the Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan then becomes the need to report the status and trends as measured by the EOC Scorecard. At an industry level, a handful of critical metrics—those that are being used by individual agencies—could be identified, adopted, and aggregated to form a modified Industry EOC scorecard.

The Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan outlines many different events targeting various stakeholders. Progress against measures is reviewed regularly with each measure being considered based on its individual merit as well as how it fits into the larger set of measures. Data are collected over time and trending is used to find patterns of performance and opportunity. Each communications event should carefully detail the distribution list, means or type of communication channel (e.g., presentation, town hall, email), and timing. In addition, the targeted audience should be asked for feedback regarding the communication in order to guide future improvements. Creating a continuous improvement process for communications and implementation of the Toolkit will strengthen the success of the transportation agency and industry toward evolving to an EOC.

Some initial measures to determine the transportation agencies success in implementing the Toolkit may include the following:

- Number of employees targeted in the EOC Awareness Campaign as a percent of total employees.

- Number of employees involved in EOC follow-on activities, committees, work-groups, and so on.
- Number of managers incorporating EOC objectives into staff appraisals.
- Number of presentations delivered to constituents such as board members, employees, community forums, and so on.

Some initial measures to determine the industry’s success in implementing the Toolkit may include the following:

- Number of industry constituencies or associations actively involved in EOC Awareness Campaign.
- Number and types of communications regarding EOC Awareness Campaign.
- Number and types of EOC follow-on activities, communities, articles, and so on.
- Number of success stories and lessons learned developed during the quarter.
- Number of presentations delivered to constituents such as board members, committees, and so on.
- Number and types of communications delivered to stakeholders found in tactical communications and implementation plan.

## ■ COMMUNICATIONS BEYOND YEAR 1

The Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan should be reassessed at the end of the first year. At an industry level, this “year in review” and debrief should include board members, general managers, human resources leaders and transportation partners such as association staff. In an agency, the reviewers should include members from the EOC rollout team, such as leaders, human resources staff, line managers, union representatives, and employees. The participants should be a cross-section of the specific agency that had varying levels of responsibilities in regards to the rollout of the agency’s EOC strategy. The “year in review” should focus on understanding whether the initial EOC Awareness Campaign was a success. Based on this feedback, the Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan should be adjusted to reflect the suggestions and recommendations of the participants.

## ■ COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN GUIDELINES

Deploying a successful agency or industry Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan depends on many factors. The Program Area for Communications in the Toolkit provides additional information on selective methods for harnessing employee involvement and outlines the basic principles for effective briefings that should be considered when tailoring the final Plan. Other considerations for a successful Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan include the following:

- A visible leader or EOC champion that is accountable and responsible for the agency or industry-wide communications.
- A clear commitment for supporting the EOC journey.
- Resources to support the development and deployment of the communications (i.e., people, budget, and time).
- Thinking big and starting small—ensuring that people are aware and onboard.
- Soliciting and acting on feedback from the agency or other constituencies for improvements.
- Keeping the messages short and simple so they can be easily repeated.
- Planning for and taking time to manage the organizational change.

- Answering questions and conveying “What’s In It For Them” (WIIFT) to the target audience.
- Developing metrics, revising accordingly, and reporting progress to management and employees regularly.
- Capturing and sharing knowledge; begin by documenting anecdotal success stories and lessons learned.
- Participating and collaborating with other transportation agencies and industry opportunities.
- Remembering that evolving to an EOC is a journey!

## What is an Employer of Choice?

**An Employer of Choice is...**  
*Any public transportation operating agency that, because of its reputation, is able to attract, retain, and optimize a capable and committed diverse workforce that enables operational excellence, safety, and high customer satisfaction.*



- Externally, an Employer of Choice has a reputation for quality of services and products. Because of this reputation, they are known for being a compelling place to work, where employees can build world-class skills and work with other high-performing employees.
- Internally, an Employer of Choice has employees who are proud to say they work for the agency that successfully delivers on its mission and vision. Employees know their contributions make a difference and that they can count on their leaders and co-workers to sustain the agencies reputation.

1

## What are the Fundamental Concepts for an EOC?

- **Is a journey!** An organization does not become an EOC overnight...and the path is different depending on where you start and where you want to get to. Like any journey, if you don't decide where you want to go, you will never know if you have arrived.
- **Requires alignment.** Alignment of the business strategy and the EOC strategy...alignment of the HR program areas and activities with the EOC strategy.
- **Is a moving target.** Even organizations that display “best practices” are constantly reassessing how they are doing...especially as business and market conditions change.
- **Takes commitment.** This is not an “HR responsibility”. It requires engagement of leaders, managers and employees. It will involve resources and focus – maybe additional resources, maybe reallocation of resources...but definitely a focus.
- **Depends on a plan.** Because becoming an EOC requires energy and commitment, organizations embarking on this road want to have a plan to get there...a plan which is driven from business strategy and which considers the organization's objectives and desired destination.
- **Should be the way we do business.** Becoming an EOC is not a program. It should describe, inform and lead how we address our human resources systems – how employees and potential employees see us...everything from compensation to performance management to culture.

2



## Why is a Capable & Committed Workforce Important?

- **Issue 1: Even if an agency wants to stay the same, external forces will force change.**  
The labor market is shrinking, customers, public constituents and taxpayers are seeking reliable and cost-effective services, and environmental and conservation forces are elevating the provision of transportation service to a national priority. In order to achieve our mission and continue providing services and products at current or increased volume and service levels, we need to maximize the talent and skills that we have in our workforce, attract new and different kinds of skills, and keep our most talented employees from walking out the door.
- **Issue 2: New paradigms and models for public transportation organizations require aligning human capital systems with fundamental changes in strategy.** The work done as part of TCRP Project J - 08B *New Paradigms for Local Public Transportation Organizations* concludes that reinvention in local public transportation has become essential. This work done by the New Paradigms project calls for an evolution in thinking and strategy. This shift to a new business paradigm – systemically different ways of delivering products and services – means fundamental, strategic activity at both an industry and an individual transit agency level. As organizations begin to adopt components of the new public transportation model, the need to adapt and align human resources strategies and human capital infrastructure becomes apparent. Among other things, it will mean ensuring that employees have the most appropriate skills for the new ways of working, a consistency in performance measurement exists (among the community, the organization, the department and the employee), a tireless focus on the customer experience is maintained, and an environment of participation taps into the creativity and knowledge of employees at all levels.
- **Issue 3: Individual organizations, not industries, become Employers of Choice.** Becoming an Employer of Choice is fundamentally centered on infrastructure, programs, alignment and reputation at an individual transit agency level. Actual programs and ways of working that are practiced by each agency make it (or do not make it) an Employer of Choice. The American Public Transportation Association's PT<sup>2</sup> initiative can raise awareness of career opportunities among workers who would not have otherwise considered a career in public transportation. However, keeping and motivating employees most certainly depends on their day-to-day experiences at the agency where they work.

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## Why is a Capable & Committed Workforce Important?

- **Issue 4: Human resource designs do not make an organization an Employer of Choice.** It begins with an informed governing body, an executable strategy, credible, energetic leaders and a committed workforce. An employer of choice organization uses an integrated combination of designs to focus priorities and to create line of sight. Designs are selected to ensure the attraction, retention and optimization of the desired workforce and help communicate priorities and reinforce behaviors and results important for organizational success.
- **Issue 5: Leadership sets the tone and pace and is the "make or break" underpinning to achievement of Employer of Choice Status.** Becoming an employer of choice is not a Human Resources department responsibility. Although the Human Resources department may be a key resource in helping to develop, implement and maintain pieces of the EOC strategy and action plan, boards of directors, leaders, and managers throughout the agency must participate and be engaged at various stages of the development and deployment process.
- **Issue 6: Each agency is in the driver's seat. While a long-term vision of remaking the public transportation industry is being crafted, at a practical level each agency must continue to meet the challenges of daily operations.** Every day customers need to get from Point A to Point B safely, reliably and in ways that meet (or exceed) their expectations. Although the capital investment in transit agencies often garners focus, to maximize your capital investment, you need to maximize your human investment. Attracting, keeping, and optimizing talent are challenges faced by agencies every day, whether they are on the road to reinvention or not. As expressed in the TCRP's Research Results Digest entitled *Identification of the Critical Workforce Development Issues in the Transit Industry*: "It is universally agreed upon that workforce issues are critical to the continuing success of the industry. Every property interviewed identified particular, severe problems faced in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce..."

4

Sample EOC Key Messages (continued).

# What is an Employer of Choice Toolkit?

## Contents

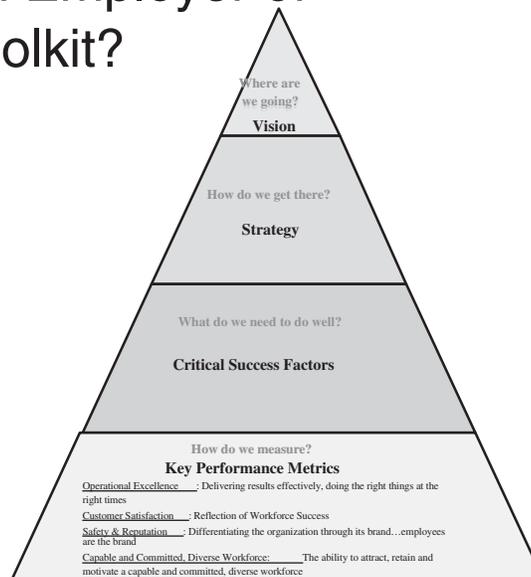
- This toolkit is a compendium of materials to guide the journey in becoming an Employer of Choice (EOC).
- The materials in this toolkit:
  - Address the areas of greatest opportunity in the transit industry identified by research
  - Are like the toolkit of a mechanic –containing a variety of materials that can be used as appropriate throughout the process of troubleshooting, diagnosing and building an EOC organization.
  - Are customizable resource materials
  - Include best practices, strategies, assessments, processes, tools and templates that can be selectively applied where needed.
  - Should be tailored “fit” your agency’s needs.

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# What is an Employer of Choice Toolkit?

## Purpose

- This toolkit provides a plan of action as well as supporting tools and tactics to prioritize and build an aligned, engaged and committed workforce. This toolkit is aimed at providing:
  - **A framework** to consider the interrelationships between the delivery of world class transit services and human capital practices
  - **A process** to identify and prioritize improvement opportunities, priorities and direction for your agency
  - **Methods** to stimulate dialogue and action in your agency to enhance your agency’s ability to attract, retain and optimize talent
- Ultimately, this toolkit should help the organization align employees with mission



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Sample EOC Key Messages (continued).



## How was this Toolkit Developed?

- Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a global human resources consulting firm, along with Focus Consulting Corporation, has worked closely with panel made up of transit agency experts to design, test and develop this toolkit
- The toolkit is based on research and information from a variety of sources, including best places to work organizations and input and insight from transit employees and transit boards at selected agencies throughout the United States and Canada, including:
  - BC Transit
  - King County Transit
  - Bay Area Rapid Transit
  - Go Transit – Toronto
  - Iowa (representing various small Iowa organizations)
  - Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
  - Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
  - New Jersey Transit
  - Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority

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## How do we Use the Toolkit?

- Although you can move directly to any section of the toolkit, we recommend that you follow the sequence listed below.
  1. **Read the *Introduction*.** It will orient you regarding the topic Employer of Choice and use of the toolkit. A table of contents is included at the beginning of the Introduction.
  2. **Review *Section I: Employer of Choice Boot Camp*.** This section deals with the critical role of leadership in becoming an Employer of Choice.
  3. **Review *Section II: Building Your Agency's Employer of Choice Strategy and Complete the Employer of Choice Diagnostic*.** This section provides information, processes and tools to: develop an Employer of Choice strategy, diagnose your current state, identify priorities and track progress. By completing the Employer of Choice Diagnostic, you will be directed to other sections of the toolkit.
  4. **Proceed to the remaining sections and resources in the toolkit as appropriate.** You may be directed to a section in the toolkit as a result of completing the EOC Diagnostic, or you may simply wish to review other sections as a reference.

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*Sample EOC Key Messages (continued).*



## What is Our Agency's Strategy for Becoming an EOC?

This message should be developed by each agency and will be dependent on their place in the EOC journey.

- Themes may include:
  - The agency's vision, mission and strategy
  - How a capable, committed and diverse workforce contributes to the agency's operational success, customer satisfaction and reputation in the community and with the public – how the agency defines its goal of becoming an EOC
  - The agency's progress to date regarding building a capable, committed and diverse workforce
  - The priorities for the next year and what will get tracked
  - The role of leaders in making the organization an Employer of Choice
  - How workforce input will play a part
  - What employees can expect

*Sample EOC Key Messages (continued).*

<b>EOC Champion</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Key Message</b>	<b>Communication Channel</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Transportation Associations (Subcommittees)	Politicians, Board Members, Lobbyists, Members, Committees	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status  Current Agency Events	Board Meetings, Face-to-Face Meetings, Key Briefing Messages, Association Meetings, Conferences, Website	Quarterly, As Needed
Transportation Associations	Media, Community	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status	Broad-based communications, Press Releases, Website	Monthly
Transportation Associations	Transportation Agencies	EOC Success Stories, Lessons Learned, Best Practices	Association Meetings, Conferences Newsletters, Publications, emails, Website	Monthly
Transportation Cooperative Ventures	Colleges, Government-Sponsored Agencies	EOC Awareness, Objective, Goals and Status	Presentations, Face-to-Face Meetings, News Briefs, Website	Monthly
Other Industry EOC Champions	State and Federal Regulatory Agencies	EOC Awareness	Association Meetings, Presentations, Publications, Metrics, Workshops, Committees, Website	Quarterly
Other Industry EOC Champion	All Stakeholders	EOC Awareness, Objective, Goals and Status EOC Success Stories, Lessons Learned, Best Practices	Association Meetings, Presentations, Publications, Metrics, Workshops, Website	Monthly

*Exhibit B: Sample Tactical Plan for Year 1—Industry.*

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Key Message</b>	<b>Communication Channel</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Board Members and Elected Officials, Communications Director	Politicians, Media, Outside Constituencies	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status, What's In It For Them (WIIFT) factors Current Agency Events	Board Meetings, Face-to-Face Meetings, Key Briefing Messages, News Briefs, Newspaper Articles	Quarterly, As Needed
Outside Transit Organization Liaison	Members, Press, Sister Organizations, Union Officials	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status	Publications, Newsletters, Committees, Presentations, Workshops	Quarterly
Transit Agency Executives and Managers	Managers, Supervisors, Professionals, Union Members, Association Members	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status, WIIFT	Briefings, EOC Agency Emails, Town Meetings, Workshops	Monthly
Transit Agency Human Resources Manager	All Employees	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status, WIIFT	Briefings, EOC Agency Emails	Monthly, Weekly, As Needed
Supervisors, Professionals	Administrators, Operators	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status, WIIFT	Briefings, EOC Agency Emails, Small Group Meetings	Monthly
Administrators	Peers	EOC Awareness, Objectives, Goals and Status	Memo Boards, Briefings, Face-to-Face Meetings	Weekly
Agency EOC Champion	Associations, Employees	EOC Success Stories, Lessons Learned, Best Practices	Presentations, Conferences, Newsletters, Workshops, Metrics	Monthly

*Exhibit C: Sample Tactical Plan for Year 1—Agency.*

Abbreviations used without definitions in TRB publications:

AASHO	American Association of State Highway Officials
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
APTA	American Public Transportation Association
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASME	American Society of Mechanical Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATA	American Trucking Associations
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
CTBSSP	Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NCTRP	National Cooperative Transit Research and Development Program
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TRB	Transportation Research Board
U.S.DOT	United States Department of Transportation