

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Who rides the bus?

- People who can't afford to own/drive a car, but still want to/must go somewhere.
- People who are temporarily without a car and can't find another alternative.
- People who ride the bus because they want to.
- People who are afraid to fly.

Why do most people *not* ride the bus?

- Fear. Afraid of who might be on the bus.
- Worry. About getting on the right bus.
- Inconvenience. It doesn't go exactly where they want to go. It doesn't start from a convenient departure point.
- Discomfort. Hot in summer, cold in winter.
- Stature. There's no glory in riding the bus. Only poor people ride the bus.

Why would anyone ride the bus who doesn't ride it now?

- Convenience. If a bus went somewhere that was too far or too difficult to drive to, or too expensive or difficult to fly to.
- Economy. It's cheaper to ride the bus than fly.
- Environment. The more people ride buses, the less junk in the atmosphere.

Where is the bus in the transportation chain?

Well below trains, above walking, hitchhiking, or riding a motorcycle (for most people).

Is there any positive characteristic of bus riding other than economy?

At age 80, my Uncle Will rode the bus everywhere he went. He said he could see the country better, feel America better (he came here from Scotland in his twenties), and that he always met the nicest people on the bus.

If you really want to see the country, feel America's heartbeat, there are only three conventional options: car, train, bus. Trains don't always go where you want to go; I can't get from Oklahoma City to Dallas by train. Cars work unless you're the driver, which means you pay more attention to the road than you do the scenery. On the bus, you can sit back and relax, and enjoy the scenery.

Conclusion.

You probably can't statistically expand the available universe. There are a certain number of people who will ride the bus; there are a certain number of people who *might* ride the bus; there are a certain number of people who will *never* ride the bus under any foreseeable circumstance.

It seems the only practical approach is twofold:

Make the existing market more active by giving those who *will* ride the bus and who *are* riding the bus a good reason to keep doing so, with special offers, coupons, etc.

make those who *might* ride the bus feel good enough about it to get on one next time they go somewhere. The only way I know to do this is by changing their bus emotions: taking away the bad things, putting good things in their place.

I would key my campaign around a phrase that has some emotional content, and which also suggests other positives:

America.

You can only get there by Greyhound.

Copy extension

(for the highest demographic of those who will and might ride the bus)

It doesn't happen in a car.
Don't look for it in an airplane.
You can't feel it on the train.

There's something comforting, something mystical about being nestled in the belly of a Greyhound Bus listening to the singing of the tires, the window a screen filled with the constantly changing face of America, images and sounds and smells that reach in and touch you on your childhood.

Your seatmate smiles, puts out his hand, and in seconds you are deep in conversation with a priest from Idaho, on his way to his mother's 80th birthday. Outside, a sad-faced woman leans against the door of an all night cafe. An elegantly clad couple climb into a glistening black limousine. The trees wave and twirl as if stirred by the hand of God. The moon rises, huge and golden, so close you can touch it.

What's out there is America.

And you can only get there by Greyhound.

Other versions would use language and images geared to specific demographics: for the youth market, the senior market, etc. I would also research music of all types, looking for "bus" songs that might be used as background or as content for spots. Simon and Garfunkel's *America* comes immediately to mind.