

8. Marketing Plan

KAT has embarked on an ambitious campaign to rebrand itself. The new KAT logo shown in Figure 8-1 has been rolled out and is accompanied by a new look for the KAT fleet (Figure 8-2). The green represents "green" and the new slogan "Ride for Change" is a double entendre referencing both the economic and environmental benefits of transit for riders and the community as a whole.

Figure 8-1
The New KAT



KAT is also in the process of seeing construction completed on its \$29 million transit center that will be known as Knoxville Station on Church Street. The transition represents a major marketing opportunity as experienced recently by METRO in Akron, Ohio. METRO opened its new transit center near downtown in January 2009. The opening was extensively covered by the media and included a wide range of activities. One of the focal points of the media (both local and national) since the METRO center opened has been the various "green" initiatives which include solar panels, geothermal wells, waterless urinals and other features. Like the METRO facility, the Knoxville Station facility has significant "green" characteristics which should be referenced as community benefits in KAT's various public communications.

Knoxville Station will also be a marketing opportunity to both current and potential KAT riders as KAT uses the media to publish information about new routes, how to use the transit center, and related matters. KAT's literature should reflect how the transit center will make using KAT easier, safer, and more fun. Features of the transit center such as wireless internet, an easy shuttle ride to downtown, and others should be prominent in anything printed about the center.

Figure 8-2
KAT Bus – A New Look and a New Slogan



KAT currently has very little funding available for marketing activities beyond printing of maps and schedules and related activity. In addition, KAT does not have a staff person solely devoted to marketing. Given the current budgetary climate, it is not recommended that a full time position be established. KAT's traditional marketing activities should be continued (including partnerships with Smart Trips and exploration of other "green" or alternative travel behavior programs. KAT should consider some non-traditional marketing initiatives such as a social networking internet site (Facebook, Twitter) that could be used to issue updates, email blasts to employers and government workers (if approval can be obtained) to help market KAT's services, and continuing to expand its website to offer assistance to riders and those nonriders who want to use KAT.

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