

Who is this guy?

- ▶ 23 years as DART's principal spokesperson; 20k+ media interviews
- ▶ 30 years in PR, reporter before that
- ▶ Trained CEOs, executives board members



Today's crisis is...

- ▶ Ridership
- ▶ Scared customers
- ▶ Scared employees
- ▶ Budget cuts
- ▶ You're exhausted
- ▶ Insert your crisis here...



New crisis, same goals

- ▶ Get through it
- ▶ Contain the reputational damage
- ▶ Position yourself to tell a better story



Sustaining communication

- ▶ Pause: You're beat down and tired; your staff too
- ▶ Assess: What's going on now? What are the priorities? Is your communication aligned internally, externally?
- ▶ Act: Keep talking and focus on values; what's important to your audiences?



The path to recovery

A NEW DESTINATION FOR TRANSIT

Morgan Lyons of Lyons Strategic analyses how the current pandemic might change the path of public transport long after the current restrictions are over.

The current pandemic has been something of a wake-up call for transit operators. Their seats are filled by employees who, in the line of duty, depleted cash and credit reserves, and ridership losses that they can only pay for out of pocket. The price for survival is hopefully - finally - a greater recognition that their services are 'essential'. Now they need to convert this new public 'wake-up' into a meaningful investment of funds that will help them restore service cuts and create a safe, welcoming, and efficient environment for customers and employees.

This will not be a flip-a-switch recovery. The historic San Francisco cable cars and their riders do not just return overnight. New York City will think long and hard before restoring its subways to 24-hour operation. Transport for London will have some major challenges as it seeks to restore service levels with passengers still staying away.

Stalled expansion projects around the world are not likely to pick up where they left off, or continue along their pre-existing path when the financial options and ridership models supporting them are obliterated. And how long will it take for customers to feel safe on a traditionally packed rush-hour train?

It will take lots of money, bold thinking, and visionary leadership to get us safely to the other side of this pandemic. Many industry observers think it might take years to recoup their losses and create a clear 'new normal'.

Organise your thinking
The successful human CEOs I have observed have followed a similar path to recovery:

"It will take lots of money, bold thinking, and visionary leadership to get us safely to the other side of this pandemic."

Transit provides mobility. There is simply no way to build enough roads to keep large cities from stalling. We figured this out in the 19th Century as urban rail systems and subway projects were launched. Younger, rather less dense, but still rapidly growing cities are learning. As more than one transit planner has said, people don't bring their roads with them when they move to a new city.

Second, transit connects people to basic



A photograph of San Francisco Market Street in late April 2020. The street is mostly empty, with a few people visible in the distance. The streetcar tracks are visible on the ground, but no streetcars are present. The buildings lining the street are tall and modern.

San Francisco Market Street in late April 2020, devoid of streetcars and devoid of people a scene that has been mirrored in major cities around the world in the past few months. Wikimedia Commons

Transition slide

Keep working the problem

- ▶ Today's "normal" informs tomorrow's "normal"
- ▶ Your agency has changed, your community has changed; change your communications to reflect the change (tone, tactics, channels)





Thank you!
Good luck!
Stay healthy!

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