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# The effects of non-contingent free bus tickets and personal commitment on urban bus ridership

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### Abstract

To compare the effects of free rides and commitment to a performance goal on increasing bus ridership in an urban setting, 83 non-bus riding automobile drivers were exposed to one of the following conditions. (1) Control where route and schedule information were provided. (2) Commitment, where subjects agreed to ride the bus twice a week during the treatment period. (3) Free Tickets, where an unlimited supply of free bus tickets were provided. (4) Free Tickets Plus Commitment, where the free transit and commitment conditions were combined. While there were no systematic differences between the experimental conditions, each of them produced significantly higher levels of ridership than the no-treatment control group during the 4 week treatment period and two subsequent follow-up periods. These results suggest that both free rides and agreement to a specific performance goal can overcome many of the

obstacles which prevent individuals from initiating and maintaining regular patterns of bus ridership.



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