

# APTA Innovates to Keep Its Members Connected in Unprecedented Times

**As the American Public Transportation Association champions the embattled public transit sector, Lead Marvels has its back.**

## Challenges

- Keeping members connected and engaged during a time when live events are not possible
- Providing educational resources and thought-leadership opportunities to members faced with unprecedented obstacles

## Solution

- Implement a turnkey, fully managed digital content hub on APTA's website with little time or resource investment
- Members gain access to valuable educational information, while business members highlight their thought leadership and gain quality, intent-based leads

## Results

- Increased traffic and engagement on APTA's online Knowledge Hub among members
- APTA reinforces its stature as a trusted leader and voice of its industry
- A new source of incremental, non-dues revenue

As the nation was coming to terms with the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic last spring, public transportation ridership declined 76 percent nationally in the second quarter of 2020 compared with the same period the prior year.<sup>1</sup> Media outlets reported on the “ghost trains” coursing just beneath the surface of New York City, home to the largest public transportation system in the world.<sup>2</sup> From the beleaguered bus and ferry systems in Seattle<sup>3</sup> to the “zombified” state of Washington DC’s Metro service,<sup>4</sup> our nation’s public transportation infrastructure took an enormous hit during the worst of the pandemic. Some national media outlets even mused whether public transportation could survive the coronavirus pandemic, citing experts who warned of a “death spiral” for public transit.<sup>5</sup>

What did not get much acknowledgement, however, is that the public transportation sector – and, notably, the people who make it run – never stopped. Services were curtailed in many cities and schedules modified for a nation in lockdown, but through the height of the pandemic, when public fear was at its zenith, public transit systems across the country continued to transport medical and other essential workers to and where they were needed. Public transit systems continued to shuttle people to and from medical appointments, grocery stores, vaccination sites, and friends and family members who needed assistance.

*“A lot of people focus on public transportation coming back; well, actually, we never left,”* says Jack Gonzalez, senior director of marketing and sales at APTA, the American Public Transportation Association.

As the world's largest nonprofit association for the public transit industry, APTA has more than 1,500 public and private sector member organizations, including over 400 transit agencies across the United States. The organization promotes and advocates for the interests of the public transportation industry, while also providing advocacy for federal funding and policies, research, technical expertise, consulting services, and workforce development programs.

### **The Unsung Hero's Hero**

During the worst of the pandemic, APTA fought tirelessly to support the needs of public transportation agencies and workers, while helping members adapt to the unprecedented challenges they faced so that they, in turn, could continue to serve a nation in crisis. And, as people across the country struggle to regain some sense of normalcy, APTA and its members will play a vital role in our nation's recovery.

However, much like the industry it serves, APTA itself faced struggles in serving its members and sought to find new ways to keep its membership network connected and informed at a time when traditional channels were disrupted.

### **Finding New, Innovative Ways to Serve Members**

The public transit industry relies on APTA's live events to network, share information, and educate itself so that members can continue to improve their support for public transit. APTA's Expo conference typically has over 18,000 registrants and more than 800 exhibitors across bus and rail industries. Because APTA is the only association in North America that represents all modes of public transportation, including bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne services, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail, its members rely on the association for thought leadership resources and industry guidance, especially through the organization's meetings and live events.

*"With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that the valuable face-to-face connections*

---

***"With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that the valuable face-to-face connections APTA provides its members through its multitude of conferences had ceased. Without these in-person opportunities, APTA business members were challenged to develop new business."***

---

*APTA provides its members through its multitude of conferences had ceased," said Gonzalez. "Without these in-person opportunities, APTA business members were challenged to develop new business."*

APTA was forced to find an alternative – yet still effective – way to provide valuable educational resources and industry connections to enable the success of its members.

### **Sometimes Even Heroes Need a Helping Hand**

Realizing it needed to innovate in order to continue fulfilling its commitment to its members, APTA began exploring other ways to support its mission. For this, they turned to Lead Marvels for help. Lead Marvels introduced APTA to its proprietary content syndication and lead generation platform and worked with the association to create the APTA Knowledge Hub. The platform, fully managed by Lead Marvels, allows association business members to syndicate educational content and promote it to APTA members. Vendors who use the platform to promote their content receive business leads from those users who engage with their content.

## **“A Way to Connect Our Members”**

One of the key benefits of the Lead Marvels solution, according to Gonzalez, is that it offers “a way to connect our members.” Unlike a live event that may last a few days at most, APTA’s Knowledge Hub offers an “always on” platform to facilitate valuable educational experiences for its members, and it’s always available whenever they need it.

*“As the leading public transportation association, it’s so important to keep our members engaged, especially at a time when the entire nation’s infrastructure is stressed,” emphasized Gonzalez.*

## **Lead Generation for Business Members**

Gonzalez explains that APTA’s members not only appreciate the access to timely and relevant educational resources, but they now are also able to connect with vendors virtually similar to how they normally would in a traditional tradeshow exhibit hall environment. And APTA’s vendors, in turn, are able to promote their value proposition to members and receive as leads members who engage with their content.

## **A “No Risk,” Turnkey Solution**

Lead Marvels’ platform is implemented on a turnkey basis for its association partners and is fully managed by Lead Marvels. “There’s really no risk,” states Gonzalez who also appreciates the fact that the implementation required “very little effort on our part.”

The APTA Knowledge Hub was launched with 14 vendors and 25 educational resources within 60 days. APTA’s business members have embraced the launch of its Knowledge Hub and are eager to participate.

---

**“The Lead Marvels solution is a turnkey offering that required a minimal outlay of resources from us. The Lead Marvels team was there for us each step of the way as we worked to launch our Knowledge Hub, and they continue to remain committed to our success.”**

---

In the first 60 days, APTA’s Knowledge Hub recorded nearly 10,000 page views and generated almost 1,000 leads for business members, a testament to the value the Knowledge Hub offers its members. The Lead Marvels solution offered APTA a turnkey solution that required a minimal outlay of resources from the association, yet provides a powerful member benefit.

*“The Lead Marvels solution is a turnkey offering that required a minimal outlay of resources from us,” said Gonzalez. “The Lead Marvels team was there for us each step of the way as we worked to launch our Knowledge Hub, and they continue to remain committed to our success.”*

*“I would recommend Lead Marvels,” continued Gonzalez, who loves the platform solution including the ease of implementation and the lack of any risk. For Gonzalez, Lead Marvels’ fully managed educational platform is a no brainer: “It lets your business leaders shine as thought leaders and provides useful information to members.”*

## To view APTA's Knowledge Hub visit:

<https://knowledgehub.apta.com/>

## To request a demo of Lead Marvels' solutions, visit:

<https://www.leadmarvels.com/demo>

### About APTA:

*The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of more than 1,500 public and private sector member organizations. Benefits to our members include advocacy for federal funding and policies, research, technical expertise and consulting services, workforce development programs, educational conferences and seminars, and 135 subject-matter working committees. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada ride APTA member systems. Our membership is engaged in every aspect of the industry – from planning, designing, financing, constructing and operating transit systems to the research, development, manufacturing and maintenance of vehicles, equipment and transit-related products and services. Additionally, academic institutions, transportation network companies, transit associations and state departments of transportation are APTA members.*

### About Lead Marvels

*Lead Marvels is a lead generation and content syndication company serving associations, publishers, and B2B marketers. We offer customized, scalable solutions for our customers to help them build a pipeline of new, qualified leads to increase their customer base and grow revenue. Our unique funnel-based platforms, fully managed by our team of experienced demand gen experts, are built using proprietary technology that makes our system completely turnkey for our customers.*

*We partner with associations and publishers to provide incremental, non-dues revenue streams. And, for B2B marketers, our solutions amplify their voices among targeted audiences by syndicating thought leadership content to generate and nurture high-quality, intent-based leads.*

*Our founders have been in the lead generation business for over two decades, generating an estimated 2,000,000 leads to accelerate the growth of some of the largest, most successful brands in the country.*

*For more information or to request a free demo, visit [www.LeadMarvels.com](http://www.LeadMarvels.com) and follow [#LeadGenMadeEasy](https://twitter.com/LeadGenMadeEasy).*

---

1. "Public Transportation Ridership Report: 2nd Quarter 2020" American Public Transportation Association, <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/2020-Q2-Ridership-APTA.pdf>

2. Guse, Clayton, "Inside NYC's eerie ghost trains," New York Daily News, September 14, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/coronavirus/ny-coronavirus-subway-shutdown-ghost-trains-mta-20200914-2emopvipq5cy5myhanizy2gk6a-story.html>

3. Lindblom, Mike, "As ridership drops, should Seattle-area transit agencies trim service amid coronavirus outbreak?," The Seattle Times, March 12, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/as-ridership-drops-should-seattle-area-transit-agencies-trim-service-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>

4. Editorial Board, "Opinion: Metro is struggling to restart – and survive," The Washington Post, August 26, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/metro-is-struggling-to-restart-and-survive/2020/08/26/83fba1ac-e70e-11ea-970a-64c73a1c2392\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/metro-is-struggling-to-restart-and-survive/2020/08/26/83fba1ac-e70e-11ea-970a-64c73a1c2392_story.html)

5. Abbas, Mo, "Can public transportation survive the pandemic? Experts warn of 'death spiral'," NBC News, December 27, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/can-public-transportation-survive-pandemic-experts-warn-death-spiral-n1252214>