

INNOVATING THE BUSINESS OF TRANSIT

Transportation Case Study

CLIENT SITUATION

King County Metro, a metropolitan transit authority located in Washington state, sought to increase its rider base among its large business commuter segment. The agency's B2B transit benefit program had already secured relationships with more than 1,600 employers from across the city; however, ongoing struggles with internal operations, product execution, market awareness, and customer experience threatened to stifle the agency's prospects of future growth.

The agency's leaders recognized the need to redefine the organization's operational and go-to-market strategy in an effort to grow its rider base while strengthening its presence in the business community. King County Metro engaged North Highland to help identify challenges to achieving rider growth, define strategic imperatives to streamline execution of B2B transit benefits, and recommend specific steps to bring their vision of the future to life.

North Highland helped King County Metro, a leading metropolitan transportation authority, drive sustainable, positive changes to its business strategy in pursuit of becoming a more customer-focused transit agency that promotes increased ridership in the city.

OUR APPROACH

North Highland began by conducting research around transit benefit pain points and growth opportunities. The project team also performed an end-to-end analysis through immersive data-gathering and a series of over 300 interviews and surveys to B2B transit benefit managers, as well as the internal operations team. That process allowed North Highland to map out the customer experience process flow and identify gaps and inefficiencies. North Highland supplemented these analyses with peer-benchmarking and market research. Throughout the process, the project team tagged its analysis back to the organization's promise to become a more customer-focused agency. In translating these insights, North Highland then identified actionable strategic imperatives across four areas of opportunity:

Customer Experience: Establish a world-class experience that is consistent and meaningful across all touch-points, including in-person, digital, and social media channels, business customer onboarding approaches, self-training tools, customer service best practices, and loyalty and retention programs.

Internal Operations: Optimize processes to drive efficiencies and customer service speed through efficiency targets, metrics, lean process design, cost rationalization, data-driven decision support, and communications automation tools. Internal operational efficiencies are directly tied to a simplified customer experience.

Sales Approach: Adopt a formalized sales approach to establish and grow new and existing customer relationships via the development of better sales plans, metrics, partnerships, outreach methodologies, problem resolution, and upselling processes.

Agency Culture: Align the B2B division around a shared purpose that motivates and empowers employees to delight the client's riders, including the development of an authentic employer brand, organizational and experiential changes, and a new approach to employee engagement.

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VALUE DELIVERED

Applying a consistent focus on taking strategy to action, North Highland's recommendations supported the strategic imperatives with specific, prioritized, and tactical initiatives aimed at achieving each area of opportunity across customer experience, operations, sales, and culture. These components are primed to lead the agency to increase its B2B customer base, increase ridership, and provide a best-in-class experience for the local business community.

King County Metro has retained North Highland to operationalize its recommendations and work as a partner helping it to achieve its vision and drive lift on performance metrics. Beyond the tactical activities that the strategy informed, North

Highland's recommendations provided a roadmap to help position the transit authority as an innovator in rider experience: a critical imperative as technology trends continue to disrupt the norms of mobility and elevate the importance of seamless experiences.

"THE GREATEST COMPLIMENT I CAN OFFER NORTH HIGHLAND IS THE FACT I HAVE REFERRED THEM TO MY FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES. THEY ARE A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH, AND THEY GUARANTEE EVERYTHING THEY DO."

-King County Metro Program Manager

ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND

North Highland is a global management consulting firm known for helping clients solve their most complex challenges related to **customer experience, performance improvement, technology and digital, and transformation**. We add value and support our clients across the full spectrum of consulting, from strategy through delivery. We bring the big ideas, then we make them real.

North Highland is an employee-owned firm, headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., with more than 3,000 consultants worldwide and 60+ offices around the globe. The firm is a member of [Cordence Worldwide](#), a global management consulting alliance. For more information, visit and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).