



The Path to Seamless Mobility

GUIDE TO TRANSIT MOBILE APP-SELF-SERVICES

Unlocking the Power of Mobile Apps in Transit



In 2007, Steve Jobs said, “every once in a while, a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything...”. This statement seemed like an opening line from a sci-fi movie but proved to be not too far from the truth. Apple had just put the power of a computer into the palm of everyone’s hand, and now, people can’t imagine life without a smartphone. From banking to navigation, mobile devices have worked their way into the fabric of many industries, and transit services are no exception.

Transit agencies offering self-service applications, whether that be via a web portal or mobile app, put the power of transit back in the hands of the rider. People are already making the migration using ride hailing apps to the likes of Uber and Lyft at an increasing rate. Those numbers are expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 20% until 2025. People are getting used to the idea of self-service. When was the last time you called an airline to book a flight or called up a restaurant to see if they were open? Users have unlimited information at the tips of their fingers and transit agencies either need to get on board or be left at the station.

BENEFITS OF A MOBILE APP FOR TRANSIT

Users are a transit agency's #1 priority by a long shot.

Here's a quick look at some of the numerous benefits of adopting a mobile app for your transit agency.

Convenience

The convenience of ticketing via a mobile app cannot be matched. Your riders can purchase tickets whenever is convenient to them — anytime, anywhere. No lines at the farebox, no need to keep track of a payment card.

Increased Communication

With a mobile app, you can send your users key messages like safety announcements and schedule changes as well as special offers. It goes directly to their phones, right there near their hands at all times.

Self-Managed Account

Save payment information for quick checkout. Purchase tickets individually or as a package. The options are theirs!

Reporting

Gain real-time data on your route usage, passenger information, and use the data to make schedule adjustments and implement long-term plans that will make your agency more profitable.

Reduce Boarding Time

Using a mobile app to scan tickets is much faster than processing cash payments via onboard fareboxes. Speed up your routes and stay on schedule!

Scale Affordably

More mobile ticketing does not increase your overall costs in any way. No additional staff or pay machines are required, just enjoy the revenue growth!

Increased Customer Satisfaction = Revenue Growth

Happy users turn into loyal customers. If you provide them with a convenient solution, they'll return to ride and ride again, as long as your service is affordable and reliably gets them where they need to go.

Cost Savings

With a mobile app, your operational costs will go down while your revenue goes up. You'll have less physical fare collection to deal with, which means less staff required, fewer fareboxes, and other reduced associated costs. Processing and accounting cash fares can be a significant labor cost, moving to the mobile app helps eliminate much of the burden.

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Self-service portals and mobile applications' largest goals are to reduce or even eliminate call volume. Now the latter is probably not going to happen anytime soon as there will always be those people who love to chat and actually look forward to their scheduling phone calls or the few people that don't have internet access at the time, but these are few and far between.

Three of Ecolane's largest self-service adopters phone volume decreased by 50%. Not only did one of these clients see a decrease of 50%, but that decrease occurred with only 14% of their non-subscription rides being booked via a self-service application. An Ecolane client estimated that each call occurred at about \$8 per call to best calculate their cost savings.

To give an example of the cost-savings impact self-service could have using this client's cost per call estimations and an Ecolane sister company call center volume:



Even if you don't cut call volume by 50% like some of Ecolane's agencies, you can still see how quickly a strong return on investment appears.

Another way to make riders' lives better can also make caregiver lives better too. Many apps will now allow you to track where your ride is. This majorly benefits in a few ways:

- Users now can better plan around the arrival of their ride. This maximizes both the rider's time and the driver's time as they no longer need to wait around for 5 minutes after pulling up early.
- There will be fewer "where is my ride" calls.
- Caregivers can now see where their dependent is at. You can see they got to their doctor's appointment on-time from your office and know they will be home in 10 minutes. This can help caregivers breathe a little easier every ride.

With the ability to cancel easier, no-shows are also cut down. Fewer no-shows mean less wasted driver time and mileage. A bonus is fewer entry errors on the side of the agency's operations.

HOW TO GET STARTED

The obvious first step (outside of getting a self-service application) is marketing. No one will use an app or portal without knowing it first exists. Many agencies would put an advertisement on sides of buses and their website home page. This as an easy way just to make sure that the product availability is visible to the public. Riders don't need to ask the question if it is an option anymore. Now, they can see that it is an option and can start the adoption process on their own. Clients with Ecolane that had the most success were the ones that pushed adoption during ride booking calls. Users will call in to schedule their ride, and the operators simply say, "hey, you can now do this via our self-service/mobile application". Often, these calls then turn into an on-boarding call where the operator walks through the start-up process. Ecolane's two largest adopters both used this strategy, and the results show.

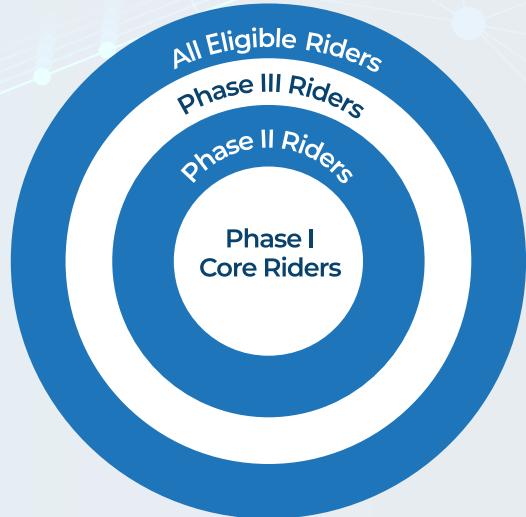
If you are in the unfortunate situation where your phonelines are backed up, you may experience a quicker shift as customers are tired of sitting on hold (no matter how good the elevator music is). The mere lack of resources can drive riders to seek other booking options. Some agencies have been experiencing long wait times on their phone lines and putting a simple plug for your mobile app on your phoneline waiting room tone can go a long way. Now your agency is answering questions without even answering the phone.

Each transit agency needs to determine its appropriate user adoption strategy.

As with any new initiative, it is best to have a rollout strategy. A successful strategy is to test the applications firsthand internally. Have employees use the apps first to get a better understanding of the product. Next, select a small group of regular users to test the app before going live. This gives agencies a chance to test out any bugs they are experiencing as well as a better understanding of the product from a rider's view and common questions users may face. Regular riders better understand their value to an agency and will be more patient while giving better feedback about the new tool. Once the kinks have been worked out, agencies can now go live to the full ridership pool.

The target strategy is also another successful rollout plan. Agencies will set phases where certain types of rides/riders can access the app then adding another group and so on and so forth. Agencies need to determine how they want to set which riders are eligible in each phase.

TARGET ADOPTION STRATEGY



Obviously, each agency faces its own obstacles when implementing changes. These adoption plans are just ideas and strategies that Ecolane clients have had success with. It is important that agencies discuss concerns with all stakeholders to get a better understand of what their specific hurdles are. Be sure to reach out to drivers, operators, and riders when developing your plan for best customization. Use your network and reach out to other agencies to pick their brains on what live issues they found the most difficult to deal with. Understanding the whole picture cannot be undervalued when beginning the strategy development phase.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

What You Should Remember



RIDERS ARE READY FOR THE TECHNOLOGY

Riders have the access and knowledge needed for self-services, and the demographics will only grow more favorable as the world continues to become more tech savvy.



COST SAVINGS AND RIDER EXPERIENCE ARE KING

Self-service offers a better ride booking experience at the user's convenience all while saving agencies money.



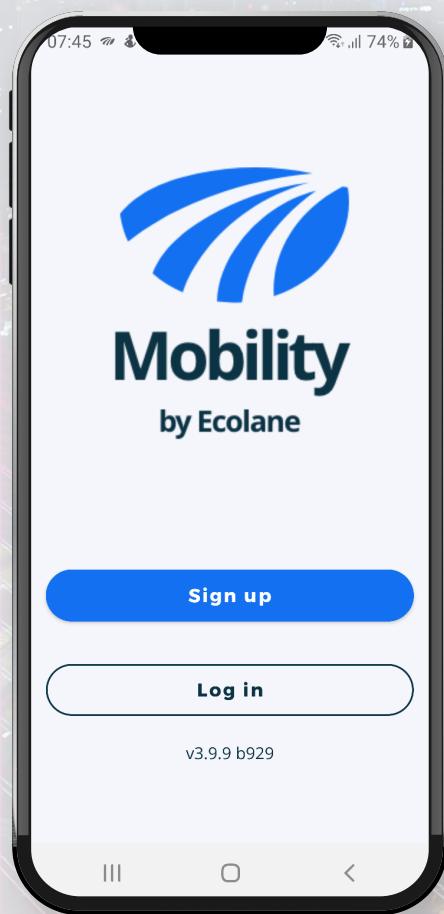
ADOPTING SELF-SERVICE REQUIRES A PLAN

The best strategy for your agency depends on your riders but having everyone on board with a plan will lead to a better rider adoption experience for both the agency and users.

SUMMARY

- 1. Realize the benefits of self-service.** The numbers are out there to back it up, and it will make the user experience and operations' lives easier.
- 2. Add the functionality.** Find a provider and add it to your arsenal.
- 3. Talk to your users.** Get feedback from your riders. Understand their struggles so you can better address issues when you go live.
- 4. Test it internally.** This is your chance to work out the bugs.
- 5. Develop your rollout strategy.** Develop a plan that works for your agency. Try a plan from above or make one specific to you but have a plan!
- 6. Market. Market. Market.** People won't use a tool they don't know exists.
- 7. Self-service success!**

Web portals and mobile phone applications aren't going anywhere anytime soon, and the positive impact they have on transit will continue to grow. Be that rider experience or agency savings, self-services prove to be valuable and are on an inevitable path of becoming a necessity as riders become more and more tech savvy. So, until the next "iPhone" comes along and makes mobile apps obsolete (something no one sees for quite some time), it's time for transit agencies to evolve and embrace the present and future of self-service applications.



MOBILE APP by Ecolane

**Industry-leading transit mobile
app providing unparalleled
self-service capabilities**



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