



TRANSPORTATION SECURITY SOLUTIONS

“Working with Commissionaires is more like having a partner for our business rather than a contractor supplying a service. They challenge us—in a good way—to rethink our practices and help us innovate to provide even better service.”

Kyla Daman-Willems

MARKETING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
SUPERVISOR, WEST COAST EXPRESS



WEST COAST EXPRESS OVERVIEW

- > Eight stations along 65 km of railway
- > Operates 10 trains, 5 to 10 cars per train
- > Average ridership of 11,000 per weekday
- > Runs consistently at 88% capacity
- > One of North America's highest On Time Performance ratings: above 94% for 15 years



www.westcoastexpress.com

WEST COAST EXPRESS

West Coast Express (WCE) is a commuter rail operation that serves the northeast sector of Metro Vancouver's transportation network and the City of Mission. The 65 km route links Mission, Port Haney, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam and Port Moody with downtown Vancouver. As the rail division of TransLink, Metro Vancouver's regional transportation authority, WCE has welcomed more than 28 million passengers since its inception in 1995.

CHALLENGES

WCE's mission is “to make passengers love the service they get.”

From the start this has meant ensuring passenger safety, comfort and satisfaction. Since WCE has only 15 people on staff, all others providing service are contract employees.

To ensure safety of passengers and protecting the personal security of employees, contractors and customers, WCE established a mobile patrol to monitor stations, platforms and parking lots to reduce or eliminate accidents and prevent vandalism and public disturbances. One security guard conducts random mobile patrols every shift, including the seven intermediate stations and their associated areas, such as parking stalls, bus bays, express drop stalls and bicycle lockers.

For the first decade of WCE's operation a single security contractor supplied personnel on a three-year contract basis. When this contract came to an end, Kyla Daman-Willems, Marketing and Customer service supervisor, WCE said, “We decided we needed to look for a provider that would bring more to the task, one that would reinvigorate the service.”

SOLUTION

In 2006 WCE awarded the contract to Commissionaires based on its response to an RFP that drew more than 20 submissions. The initial three-year was extended one year and Commissionaires' contract was renewed for a further three years in 2010.

WCE quickly found that Commissionaires—both management and employees—were very diligent and flexible, willing to adapt and look at new ways of doing things. Commissionaires employees also came to Mobile Patrol with more training, which included First Aid.

Commissionaires also suggested ways to improve the efficiency and safety of station checks through GPS tracking. They installed (and maintain) GPS tracking on designated WCE vehicles at no additional cost to WCE. The GPS tracking makes sure all station checks are completed as required and monitors the safety of mobile patrollers while ensuring efficiencies in mileage and patrol times. Commissionaires also recommended their Lone Worker Monitoring program. Mobile patrollers call in at regularly schedule times to assure their security on site.

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“We like it that Commissionaires takes care of their people,” said Daman-Willems. “When people are well led, they perform well. And when the mobile patrol team does its job well, WCE and our passengers benefit.”

WCE found that the mobile patrol team also stepped up to improve fare-checking, an area where the previous provider had been underperforming, according to Mobile Patrol Supervisor Alicia Fossum. Commissionaires’ strong performance providing mobile patrol service led WCE to include them in the RFP for station attendants when it came up for renewal in 2010.

From the start of service in 1995, WCE had also chosen to have station attendants at each of the eight stations to ensure customer satisfaction, from purchasing tickets and way-finding to resolving parking problems. For example, each attendant is empowered to adjust ticketing conflicts on the spot and issue coffee vouchers if a train is unexpectedly delayed. Attendants are on duty during peak times. Station attendants receive the Ambassador customer service training offered by Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) as well as other relevant training programs.

In another highly competitive RFP, Commissionaires won the contract. In the staffing process, they afforded the existing attendants the opportunity to apply for positions under the new contract; 70 percent of the attendants from the previous contractor are still on the job, according to Bob Chapman, Manager of Security Services for Commissionaires in BC’s Lower Mainland region. In addition to the standard training all attendants received, Commissionaires also put them through its own customer service training program, SERVICE ADVANTAGE.

Positive changes were quick to come following the deployment of Commissionaires-trained attendants. New employees have reinvigorated morale all around, according to Daman-Willems.

“The new blood has renewed the enthusiasm of the veterans,” she said. “They’re now getting the support they need to provide service that passengers love.”

WCE management now has closer contact with Commissionaires’ head office supervisors and more regular communication with them. Commissionaires’ office is a five-minute walk from WCE head office. As well, all attendants are in regular contact with supervisors through the Lone Worker Monitoring program.

RESULTS

WCE now has both mobile patrol service and station attendants who fully support its mission “to make passengers love the service they get.”

WCE now enjoys:

- > A rider satisfaction rating of 86 percent (November 2010), the highest among all TransLink transportation modes;
- > Closer communication with, and access to, Commissionaires’ management;
- > Fully engaged mobile patrollers and station attendants who have the full support of Commissionaires;
- > A reliable new resource that looks for ways to innovate to improve service.

“Commissionaires understands what we’re trying to accomplish and asks questions to help us achieve it,” says Daman-Willems. “They’re a resource we never had before.”