

## **SESSION: HOW TO INCREASE REVENUE FOR YOUR MUSEUM**

### **DENNIS BELL & JILL MOORHEAD - THE BENDIGO TRUST**

*Before I introduce the two presenters it is only fitting I give you a brief outline of the city and the organisation that both Dennis and Jill come from.*

*Bendigo is 145 km north of Melbourne and was formed after the great 1851 Victorian gold rushes. The City of Greater Bendigo currently has a population of 85,000 people.*

*In 1970 The Bendigo Trust was established with the sole function to preserve, restore and if necessary operate and administer some of Bendigo's historic features before they disappeared. Thus in 1970/71 the first project was to develop the Central Deborah Gold Mine, the last great gold mine to close in 1954.*

*The Central Deborah Gold Mine operates both as a working and tourist gold mine with visitors able to walk through the second and third levels.*

*Also 1970 The Bendigo Trust sought to keep a section of the original 1902/3 tram track, linking the Gold Mine, Depot and North Bendigo - through the heart of the city - The Tram Depot and facilities, and the complete fleet of 23 electric tram cars (which has now grown to 33 cars with other vehicles).*

*The Bendigo Trust also administers the Bendigo Gas Works - the last coal fired gas works to close after the introduction of LPG and the historic Victoria Hill Gold Site. Both are to be fully developed at a later stage.*

*The Bendigo Trust currently employs some 45 full and part time staff, many work as volunteers with others.*

*The Trust attracts some 100,00 visitors annually. The Bendigo Trust earns over some \$1.3m annually and is completely financially self-supporting.*

*Dennis Bell is the Tramways Superintendent and is responsible for the day to day operations of the Tramways.*

*Jill Moorhead is multi-skilled, working as a Tram Driver, Central Deborah Gold Miner guide, receptionist and .....sales.*

*John Phillips*

### **Income Alternatives - Part 1 - Dennis Bell**

Each Tram Museum knows the importance of sustaining an income. Perhaps the most popular and logical method is income derived from tram rides. I am sure that all of us capitalise on this form of revenue raising one way or another.

There are a number of other methods to source revenue for your museum. I will deal with one method that has been successful in Bendigo.

### **Advertising Sponsorship (Internal and External)**

Internal and external advertising on trams is a time proven method, dating back to the turn of the century and beyond. We have continued with this highly visible method of advertising on our trams. For practical reasons we have broken advertising sponsorship into three sections.

#### **Section 1:**

**Internal Advertising:** This takes the form of a Sponsorship Board (usually strong cardboard) approximately 800mm x 450mm. The board is placed on the internal advertising panel of the tram. Each tram is capable of having a number of these boards fitted. The businesses most applicable for this method are the small businesses that are near the tram track. This is also the least expensive method.

#### **Section 2:**

**External Advertising:** (Single Board) This is the sale of a single exterior advertising board, (approximately 3m x 600mm) to medium sized businesses. These signs are placed on the top side or top (roof line) of the tram, depending on the tram type. These are the medium cost sponsor boards.

#### **Section 3:**

**External Advertising:** (Complete Tram) This is the sale of the complete advertising space on a tram to the sponsor. This includes the 4 exterior boards (3m x 600mm) and all the interior boards (approx. 20).

These contracts usually appeal to the big national or multi-national companies that have a large promotional budget, e.g. Insurance Companies, Banks, Coca-Cola etc. The single tram sponsor is by far the best method from our point of view. This requires just a single contract and usually repetitive signage on the tram, making the whole operation much smoother and faster to implement. This of course is the most expensive method.

The income from our advertising sponsors have given us sufficient funds to pay the wages of almost two full time maintenance officers. This of course is a tremendous help in keeping our trams operating.

### **Income Alternatives - Part 2 - Jill Moorhead**

Another source of revenue is our Gift and Souvenir Shop.

Some people tend to think of souvenir sales as a service to our tourists - which it is, but it can also be a good extra profit maker for your museum. To do well out of your shop a little thought has to go into it.

Presentation is a key factor. Make sure your shop is in a prominent position. Some people have no intention of buying gifts or momentos but if it is front of them, nicely displayed, we can often change their minds.

Make sure most of your products are relevant to your area.

That doesn't mean you have to sell only trams or tram parts - but have your own logo on them. Most companies will charge a fee for your own design artwork, but this is usually a once-only cost and can be used on a number of products.

Some of the best selling products we find are magnets, postcards, videos, wine and beer glasses, T-shirts, caps, badges, coffee mugs, model trams, tea-towels, key-rings and stubbie holders to name a few. You may find that in different areas some products are more popular than others.

Good lighting is essential.

Heating and cooling is also important. If you are not climatically comfortable in a shop your sub-conscious tells you to get out of there.

Make sure every article is priced.

Most people don't like asking prices. Have your cash register close to your goods - not up the "other end". Near the door is usually a good position.

Plan your layout.

It is essential to leave room for bus loads of people to circulate and look without feeling rushed or pushed. Free standing gondola type stands are ideal to move around, and display goods to the best advantage. This is not always possible, but we can always look for and dream of ways for "the perfect shop". If you have a conducted tour of your museum, it is a good idea to finish your talk near the shop door - or alternatively plan time midway through it to allow people to spend time "browsing" and hopefully buying.

Another important factor is friendly, cheerful staff. Most people will not buy as much from a "sourpuss" or a "grump".

If "Aussie Host" is available in your area it is worth the money to send your staff. It is usually a full day course.

The Retail Traders Association is in most capital cities and are happy to send someone to your area to help with layouts etc.

Remember the best advertising is word of mouth - if someone has enjoyed visiting your area and purchased a momento they like to show it off and tell their friends all about your museum.

QUESTION: John Shaw (Perth Electric Tramway Society)

Do you handle the ads yourself ?

ANSWER: Yes - we also supply board but the sponsor supplies the signwriting.

QUESTION: Howard Clark (Sydney Tramway Museum)

How do you work your priorities out re exposure ?

ANSWER: The trams are rotated on a regular system plus they also get exposure in the depot.

QUESTION: Les Withington (Tasmanian Transport Museum)

Commented on problems at their museum as they are only open at the weekends.

ANSWER: Yes - it can be a problem, but try the multinational companies, also TV stations.

QUESTION: Michael Kerr (The Tramway Historical Society Inc)

Commented on ads on trailers behind steam tram and photos in local newspapers are good for sponsors as well. It is now hard to get money out of companies these days. Advance planning is necessary.

QUESTION: Frank Edwards (Perth Electric Tramway Museum)

Are you ads the original size ?

ANSWER: Internally they are the same. Externally they are the same size as the SEC used.

COMMENTS : were passed around the group re the ads on the W2 in Christchurch. The sign work that goes onto the top of your tram must be acceptable and not over the top.

QUESTION: Steve Lea (Christchurch Tramway)

Do you have a problem with shoplifting ?

ANSWER: Yes but you have to live with it.

QUESTION: Martin Smart (Perth Electric Tramway Society)

What sort of mark-up ?

ANSWER: 100%

QUESTION: Howard Clark (Sydney Tramway Museum)

Are books a good item to stock ?

ANSWER: Yes, but you need about half a dozen at least.