

Rhetorical Situation

Audience

The creators of the brochure assume that their audience has no prior knowledge. For example, the “Know Before You Go” section informs people who are unfamiliar with travel conventions of how to purchase tickets, how fares are priced, and which connections to take. Moreover, the brochure gives information about holidays and schedule changes. Even if a person had prior knowledge, schedules change rapidly. The date on the side of the brochure lets the audience know how current the schedule is.

Design Preferences

The conventional design helps readers navigate through the large amount of information inside the brochure. The most important information is toward the front of the document. Moreover, the charts, pictures, and text help individuals of all learning preferences process information. The colors have high figure-ground contrast: text is in blue, but red sets sections apart. The brochure accommodates color impaired viewers because it uses only two main hues with high contrast that is not overwhelming.

Purpose

This document informs, stimulates interest, and helps readers accomplish an issue or task. It includes price, route, time, safety, and basic information for each line. Moreover, there are maps and charts to help organize the content and both use easy to navigate chart keys. The brochure also includes “fine print” to group important, changing information about charts but does so in a way that emphasizes rather than hides the content. The brochure itself is also foldable so that users can take it with them as they travel. Not only does this brochure inform, but it also stimulates interest. It includes colors and icons, minimizes white space, and uses “blurbs” to draw the reader’s eye to important information within smaller sections. Finally, the brochure helps users accomplish a task. As they travel, they need to know information about their route. The brochure also includes travelers with bikes, commuters, and people just going to the airport.

Context

Because the brochure helps people who are on-the-go, it is very “scannable.” It includes red and blue headings with high contrast, large sections banded by colored rectangles, and large chunks of information.

Visual Language

Typefaces

The typeface for this document is a sans serif font with different sizes and colors. Text is in italics, bold, underlining, and even all caps--the designers maximized their font options by playing with size and treatment so that they could maintain consistency but build emphasis. They also make their sections easy to find by using large headings and bullets.

Cues

The color scheme for this document includes only red, blue, and white; however, using those three colors and some shades, the designers created strong visual cues. Red headings often signify new sections. Although white space does not separate each section, the headings create enough of a contrast that the document does not look crowded. Graphics and bolded text also divide larger sections into subsections. In the charts, horizontal lines differentiate times of day--darker lines signify the night routes while lighter one signify the morning. If there is important extra information, such as routes that run only on Friday, the chart shows a highlighted column. Finally, all policies are bounded by colored boxes to separate them. \

Extra level elements

Extra level elements also help organize the brochure. Some icons to separate larger chunks of text to delineate a new section. Maps also show routes; charts show the times to and from destinations. Finally, squares and rectangles clearly mark boundaries of the document. Finally, the data displays have alternating colors and shading so that there are separate parts but not unnecessary lines in the document as a whole. Colors do most of the dividing work.

Page size and orientation

This brochure folds several times so that it is compact; consequently, the columns neatly arrange the content. These horizontal, colored bars separate the columns, labels for data such as times and charts are in the middle of the page where users can find them quickly.

Rhetorical Impact

Arrangement

The information in this brochure is divided up into very square sections. The first page has information for before you travel (personal items, pets, buying tickets, basic safety), so it is the first thing the audience would see. The maps are all in one column straight down on what appears to be the back page when the document is folded. There is one page for "to" lines Monday-Friday, one for "from" Monday-Friday, and then "to / from" Saturday and Sunday is split on the last page because weekend schedules are different each day. Special conditions and holiday information is always directly below the corresponding chart so that it is in the same place every time. There is one spot that isn't snapped into the grid-like structure, and it is on the front page. It looks just like a sticker was placed on carelessly, which draws the eye to it but is also somewhat distracting.

Emphasis

The strongest form of emphasis this document uses is color. For example, on the Northeast Corridor transit map, the route is in red but everything else is shades of blue. on the schedules, the exceptions have a red column with white text. The important headings are also in red but other things are in blue. When there is a lot of blue, they often use icons to emphasize that there

are separate sections of important information. Red and blue are the only colors used throughout this document, but because they are divided up so well, it is not overwhelming or difficult to look at.

Clarity

This is a pretty extensive document, but all the information is very clear. The blue text has good figure ground contrast, and the two main colors and their corresponding complements work well to divide sections and sub-sections visibly. They also use white space well in the columns to divide sections and pages, but no space is wasted. Because the headings are a different color than the rest of the text, no extra space is needed between sections. On the charts, they often use shading to divide information into columns so that it doesn't overwhelm the viewer but guides them instead. Every element is very smooth, direct, and easy to follow.

Conciseness

There is limited text in the document. However, the large charts are chunked together. Related information falls in one or half-page spreads. The document is concise because although it contains many visuals, it uses a limited amount of text.

Tone

Overall, the tone of the brochure is friendly. Parts of the document engage the users, telling them how they can save time and money. The design also lends to a friendly tone. For example, the "fine print" sections are not in small text. Instead, these sections include information the designers want the reader to know up front. By drawing attention to the "fine print," the designers build their friendly, helpful tone. Moreover, the colors build energy; the design promotes usability; and the conversational headings help users accomplish their travel tasks.

Ethos

This document is very well put together and contains as much information as possible, so it seems like they are trying to save people time and money and hassle. Overall, the document comes across as helpful.

Visual conventions

Columns show where the document should be folded and they are consistent throughout the document. This element is standard for this kind of informational brochure, but it is very effective.

<http://www.njtransit.com/pdf/rail/R0070.pdf>