

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: November 2024
ITEM: New Business 2 – RAL Gift Certificates and Sales Promotion
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

Overview

Along with Greg Elems, Patty Clawson / Big Fish and Janet Steeper, I have been looking at new ideas for promoting and selling the RAL experience. This item proposes several points toward that end.

RAL Deposits Available Online

In setting up the memberships through the online store, I have become much more familiar with its capabilities. This includes the ability to have buyers select dates related to their purchase as well as adding text information.

With this capability, I propose we add RAL deposits and RAL Gift Certificates as purchase items within the online store. For a deposit, the buyer can list their top three preferred dates between the RAL season open of May 24, 2025 and the close of October 4, 2025. Then, the store staff can check the RAL reservation book and confirm the date with the purchaser at a time that works for the staff.

This eliminates the need for the buyer to call the store and the need of the store personnel to either drop what they are doing and take the reservation or call back on a message, assuming the caller leaves a message. Having a more flexible buy option and giving the store more flexibility in responding should make the process easier all around.

I have also done a concept revision to the Gift Certificates. As we have changed the format of the program, the old certificates no longer work well. In order to save money, I have designed a letter that would be pre-preprinted (likely using the high resolution printers at my office or through our regular printer) then have information final printed upon sale by the store staff using a template. This is exactly how we do the current RAL operation certificates so this is a known process. An example using the current certificate (graphic will be changed) is part of this report.

This would save money and eliminate having quantities of Gift Certificates around. In addition, we could list them on the store as well with text boxes for the buyer and gift receiver's names. This again would free up store time and should make for a smoother work flow.

I also propose that we offer variable prices for the Gift Certificates. A buyer could purchase a complete RAL, or purchase \$100, \$200, \$300 etc. toward a complete RAL, with the balance to be paid when the RAL is performed.

RAL Marketing Campaign

Finally, we propose a social media marketing campaign be performed to promote the RAL and drive buyers to the online store or to call the museum (we would leave that option open). Patty Clawson has put together an outline of a paid campaign that is attached to this report. We would also post to our related Facebook groups.

We would like to start this campaign right away. If approved, I could get the online store pages live by Monday evening 11/11 and we could start the campaign by Wednesday 11/13. This could bring us income during the winter shutdown and prime us for a stronger RAL season in 2025.

Requested Action: Discuss and approve recommendations, including new Gift Certificate design, online store sales and marketing campaign. Choose which level of campaign.

Big Fish Creations has prepared a suggested media buy for the promotion of the Run-A-Locomotive program at Western Pacific Railroad Museum. The RAL campaign will consist of digital media in combination with other media throughout a specified duration of time.

Digital Media Buy Goals:

- Make the RAL program marketing efforts deliberate with specific campaigns, audiences, and metrics.
- Modernize the RAL program marketing efforts
 - For example, push the message out rather than wait for people looking for or stumbling upon RAL experiences
 - Social media (campaigns, videos, ads etc.)
- Use cost effective methods

Digital Media Buy Objectives:

Create an awareness campaign for the RAL program at WPRM. The objective for an awareness campaign is to drive holiday sales and position the RAL experience as the ultimate Christmas, Black Friday and special gift for anyone seeking a hands-on experience.

It's a niche market. It's a broad market. And most importantly, deposits or payments made in full via gift certificate will provide a revenue stream during the non-operational time of the museum. The ROI for the RAL program is higher than other products such as museum admission or basic membership.

Because the RAL campaign will focus on general awareness, it will also generate upsell opportunities for gaining memberships, volunteers and possible increases in merchandise.

Possible Creative Direction:

Concept: Christmas Experience Gifts

Creative: Compelling video of the RAL experience

Headline/Copy Concepts:

Wrap up the wonder of an RAL experience this year

More horsepower than all the reindeer on Santa's sleigh

A gift so big, you've got to climb aboard to open it.
When Making Santa's Nice List Pays Off.

Why a Facebook digital media buy?

As of 2024, Facebook has over 3 billion monthly active users, making it the most popular social media platform in the world:

Monthly active users – 3.07 billion

Users in the United States – 250.2 million

Gender – 53.3% Male and 43.7% Female

Statistics by Age

- 2.9% of people between the ages of 13-17 use Facebook.
- 18.1% of people between the ages of 18-24 use Facebook.
- 25.7% of people between the ages of 25-34 use Facebook.
- 18.1% of people between the ages of 35-44 use Facebook.
- 13.6% of people between the ages of 45-54 use Facebook.
- 11% of people between the ages of 55-64 use Facebook.
- 10.6% of people that are 65+ years old use Facebook.

According to most data, the social media platform most used by people aged 35 to 65 is Facebook. This is because Facebook has a large user base across a wide range of ages, with particularly high usage among the 30-50 age group.

1. Your Audience is on Facebook

As of September 2024, Facebook has 3.065 billion monthly active users (MAUs) and 2.11 billion daily active users (DAUs). This makes Facebook the world's most popular social media platform. Facebook is providing businesses with the largest advertising opportunity.

2. Facebook Ads Are Cheap

Facebook ads tend to cost a fraction of what other online marketing channels cost.

3. Targeting Capabilities of Facebook Are Exceptional

You can literally target anyone. Whether it be by behaviors, interests, demographics, connections, age ranges, languages, or locations, you can dig deep with these targeting capabilities and layer them upon each other.

Strategy of Campaign:

RAL General Awareness Campaign

The target audience of this campaign will consist of men & women, ages 18 to 65+, living in the United States with specific geographic regions for the state of California and Nevada. This is a target audience who visit the area for day trips, extended getaways, events, weddings and outdoor opportunities. The audience details include people who match: Interests, Outdoor recreation, Museum or Tourism.

Budget Options for Review:

1. \$15 per day for a 45-day duration

Target start date: November 22, 2024 through January 5, 2025. This 45-day run with a budget of \$15.00 per day - estimate total \$675.00 with estimated daily results of 2.K to 6K reached.

Estimated daily results

Accounts Center accounts reached ⓘ

2.1K - 6K

Payment summary

Your ad will run for 45 days.

Total budget	\$675.00 USD
\$15.00 a day x 45 days.	

Total amount	\$675.00 USD
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We use data about you and your ad account to provide you with ads billing and spending options.

[Learn more](#)

2. \$20 per for a 45-day duration

Target start date: November 22, 2024 through January 5, 2025. This 45-day run with a budget of \$20.00 per day – estimate total \$900.00 with estimated daily results of 2.6K to 7.4K reached.

Estimated daily results

Accounts Center accounts reached ⓘ 2.6K - 7.4K

Payment summary

Your ad will run for 45 days.

Total budget \$900.00 USD
\$20.00 a day x 45 days.

Total amount \$900.00 USD

We use data about you and your ad account to provide you with ads billing and spending options.
[Learn more](#)

The Marketing Mix - Intergraded Marketing Efforts that Boost Awareness

Once the Facebook ads have concluded, keep awareness going and drive sales for the RAL program by employing a variation of marketing strategies that include influencers, email campaigns, You Tube ads and consistent social media posts on the WPRM Facebook page and existing communications.

Create a marketing matrix that schedules media to flow within targeted duration of time. This scenario might contain:

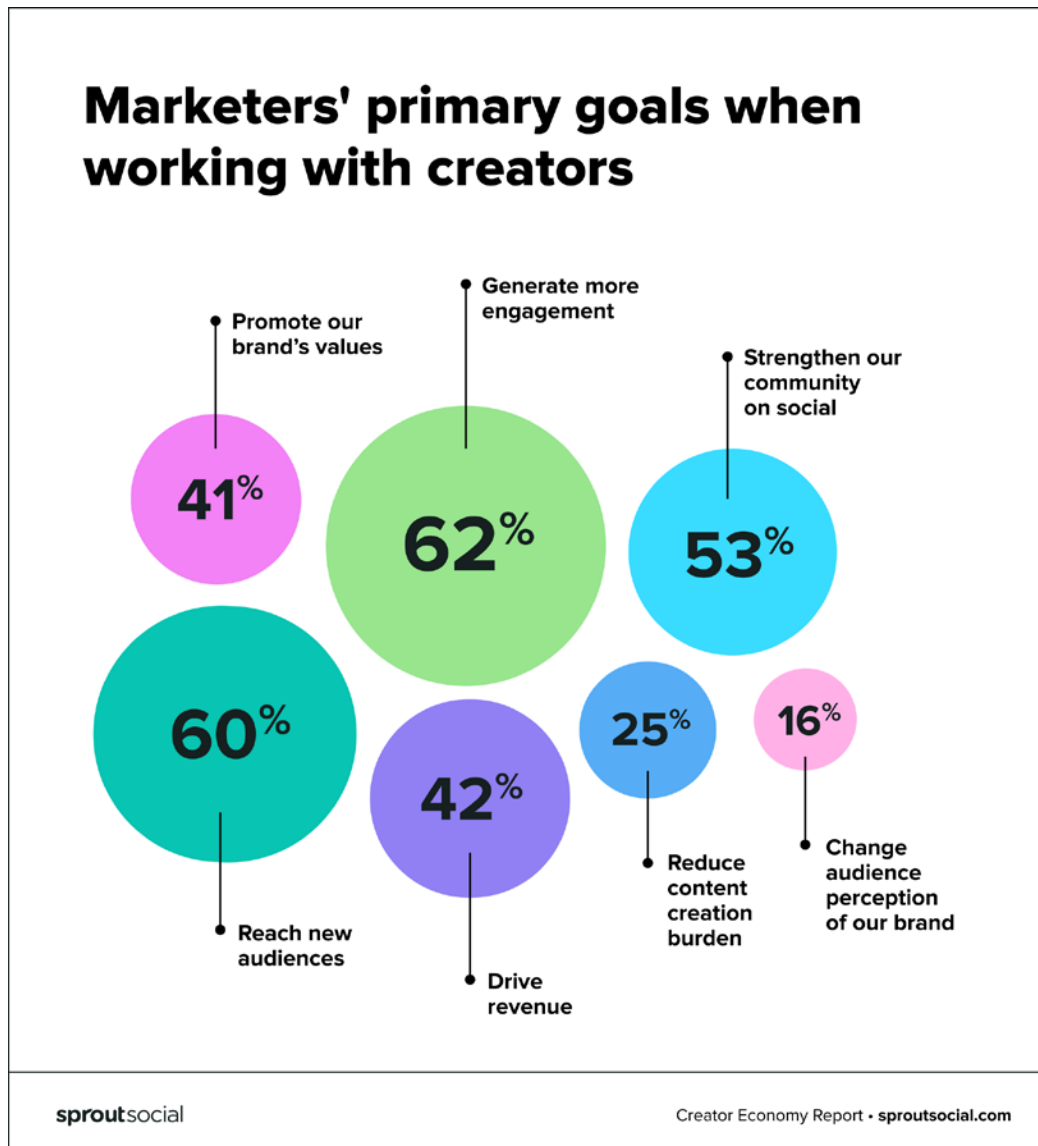
Facebook ads - Nov 22 - Jan 6

Email Campaign Nov 29 – Black Friday
Email Campaign – Christmas/New Year
Social Media posts – images of RAL
Newsletter RAL campaign – upon timeline of publication
YouTube ads – Jan/Feb
Influencers – April/May
Newsletter RAL – On timeline of publication

What's in the Mix?

1. Influencer Marketing:

Working with influencers is one of the best inbound marketing strategies being used today. Generating more engagement, reaching new audiences and strengthening community are the top three marketing goals for working with creators.



2. Email Mail Marketing Campaign:

Target the FRRS membership list, Big Boy Attendee List, Others?

3. YouTube Ads:

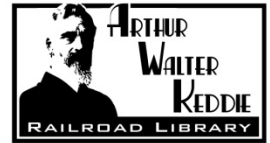
Review the YouTube platform for ads and traction for influencer reach.

4. FRRS/WPRM publication/affiliates/communications

Utilize all forms of FRRS/WPRM communications to leverage messaging.

Conclusion - Why this media buy works:

Digital media is the best bang for our media buck. It reaches more people, targets the audience and provides valuable analytics for evaluation of the money spent. And with a plan for subsequent marketing efforts, the ongoing RAL Campaign can reach the intended target audience with many points of entry.



FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

700 Western Pacific Way · P O Box 608 · Portola, CA 96122 · museum 530.832.4131 · www.WPLives.org

Thank you NAME!

Here is your Run-A-Locomotive Gift Certificate from the Western Pacific Railroad Museum.

When you want to redeem your gift certificate, please contact the WPRM at 530.832.4131 and schedule your time. Please confirm the locomotive(s) you want to operate, the number of your Gift Certificate and the value of your certificate. If your certificate is for less value than the cost of the RAL session you book, the balance will be paid when you do your RAL. The 2025 RAL season runs from May 24 to October 4.

If you need to check the locomotive selection or want more information about the program, our historic locomotives or details about an RAL session, please visit our website at RunALocomotive.com.

If you have any questions or there is any issue with your Gift Certificate, please contact the WPRM Museum Store at 530.832.4131 or by email at store@WPLives.org.

Thank you for supporting the Western Pacific Railroad Museum and our mission to preserve the Western Pacific Railroad. Also, inquire about becoming a member of the Feather River Rail Society!

- *The Volunteers and Members of the FRRS and the WPRM*

G I F T C E R T I F I C A T E



Enjoy the ultimate Hands On experience and run a real railroad locomotive

This special gift is for _____ from _____

AMOUNT: _____ LOCOMOTIVE: _____ PURCHASE DATE: _____ AGENT: _____

No.

Reserve your Run A Locomotive Experience by calling 530.832.4532. For rules, limitations and operation times, visit www.RunALocomotive.com.



The Western Pacific and the Feather River Rail Society

The Western Pacific Railroad was not the largest of the western class one railroads. It wasn't formed until 1906, with completion in 1909. However, operating in the shadow of giants like the Southern Pacific, Santa Fe and the Union Pacific, the relatively young WP had to work that much harder to survive. Thanks to the tenacious spirit and dedication of its employees, the WP rolled on in the face of occasional adversity with a spirit, humor, and culture that made them a legendary figure in the annals of railroading. In the 1960s, the Western Pacific Marketing Department in San Francisco embarked on an advertising campaign, nicknaming their employees spirit the "Willing People". Today, the volunteers of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum personify this spirit and dedication at our World Class museum. It is this tenacity that carries on the proud tradition of the WP railroaders before them.

The volunteers of the non-profit Feather River Rail Society come to us from all walks of life. Police officers, medics, businessmen, technology professionals, educators, musicians, truck drivers, pilots, professional railroaders, retirees, the list goes on and on. They all come together in their free time to carry on the proud traditions of the employees of the Western Pacific Railroad on 37 acres in Northern California on the site of the former WP Portola Diesel facility, putting an exclamation point on the credo "WP Lives!"

RUN A LOCOMOTIVE at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum

Our World Famous "Run-A-Locomotive" program allows you to rent a vintage diesel locomotive and operate it on the museum grounds, under the close supervision of your own private instructor. No experience required. Income from the program funds the restoration of our historic equipment.

Please visit RunALocomotive.com to check locomotive availability and current pricing. RAL operations can be affected by weather and mechanical considerations. Advanced reservations are strongly recommended.

Please note that while advanced reservations are recommended, walk-ins will be taken on a time available, first come / first served basis, weather, personnel, and locomotive availability permitting. We reserve the right to change locomotives in the program with one of equal or greater rental value at any time in the event a locomotive becomes unavailable due to mechanical ailment or for any other reason. Every effort will be made to accommodate specific locomotive requests.

Call 530-832-4532 and leave a message to reserve your RAL experience. For more information and operation rules, please visit www.RunALocomotive.com.



Note that the RAL program does not operate during winter months. Western Pacific Railroad Museum, 700 Western Pacific Way, Portola, California, 96122.