

Q&A TUMI webinar

Title: Combating COVID-19. The Shenzhen Bus Group's experience.

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Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO36FxYUZEY>

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1. *We have read news that all public transportation in China had shutdown can you clarify the issue?*

During the pandemic some cities did shut down their public transportation but the decision is made by individual city's transportation authority instead of a general order from the central government. However, even though public service were shut down in some cities, public transportation operators were still maintaining skeleton services for medical and other essential personnel as an effort to ensure quality living standards for citizens.

2. *For a city that has not yet experienced COVID 19, what would you do now?*

As COVID 19 has now become a pandemic, it is important that transport authorities and operators ramp up their regular sanitisation, placing particular emphasis to surface areas that come into regular contact with passengers. An emergency procurement strategy needs to be put formulated to ensure that a supply line for protective clothing and sanitising materials can ensure these supplies can be obtained under short notices. Self-isolation strategy also need to be formulated to avoid the spread of the virus with their operation and that operations services can be maintained even with staff being put on isolation.

3. *How do you manage the 50% capacity? How did you do it?*

We have constant video monitoring of all vehicles and our drivers would advise passengers to take the next bus. With our Intelligent Control Center, we are able to dispatch reserve vehicles to supplement services and routes which become overloaded.

4. *Did you increase Express type of service? Did you reduce bus stopping at every stop?*

For our daily service, excluding Spring Festival period, the services are maintained normally, with larger gaps between dispatches.

5. *How many people who used the buses were confirmed to have the virus?*

We recorded zero case of people using our buses with confirmed case of the virus.

6. *How much has Shenzhen been affected by COVID-19? (eg. number of infected % - people died because of the virus)*

In Shenzhen, there is a total of 439 confirmed cases, of which, 411 are cleared and discharged. Since the outbreak, there are 3 cases of death.

7. *May I ask the is plastic used for isolation of drivers enough to stop the virus spreading?*

Due to the nature of how the virus being spread via droplets of bodily fluid and close contact with the virus's host. Installing a plastic screen between our drivers and passengers have proven to be useful. However, for improved guarantee of safety, our drivers are required to wear masks and passengers strongly advised wear on also as it is the most efficient method to minimise infection.

8. *If there are too many people on the bus, how to guarantee people can keep the social distancing?*

We keep the occupancy under 50%, which can ensure a safe distance between passengers. We also recorded a Public Service Announcement that we replay on the bus to urge passengers the need to keep a social distance

9. *In Morocco we reduced the number of passengers by half in coaches for inter urban transportation. what do you think about this measure?*

It's effective as long as passengers can keep the social distancing. It is still highly recommended to disinfect the vehicle after each service to further ensure the safety.

10. *I wanted to know more about the app? What app do they use? Their own one or wechat or any state kind of app?*

In terms of keeping track of the travel history of passengers, the city, along with the mobile service provider, launched a WeChat based APP for all citizens to fill out their travel history, which is crossed check with the location of their phone (data provided by mobile service provider). People fill out the information voluntarily because they want to be notified ASAP if anyone they shared vehicles with were confirmed with virus.

11. *Does the app interact with the other 3 companies which offer transport services in the city?*

The App is citywide and interacts with most other public services that the city provides and include shopping malls, office buildings, residential areas and etc.

12. *I am impressed by the elaborate procedures that your Company has put in place to control spread of Corona Virus. What advice would you give to other public transport and taxi operators around the world?*

Following strict sanitising/disinfection and social distancing standards are most useful. As a public transportation operator, we should also provide standby emergency services to serve the city.

13. *For Taxis, Jo mentioned that there may be subsidies (via a lower rental and some injection from operations). With lower load factors in the buses, what is needed to ensure financial recovery after this period?*

For the interim period, Shenzhen Bus has applied for additional credits from banks to ensure that there is sufficient cashflow to maintain the operation. At the same time, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has promised to provide subsidies and funding to public transport operators to help them get through this difficult period.

14. *With regard to contact tracing, any incident that involved contacting passengers?*

Thanks to the efforts by cooperative citizens and our passengers, there has been 0 case confirmed on the public transportation system. However, it is important that we keep on tracking passengers and maintain strict sanitising/disinfection and social distancing standards to avoid the possibility of infection.

15. *Does the QR code information differentiate between the passenger trip, bus number, and time? I am asking because of the dynamics of the COVID virus (how long it stays on surfaces)-- for bus cleaning at each cycle, and for taxis cleaning 3 times daily.*

The data collected is differentiated between passenger trips, bus routes, car plates and time. These data is collected and sent to the city for analysis and storage, so that if a case was confirmed, passengers or other citizens who have come in close contact with the confirmed case can be notified and receive necessary medical examination and/or isolation.

16. *Do you disinfect bus stops?*

SZBG's authority doesn't reach to the stops. We will perform disinfecting procedures on our vehicles and our depots. In terms of the bus stops, they are being disinfected regularly by the city department.

17. *How long did it take to implement all the measures you talked about?*

All the measures were implemented within one week from instruction by the Shenzhen Municipal Government.

18. *What were the lower hanging fruit in your success? The easy pickings of the reaction*

In our experience, that measures that can be taken swiftly are establishing high and strict sanitising/disinfection and social distancing standards. We also required all employees who had been out of the city during the outbreak to self-quarantine for 14 days before they return to their posts in order to mitigate the risk of transmission. As for measures that requires involvement of other parties, it is important for Government or relevant authorities to draw up coordinated plans as soon as necessary.

19. *Can you tell us a bit more about the UV treatment systems for your buses? Thanks!*

As for COVID-19, it is easily killed by heat (minimal of 56°C and over 30 minutes), dehydration (to apply medical alcohol, 75% concentration), oxidation (apply chlorine based disinfectant or H₂O₂) and exposure to UV. We've used medical alcohol and H₂O₂ mostly because it is the most time efficient and easy-to-use method for public transportation. For UV treatment, it takes a longer time for disinfection and with the need for short stop-overs of between 3-10 minutes for most of our services, it may not be that effective. However, we are examining the UV method plus other methods of disinfection for our vehicles at our depots.

20. *Was the operation of buses maintained to enable accessibility or reduced and used for emergency use only?*

Our bus services are kept normal with larger time gaps between dispatches. We have also reserved a number of buses for alleviating passengers' load when the capacity of a particular route is reaching 50% and for other emergencies as well.

21. *What was the use of other modes (i.e. subways) and the integration between different modes of public transport (taxi-bus-subway)?*

The usage of public transportation in Shenzhen has experienced a significant reduction and passengers are avoiding the use of public transportation for long distant travelling particularly if a change in mode is involved.

22. *Is public transport (except for taxis) entirely in public governance?*

The majority of public transportation operations are owned by the Shenzhen Municipal Government and all operations have to be approved by the city's Transportation Bureau.

23. *Maybe I didn't hear it clearly on how your company managed "no more than 50% passenger loads"?*

We are actively monitoring the bus service so that the passenger load is below 50% to ensure proper social distancing inside of the bus.

24. *Is this correct that you turn off the ventilation in the bus?*

All artificial ventilations are turned off in our buses and vehicles are required to have their windows open for natural ventilation.

25. *Is there any 'Social Distance' applied to your passengers? If yes How do you do it?*

Social distancing is applied to all our vehicles and PA systems are used to remind passengers about social distancing. It is also important that passengers apply social distancing as a common practice without notice.

26. *How do you communicate with your passenger particularly during lockdown?*

Shenzhen Bus issues news and notices of services through the company website and social media platforms

27. *Is there any sanction for those who do not follow the lockdown policy?*

During the peak of the epidemic, strict enforcement on rules and practices is applied and anyone fail to comply with these may be subject to legal consequences.

28. *I wonder what is the Shenzhen public transport passenger flow after COVID-19 outbreak?*

Passenger load is still somewhere between 50 to 60% of normal and it is envisaged that this will gradually return to normal with time.

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