

The hiring process is more intense because employers the world over are more demanding. Companies have always needed people with specific technical skills, but now employers want something more. (AP photo)

Top Employers are Pickier than Ever

Want to see more than high marks and right degree

(AP) -- They can get good grades, earn a diploma and breeze through that campus rite of spring, the job interview. But college graduates still might not land a

decent job.

The world's top employers are pickier than ever. And they want to see more than high marks and the right degree.

They want graduates with so-called soft skills -- those who can work well in teams, write and speak with clarity, adapt quickly to changes in technology and business conditions, and interact with

colleagues from different countries and cultures.

"Soft skills tend to differentiate good college graduates from exceptional college graduates," says Joseph Krok, university research liaison at Britain's Rolls-Royce.

To find out what employers are seeking from university graduates around the world, The Associ-

ated Press talked to dozens of corporate recruiters, university career counselors, economists and students. What's clear is that companies increasingly want skills that don't show up in a college transcript or a sit-down interview.

"What the employers want is a well-rounded student," says Jean Manning-Clark, director of the

Colorado School of Mines' career center. "The ones that get 10 to 12 job offers are the ones who have strong soft skills."

And companies are going to ever-greater lengths to identify the students who have the right mix of skills by observing them in role-playing exercises to see how

continued ▼ on page 8

TriMet Fares: Questionable Decisions & Explanations

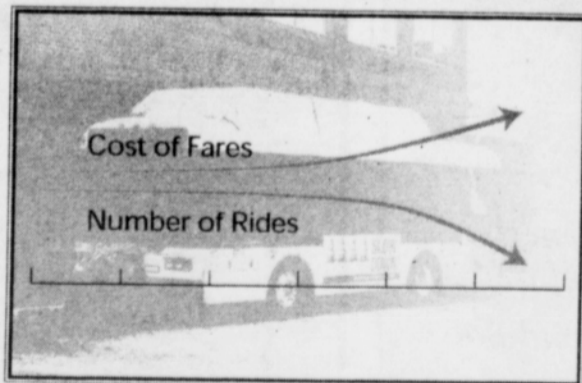
TriMet eliminated the popular Fareless Square and multi-zone pricing. It also increased and changed fares to a single flat rate. That rate is higher than fares in all major west coast cities. For example, Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego fares are less—especially for the disabled and elderly.

TriMet claims it wants to improve its service to the community. Transit experts agree that an increase in passengers is the best measure of improved transit service. What did these fare changes yield? A loss of nearly four hundred thousand passenger rides in the last year.

TriMet management justified these unpopular changes by pointing the finger at us—the people who keep the system running—your operators, dispatchers, mechanics and customer service folks. They blame the cuts on the cost of our medical insurance. As we've already stated, we expect to pay more for health insurance in the coming years. Even today, we are paying more for health insurance than TriMet management.

We decided to investigate the reasons for TriMet's negative fare changes. What we found is disturbing and indicates dishonesty.

What is disturbing is that, in 2011, TriMet managers claimed the agency had dire financial problems. At the same time, they also secretly decided to purchase a new "smart card" fare system that will be more expensive to operate. In good



Relationship of Fare Increases and Transit System Usage

financial times, that new system might be a sensible decision. Just like buying a bigger house or newer car is a sensible decision when the family budget has a comfortable surplus. But, is it sensible for a financially-strapped agency to take on a \$20+ million debt for a new technology?

What is dishonest is that the publicly stated reason for the fare increase differs from reality. A 2011 agency internal report stated that, in order to purchase and use the new fare system, TriMet would have to eliminate Fareless Square, multi-zone pricing and raise fares.

The timing is also suspicious. General Manager McFarlane announced that, because of worker benefits, the agency will need to cut service by 11% starting in 2017. Not so coincidentally, that same 2011 internal report states that paying off the new system will cost at least \$2 million per year for 12 years, starting in...2017.

Bottom line, it appears that the drastic fare changes, fare increases, threats of future service cuts and reduced worker benefits are going to pay for TriMet's latest technology purchase. It's time the agency stopped deliberately misleading the public by chalking everything up to the cost of workers benefits.

The TriMet report, TriMet passenger data and McFarlane's statements are available at www.transitvoice.org.

Sincerely, Your Transit Workers

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK

LET YOUR VOICE COUNT!

LEARN MORE AT TRANSITVOICE.ORG