



the state of airline marketing

How airlines are engaging today's consumers with innovative marketing initiatives

SimpliFlying | airlinetrends.com
2014

welcome.

Airline marketing is undergoing a phase that's exceedingly exciting, unpredictable and creative. Faced with ever more experienced consumers, who routinely ignore the commercials and ads thrown at them, airline brands are finding new ways to break through the advertising clutter to reach and engage consumers.

Besides dreaming up experiential marketing and creative – traditional media-based – initiatives, airlines around the world are equipping themselves with the tools and know-how to conquer the digital marketing revolution, experimenting with new social media platforms and launching mobile campaigns that link the online with the offline world.

New principles, new opportunities

There are a number of factors that have contributed to this renaissance. First, this is the age of 'inclusive advertising'. Quite simply, it is no longer reasonable to

expect travelers inundated with one-way marketing messages to respond "because people need to fly."

Second, effective airline marketing today employs a hybrid model. The pervasiveness of Internet and social media users almost necessitates the adoption of marketing tactics that involve both the online and offline spaces. Even when the real initiative happens offline, airlines, more often than not, depend on their online audience to spread the buzz.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, airline marketers now have access to powerful tools to run efficient campaigns that could not have been dreamt of even 5 years ago: think crowd-sourcing, location-based campaigns and the like.

Marketing to the Connected Traveler

Today's travelers are no longer contented with just accepting whatever good or ill

the airline dishes out to them. They are extremely tuned in to the power of social media, as citizens of a virtually connected world. An airline brand can no longer be "controlled" by the management and corporate speak.

The bottom-line: Airline brands are moulded as much by management direction as by the goodwill of social advocates. If you're not where your customers are, if you're not connected to them and tuned in to their behavior, you're going to lose a lot of business. The bad news is you cannot control the flow of opinion about your brand online. The good news: customers are happy (and in fact they want) to engage with you and spread a good word about you. Be transparent, responsive, and helpful online. That'll go a long way!

Airline Marketing Benchmark Report

In such a fast-moving environment, it is important not just to be creative and innovative yourself but to be more striking

than your immediate competition as well. However, given the speed at which things move in digital media, it is no easy task to stay on top of the latest trends, fads and innovations.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, SimpliFlying and airlinetrends.com have published the premium **Airline Marketing Benchmark** Report. Published monthly, the report contains a selection of 15 of the most innovative marketing and advertising campaigns launched by airlines around the world and assesses their impact.

Across the more than **350 innovative marketing initiatives** that have been featured to date in the reports, we have identified 7 trends that range from experiential events and visual culture to people power and out-of-home initiatives, reflecting the current state of airline marketing. This is the time to be creative and to dream big!

contents

micro events

A growing number of airlines are organizing surprise onboard events — ranging from mid-air fashion shows to inflight bingo and product giveaways — in order to turn an otherwise unremarkable flight into something passengers will talk about on social media, generating some earned publicity for the airline.

cool tech

As technology is evolving at a rapid pace and many airlines have difficulty thinking outside the box in order to develop innovative new services, forward-looking carriers are recognizing they had better team up with the creative and technology classes to co-create new applications.

visual culture

Tapping into today's visual culture, the selfie craze has hit airlines, while airline videos on YouTube — from safety videos to commercials featuring football stars to tear-jerking spots — have gone on to become immensely popular.

people power

Moving beyond crowdsourcing initiatives, and inspired by the numerous group deal sites such as Groupon and Gilt, several airlines have been testing 'crowd clout' concepts for commercial purposes.

emerging markets

Airlines that wish to make inroads into emerging markets such as the BRICs and the Next 11 would do well to launch initiatives tailored to resonate with local culture and social media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat and VK.

the innovation is the marketing

With the aim of contributing to the airline's brand, some airline service innovations are clearly designed for marketing purposes. The objective is to have bloggers and mass media talk about them, even if the actual adoption rate by passengers is 1 per cent in the end.

outdoor creativity

Like all other mediums, due to technological advancements and social changes, outdoor advertising has had to change and evolve. As marketers battle for the attention of an increasingly distracted audience we are seeing them turn to some rather unconventional forms of outdoor advertising.

micro events

Mimicking experiential marketing campaigns on the ground, such as Virgin Atlantic's **'No Ordinary Park Bench'** and Delta's **'brand spaces'** popping up at downtown locations, airlines are aiming to bring back a bit of the buzz and anticipation formerly associated with air travel with onboard 'micro events'.

A growing number of airlines are organizing surprise onboard events —ranging from flash mobs to inflight performances and product giveaways — in order to turn an otherwise unremarkable flight into something that passengers will share on social media and with their friends, family and colleagues, generating some earned publicity for the airline.

Following initiatives of front-runners such as Virgin America, JetBlue and Southwest Airlines — and moving beyond the obligatory Santa appearance onboard Christmas eve flights—airlines are coming up with inventive inflight 'micro events.' Examples include live music performances (Southwest, JetBlue), stand-up comedians (KLM, Virgin Atlantic), mid-air fashion shows (Virgin America, BA), DJ sets (KLM, Vueling), onboard magicians (Asiana, airBaltic), inflight bingo (Virgin America) and sponsored free meals (JetBlue, kulula.com).

The best sign of a well-executed micro event is the number of passengers pulling out their smartphones. A successful micro event will have passengers documenting



the event with their personal devices and sharing it online in their social networks (increasingly in real-time, thanks to the growing penetration of inflight WiFi), and the message will spread from there.



“Not all passengers will appreciate the buzz of an onboard event, but when executed in a way that matches the airline brand, the occasional inflight surprise usually goes down well with passengers.”

micro events inflight golf

▣ AIR NEW ZEALAND

To celebrate Air New Zealand's sponsorship of the NZ PGA Pro-Am Championship Tournament, the airline came up with an innovative inflight activity for passengers aboard select flights between Auckland and Queenstown.

ANZ had re-carpeted the aisles of one of its A320s into a putting green to offer passengers a "different type of inflight entertainment," as the airline put it.

Passengers who wanted to test their **putting skills** ▣ at 30,000 feet could fill out an entry form in the departure gate lounge and drop it in an entry box located at the gate.



If ANZ's cabin crew drew a passenger's name from the box, he or she was invited to participate onboard. A video of the event is posted [here](#) ▣.

"At Air New Zealand we're crazy about rugby on the outside of our planes and we're crazy about golf on the inside," James Gibson, ANZ's Head of Sponsorship, stated. "This world-first for entertainment onboard is sure to show off some skills and provide a few thrills for passengers."

A scoreboard was kept on Air New Zealand's blog, and the overall winner — who managed to make a hole-in-one at six feet — received a VIP trip for two, including flights, accommodation and Callaway golf equipment, to watch the final day of the golf tournament.

flying fashion

▣ BRITISH AIRWAYS

In early 2014, British Airways (BA) collaborated with British department store Harrods to host a **fashion show** ▣ onboard its new A380 aircraft. With the event BA aimed to promote its new A380 route between London and Johannesburg and emphasize its British heritage.

An audience of 200 VIP guests was invited to experience BA's new A380 and were served a champagne high tea prepared by Harrods' in-house restaurant The Saxon and South African chef David Higgs as they watched models walk the aisle of the plane wearing the best of British fashion, featuring designs from the likes of Stella McCartney and Victoria Beckham. The footwear on show was by Jimmy Choo.

The flight also included a live performance



by Afro-fusion band Freshlyground. Video of the event is posted [here](#) ▣.

By hosting this fashion show in an unconventional setting, both BA and Harrods benefited from word-of-mouth and social media buzz and earned media exposure in publications such as Harper's Bazaar and Vogue.

And as one industry analyst put it: "It was a brilliant idea to combine these two British icons into a single event. Harrods has been able to generate significant buzz, evidenced by the fact we are talking about it."

cool tech

The combination of rapid developments in consumer electronics, the acceleration of WiFi installations onboard aircraft and the large number of passengers carrying one or more digital devices has created a huge momentum that sees many of today's airline product and service innovations focusing on digital developments.

The sheer endless possibilities that today's technology offers provides airlines the opportunity to come up with innovative products and services that have the potential to set them apart from the competition.

However, as technology is evolving at a rapid pace and many airlines have difficulty thinking outside the box, forward-looking carriers are recognizing they had

better **team up** with the technology and creative classes to co-create new applications.

For example, following earlier initiatives by **American Airlines** and **Vueling**, Emirates organized a 24-hour **Travel Hackaton** in Silicon Valley last fall that brought together 300 developers and designers to build new and innovative travel-centric applications using web and mobile APIs (application programming interfaces). A USD \$20,000 prize fund was available, with students of Carnegie Mellon University scooping up the most awards at the event with concepts such as PlayFlight and Secret Menu.

Aligning themselves with the creative, entrepreneurial and technology industries

allows airlines to position themselves as 'cool' and innovative



“Technology is evolving at rapid pace and most airlines find it hard to think outside the box, so forward-looking carriers recognize they better team up with the ‘creative class’ to co-create new applications.”

cool tech innovation class

DELTA

Following earlier initiatives such as its **'Ideas in Flight'** program, which used curated TED Talks as thought-starters for soliciting crowd-sourced ideas on how to improve the travel experience, Delta this year teamed up with LinkedIn in an effort to pair interesting individuals with well-respected members of the 'creative class.'

For the **'Delta Innovation Class'** program the airline has picked a select number of leaders in the field of art, business and technology who will be traveling to events such as TED during 2014. Delta offers one lucky person per flight the opportunity to sit next to a mentor like **Eric Migicovsky** (founder of Pebble), **Sean Brock** (food entrepreneur) or **Alexandra Wilson** (co-founder of Gilt), in what the airline describes as a chance "to meet face-to-face with some of the world's most interesting

Sean Brock
Sean will be traveling to New York for The James Beard Awards. This is your chance to sit down and talk with one of the most interesting and inspiring people in food today



people in a truly unique one-on-one." Says Delta on its blog: "Our jets fill up with some of the smartest people in the world. Could these leaders use this time in the air to share their knowledge with an up-and-coming professional in the seat next to them?"

Those who want to apply can do so by entering their LinkedIn credentials on the Delta Innovation Class website. Based on their LinkedIn profiles, a shortlist of candidates will be chosen with the person selected for the empty seat receiving a free flight to the event.

ungrounded

BRITISH AIRWAYS

Last year, British Airways' **UnGrounded** 'Innovation Lab in the Sky' saw BA flight 9120 fly overnight from San Francisco to London filled with 130 members of the tech community, surrounded by poster boards and hundreds of sticky notes.

The passengers, many based in Silicon Valley, hailed from all corners of the tech community, and included Craigslist founder Craig Newmark, Webby Awards founder Tiffany Shlain, dozens of other startup founders and engineers from IBM, Microsoft, The Clinton Global Initiative and Zappos. Also aboard were the 10 winners of Mashable's Best Idea contest.

BA's hope was that these creative minds would come up with innovative ideas to address the disconnect between science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills and access to opportunities.



Before arriving at SFO airport, the participants were divided into teams to tackle four different aspects of the STEM skills gap.

In just under five hours, the groups developed 22 concepts, after which the aircraft turned into an **'idea gallery'** filled with posters explaining the different pitches (video here).

Participants collectively selected one winner in each of the four exploration categories which upon landing were to the United Nations ITU Committee at the DNA Summit in London.

BA is currently **seeking funding** for one of the winning solutions, Beacon in a Backpack, which is a STEM toolkit backpackers can deliver to remote communities they encounter while travelling.

visual culture

Images are more appealing than words; this we have known for a while, and the concept is even backed by scientific research that has shown we remember images better than text.

In recent design changes, both Facebook and Twitter have placed images prominently on user profiles and in their feeds.

Smarter devices are prompting more occasions for people to create and consume visual content, while social media is encouraging that content to be shared on multiple platforms.

This is manifesting itself in text-based tweets giving way to photo and video tweets, Google+ hangouts that facilitate group

video, the proliferation of infographics at news outlets, viral sharing of Photoshopped images, etcetera.

In fact, the popularity of visuals is such that some of the fastest growing social networks today are based primarily on images: think Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat.

It is obvious, therefore, that airlines need to not only communicate with their customers using images, but to also tap into the desire of today's connected travellers to share images. Memorable images help break the information overload on social networks.

Consider how the selfie craze has recently hit airlines, with Turkish Airlines and KLM rolling out initiatives based specifically



Royal Dutch Airlines @KLM · Jun 10

Want to win 2 five-stop Around the World Tickets? Make a #CitySelfie klmf.ly/118tbMq like Alex from Tel Aviv klmf.ly/1jicwIF



“People want to consume information as quickly as possible and formats such as video and image posts do the job so much quicker than their written counterparts.”

visual culture selfshot

✈️ TURKISH AIRLINES

Following its highly successful **'Kobe vs Messi'** ✈️ commercial, Turkish Airlines brought back the two celebrities at the end of 2013 in a competitive global **'Selfie Shootout'** ✈️ commercial, which amassed more than 135 million views within a month — 30 million more than its predecessor.

The Kobe vs Messi campaign carried the theme "Widen Your World," and to get that point across, the ad shows Mr. Bryant and Mr. Messi trading "selfies" on mobile devices from sites like Moscow's Red Square, the Great Wall of China, the South African jungle and a Hollywood red carpet. The commercial ends with Mr. Bryant "photobombing" Mr. Messi by jumping into the camera's view as Mr. Messi tries to take a shot of himself in Istanbul.

In an iteration of the campaign, Turkish Airlines also launched a free **'Selfshot'** ✈️ iPhone app.



The app allows users to take their selfies and combine them with one of the destination backgrounds featured in the commercial, then share their 'selfshot' on social media, giving the illusion that they are actually in location, due to clever photo-manipulating software embedded into the application.

The user who produced the most liked and re-tweeted selfies shared on social media over a 3-month period won a free round-trip ticket from Turkish Airlines.

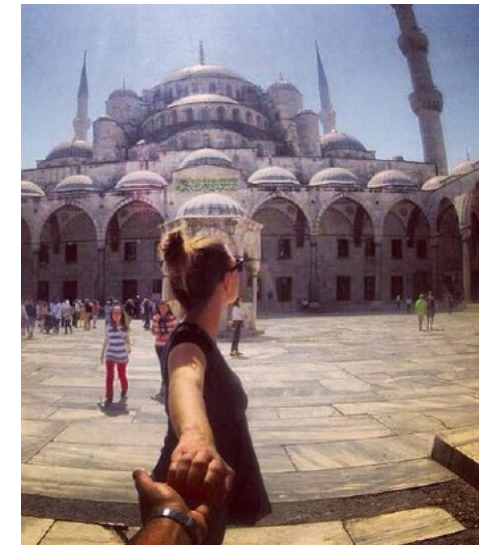
#eyfollowyou

✈️ ETIHAD

Tapping into popular global social media phenomena with creative campaigns is an effective way for airlines to show they understand today's online culture.

In a recent social media campaign, Etihad mimicked an **Instagram hype** ✈️ originally started in 2011 by now-famous Russian photographer and filmmaker Murad Osmann, who has amassed a following of 750,000 fans on the instant-photo sharing site.

Osmann creatively documents his travels around the world with his girlfriend Nataly Zakharova leading the way in his ongoing series known as **'Follow Me To'** ✈️. Chronicling his adventures on Instagram, Osmann composes each shot in a similar fashion, with each landscape shot taken from the photographer's point of view with his extended hand holding onto his girlfriend's



in front of him, and uses filters to give the pictures an artistic feel.

Using the hashtag **#EYFollowYou** ✈️, as a nod to the original title of the online phenomenon, Etihad asked their social media followers to post similar shots from their travels around the world as part of a Twitter-based **competition** ✈️.

The winner, was @lilou_dj who posted **a shot** ✈️ of a girl leading the photographer to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.

people power

If it were a country, Facebook would be the second most populous nation in the world, with 1.3 billion registered users. Twitter, the second most popular social network, has close to half a billion users.

Besides giving individual consumers a platform to voice their likes and dislikes, social networks have also, due to the sheer number of people they connect, given rise to what trendwatching.com has coined '**Crowd Clout**': "an online grouping of citizens/consumers for a specific cause, be it political, civic or commercial."

Moving beyond crowdsourcing initiatives — which seek ideas and opinions from interested consumers — and inspired by

the numerous group deal sites such as Groupon and Gilt, several airlines have been **testing** 'crowd clout' concepts for commercial purposes.

Besides generating buzz, these kinds of initiatives also allow airlines to temporarily offer heavy discounts without disturbing their main distribution channels.

Or, as innovation website VentureBeat put it, "Groupon has perfected the art of creating consumer frenzies through a combination of deep discounts, witty marketing copy, and exploitation of viral sharing... The airline business, saddled with constant price wars, could turn to Groupon as a way to fill empty seats without permanently lowering its prices on routes."

An early airline adopter of the 'crowd clout' trend is KLM. Following its **Fly2Miami** campaign, which saw KLM challenge the public via social media that it would operate a special non-stop flight from Amsterdam to Miami if enough seats were booked in advance.



the state of airline marketing

people power like to unlock social offer

✈ SINGAPORE AIRLINES ✈ KLM

Being one of the first Asian airlines to experiment with the 'people power' concept, Singapore Airlines has run two **'Like to Unlock'** campaigns — one in Singapore and one in Australia — which allowed its Facebook fans to unlock special discount codes for flights to select Singapore Airlines destinations when it reached over 1,000 'likes' for each of the promoted destinations.

The destinations were released in **weekly waves** to destinations such as Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh City and Malé.

The number of seats for each of the destinations was limited to 200, creating a high demand for the heavily discounted fares, and by the end of the campaigns, each of the 9 destinations had been fully 'unlocked.'

Singapore Airlines' 'Like To Unlock' campaign mimicked KLM's **'Social Offer'** initiative, which allows KLM's social media fans and followers to lower the fare (to a pre-determined minimum fare) for a number of selected destinations every time they log in with their Facebook or Twitter accounts. (A video shows how KLM's Social Offer works [here](#)).

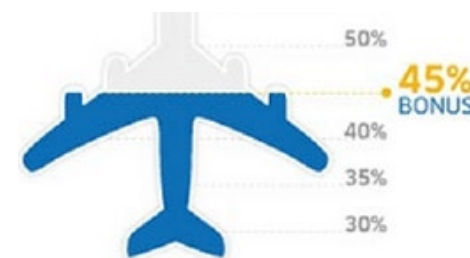
people power

✈ UNITED AIRLINES

Direct miles purchases are one of United's most profitable avenues. The airline came up with a novel way to garner social loyalty from frequent flyers by inviting members of its MileagePlus program to buy miles and watch the bonus grow by sharing this offer with others.

United's **'People Power'** promotion was a 3-day online event in which MileagePlus members were invited to purchase miles online and share the promotion through social media channels with their colleagues, friends and family in order to receive bonus miles. These could rise to as much of 60 per cent of the purchased miles if there were more than 1,500 qualifying participants in the overall campaign.

In this way, United hoped its members would both inform their peers about the promotion



Number of purchasers	Bonus %
> 1,500	60%
1,251-1,500	55%
1,001-1,250	50%
751-1,000	45%
501-750	40%

and encourage participation to maximize the value realized.

The promotion **microsite** also featured a **sliding scale** so participants could view the progress of the bonus.

Over the 3-day event, there were more than 1,500 transactions, meaning the 60 per cent bonus was offered, allowing each participant the chance to purchase miles at 2.35 cents per mile.

emerging markets

International travel to and from emerging countries — such as the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and the so-called Next-11 (which includes the likes of South Africa, Vietnam, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Mexico) — is growing, supported by economic growth and the emergence of a middle class who is starting to travel.

Airlines are building up their brand awareness in these markets by offering initiatives tailored to resonate with the ethos of their target market, be it by tapping into national culture with localized campaigns or by establishing a presence on major regional social networks such as Weibo and VK.

Neither Chinese nor Russian travellers use global social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Instead, they are heavy users of local social networks such as VK, the Facebook of Russia, which has over 55m daily users, and Renren, the Facebook of China, with over 210m users.

KLM a few years ago launched a **social media campaign** targeting the Chinese market. It showed a real-life version of well-known Dutch children's rabbit character Miffy (Nijntje in Dutch) travelling to European KLM destinations. Miffy was chosen to be the ambassador for the campaign because this creation by Dutch artist Dick Bruna is extremely popular in China, especially among young women between the ages of

20 and 30.



“Global airlines that wish to make inroads into these markets would do well to launch initiatives tailored to resonate with local culture and social media platforms.”

emerging markets romance class

▣ AIR NEW ZEALAND

Air New Zealand (ANZ) has become famous in the industry for its controversial and humorous safety videos for its flights.

Aimed strategically at the Chinese marketplace, ANZ's **'Your Romance Guide to Safety Onboard'** ▣ safety video — which curiously could only be seen online, rather than onboard — is a romantic love story that ties in with the New Zealand flag carrier's romance-themed marketing campaign in China.

ANZ has been presenting New Zealand as an idyllic destination for couples, and the video followed on from the airline's recent partnership with hit Chinese reality dating show *You Are The One*.

Because ANZ knows full well the viral pulling-power of its videos, this tale stars influential



Chinese social media celebs Molly Wang and Solo Zhuang.

Commenting on the campaign, ANZ Deputy CEO Norm Thompson said: "China is a market full of romantics who meticulously plan and save for destination weddings and honeymoons. It's a premium segment and one we are working hard to tap into."

In addition to the safety video, ANZ offered special fares and a romance-themed inflight amenity kit for couples.

go further get closer

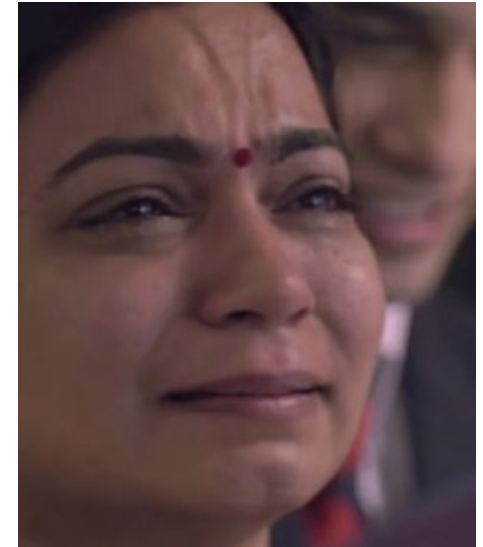
▣ BRITISH AIRWAYS

As part of a marketing strategy for India that focuses on introducing India-specific initiatives, British Airways has recently created two heart-warming videos.

Last year, BA's **'Visit Mum'** campaign ▣ (1.2 million views on YouTube) showcased how important it is to stay close to one's mother, while this year BA highlighted the importance of spending quality time with loved ones.

Launched on Valentine's Day, **'Go Further To Get Closer'** ▣ narrates the story of Sumeet Gupta and how BA helped him surprise his wife Chetna by giving them an opportunity to escape from daily intrusions and get closer to each other.

The film is based on the insight that young couples today have made work their top



priority in life, which is taking a toll on their personal relationships as they are unable to spend enough quality time with their partners. This is especially true for young couples, who are surrounded with extended family for most of their young lives. For these couples, international travel provides great opportunities to spend quality time with their respective partners as not only are they away from work, but also from the daily intrusions of family and friends.

The **YouTube video** ▣ has amassed over 2 million views so far and was supported by a **'How close are you?'** ▣ Facebook quiz.

innovation is the marketing

Unlike investments in new aircraft, cabin interiors and seats, innovations in services in order to improve the passenger experience do not have to have large financial consequences.

It basically comes down to creative ideas, and the current revolution in social media and personal digital devices allows forward-looking airlines to come up with new services that — even though not all of them will be a great commercial success — will contribute to the airline's brand by creating buzz and a sense that the airline is trying to improve the experience.

Furthermore, airports and airport lounges are popular and high-profile test-bed locations for consumer brands to showcase

their latest technological innovations. Given the diverse and international mix of consumers and the industry's high profile in the media, it is relatively easy for airlines to find interesting consumer brands to jointly launch innovative services.

For example, airlines such as Delta, Finnair and Virgin Atlantic **have partnered** with providers of wireless charging technology to let their lounge guests experience how their personal devices can be charged without using wires.

Dubbed “product or service as marketing,” here the innovation is clearly designed for marketing purposes, with the objective being to have bloggers and mass media talk about it, even if the actual adoption



rate by passengers is 1 percent in the end.



“The innovation is clearly designed for marketing purposes, with the objective being to have bloggers and mass media talk about it, even if the actual adoption rate by passengers is 1 per cent in the end.”

innovation is the marketing wearable tech

▣ IBERIA ▣ VUELING ▣ AIR BERLIN

A few years ago, anything iPad-related would generate buzz, while these days, wearable devices such as Google Glass and smart watches will surely excite the press, blogosphere and Twitterverse.

For example, earlier this year Virgin Atlantic's **six-week trial** ▣ — featuring Google Glass and Sony SmartWatch 2 devices — in its Heathrow lounge created a huge wave of publicity for the airline.

Consumer brands such as Samsung and Sony are also partnering with airlines, as they are eager to showcase their latest wearable devices.

Spanish LCC Vueling and Sony launched the **world's first application** ▣ this spring, which allows passengers to “carry both their boarding pass and flight information



on their wrist,” as the companies put it.

Iberia and airberlin also recently **announced** ▣ their own wearable boarding passes. Iberia has teamed up with Samsung to offer boarding passes on the Samsung Gear 2 smartwatch, while users of airberlin's iPhone app can send their digital boarding pass to their Pebble smartwatch.

meet & seat

▣ KLM

Following early **experiments** ▣ by the likes of Malaysia Airlines and Estonian Air, KLM in mid-2012 launched a **‘Meet & Seat’** ▣ scheme which encourages passengers to pick seatmates by checking out social media profiles of fellow passengers who linked their profiles to their reserved seat. The tool is opt-in only, to allow for the many travellers who view flight time as private time.

Causing a huge publicity wave at the time of launch, the idea behind **the concept** ▣ was that flyers would be able to find out about interesting people who will be on board their KLM flight, for example other passengers attending the same event at the destination, or share a taxi upon arrival.

Mashable recently **reported** ▣ that more



than 50,000 people have used Meet & Seat since the service was introduced two years ago. This isn't too large a number in the larger scheme of things, however, since more than 50 million passengers flew with the airline in the past two years.

Meet & Seat is most popular on routes to and from Brazil, perhaps due to the fact that of KLM's approximately 5 million Facebook users, about 1 million of them are from Brazil and 62 percent of the service's users connect with Facebook, according to a KLM spokesperson.

outdoor creativity

Billboards are so ubiquitous in the modern world, many people barely even notice them anymore.

Like all other mediums, due to technological advancements and social changes, outdoor advertising has had to change and evolve. As marketers battle for the attention of an increasingly distracted audience, we are seeing them turn to some rather unconventional forms of outdoor advertising.

Some airline ad campaigns, such as Virgin America's **colourful billboards** and Emirates' larger-than-life **skyscraper ads**, have been relying on eye-catching imagery and unusual proportions to grab the attention of the public.

Other airlines have been turning to more unusual methods to gain attention and exposure, with Air Canada's **'People Working Above'** guerilla campaign still being one of the best creative ideas around, despite being a couple of years old.



“As marketers battle for the attention of an increasingly distracted audience, we are seeing them turn to some rather unconventional forms of outdoor advertising.”

outdoor creativity look up

BRITISH AIRWAYS

British Airways at the end of last year custom-fitted **digital billboards** with surveillance technology that detected and activated the billboards when one of the airline's flights passed overhead.

Located in Piccadilly Circus and Chiswick in London, when the billboard 'detected' a BA flight flying below the clouds visible to passers by, it depicted a child running, pointing up to the sky – chasing the airplane. The billboard then updated to reflect the flight details, like "BA flight 475 from Barcelona," along with the URL ba.com/lookup. Onlookers could then go online, view destination details and ultimately make a booking.

The flight messages were accompanied by other relevant messages, such as 'Fly the new A380 to Los Angeles. ba.com/lookup', or



details such as the lowest fare available or the temperature at the destination.

Abigail Comber, BA's head of marketing, said: "We all know from conversations with friends and family that we wonder where the planes are going and dream of an amazing holiday or warm destination. We hope it will create a real 'wow' and people will be reminded how amazing flying is and how accessible the world can be."

The **online video** of the billboards in action turned into a viral YouTube video, amassing over 1.25 million views, becoming an advert in itself.

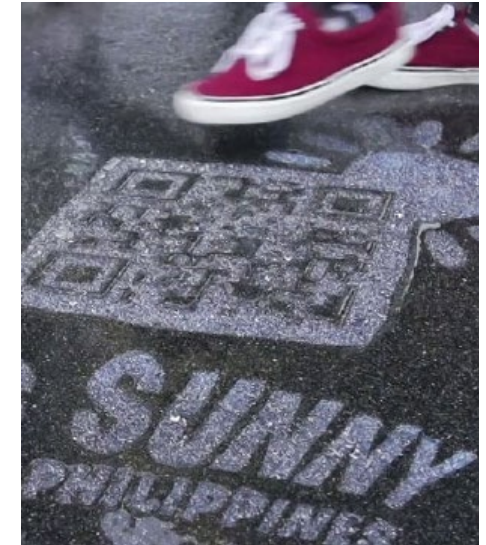
rain codes

CEBU PACIFIC

In Hong Kong, which receives just 100 hours of sunshine during its summer monsoon season, the Philippine's low-cost carrier Cebu Pacific used the wet weather as an integral part of a clever outdoor campaign aimed at driving bookings to a much sunnier Philippines.

The **campaign** used water repellent spray to draw ads onto the ground in high traffic areas throughout the city, making them invisible until wet weather hits, at which point water droplets roll off the sprayed surface, revealing a brief tagline: "It's Sunny in the Philippines."

The sunny advert was accompanied by a QR code — known in this case as a 'rain code' — so commuters could scan the ground with their phone to receive a Cebu Pacific discount code, which could



be used for a flight to the Philippines. Video of the campaign is posted [here](#).

In a **case study video**, ad agency Ogilvy claims the stunt led to a 37 per cent increase in online bookings for Cebu Pacific.

Says Reed Collins, Chief Creative Officer of, Ogilvy & Mather Hong Kong, "Our 'rain-codes' were so unexpected, something people had never seen before. The campaign received a lot of attention, but even better, they sparked action."

stay in the know.

The airline benchmark report

Published by airline branding specialist SimpliFlying and market research agency airlinetrends.com, the Airline Marketing Benchmark Report contains a wide range of airline marketing case studies each month, providing you with the latest and most innovative social, digital, experiential and traditional airline marketing campaigns, and assesses their effectiveness.

Whether you're looking for inspiration or are eager to help your airline move into the next stage of engagement, while also understanding how your airline marketing initiatives compare to campaigns from competitors in general, these reports are indispensable for airline professionals working in the field of marketing and corporate communications. The monthly reports help agencies that work with airlines stay on top of the latest airline marketing innovations and initiatives.

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