

Etihad Maps the Future for Business Travelers

SYSTEMS THINKING

BY MEDIACOM MENA 15 DEC 2014

Business travelers are often loyal to one airline. How did Etihad connect them across the world with a systems thinking approach? By MediaCom MENA

A new name for business travelers

Business travelers are a tricky bunch. Once they find an airline that caters to their needs, they tend to stick with it. There's also the power of loyalty programs.

Etihad needed to fill its highly profitable business seats on new routes. That meant generating brand awareness (a key factor in airline selection), as Etihad was not as well-known as many of its rivals, including Lufthansa, American Airlines and Emirates.

In addition to spreading the word about Etihad, we decided to show road warriors how the airline could make their business trips more valuable by helping them set up meetings on the fly.

Who's in town while you're traveling

MediaCom's solution was "Mapped Out," an app built into LinkedIn, the world's largest network of globe-trotting professionals. It allows our target audience to turn future travel plans into business opportunities by leveraging existing contacts and easily arranging meetings. Users can sift through their contacts by sector and location, highlight their executive travel to their peers and book their business flight with Etihad, all through the application.

We started by promoting Mapped Out to LinkedIn members most likely to be interested in Etihad's newest routes to Abu Dhabi, India and Washington DC. Then we tracked app users, enabling us to create behavioral profiles and identify lookalike consumers for retargeting.

These new prospects were mirror images of travelers who had actually booked on Etihad or who had researched the airline's target destinations.

Etihad is really flying

With help from Mapped Out, Etihad's brand awareness is now sky-high and the airline is starting to take seats from its competitors. We put Etihad in front of a hard-to-reach, time-starved audience for a fifth of the cost of traditional business media. And business travelers who are planning to book flights have a 10% more favorable impression of Etihad and are 9% more likely to fly with the airline compared to a control group.

Another indication of our success is that we've reached more than 100,000 business travelers and created a cookie pool for 30,000 LinkedIn business travelers. In addition, we've identified 100,000 relevant prospects via behavioral profiling, all of whom can be

engaged in future campaigns.

Finally, LinkedIn members have mapped out more than 205 million miles worth of connections – enough to fly round the world 32,000 times.

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