

Virgin America

Problem

How does an airline company share its in-flight experience with people on the ground?

Solution

Use a landmark OOH location to amplify a social media campaign.

Background

Virgin America attracts an especially social group of flyers. We call them the creative class: people who live a curated, entertainment-rich, trend-forward lifestyle and like to broadcast it to all of their followers. So when they fly Virgin America (complete with moodlighting, WiFi, and live sports and food on demand), they can't help but share. In fact, on almost every flight, Virgin America flyers post about their experiences so their friends can see how they fly.



The challenge was getting the word out to a broader audience about how amazing the flying experience is. Virgin America had always used OOH to spread the word, but we wanted to do something bigger: we wanted to consolidate our social flyers on a highly visible platform to bring the Virgin America experience to the masses.

Objective

The objective was, simply, to build brand and product awareness with the creative class, our unique breed of flyers who find the likes of United and American a little tired. We focus more on behavioral and attitudinal characteristics of our prospects than demographics; but in general, this audience falls within the standard demographic segment of adults 25–54.

Strategy

Once people fly Virgin America, they don't go back. Customer satisfaction is high, with more than 80 percent planning to book again in the next six months. The problem is that those who haven't flown us believe every airline is the same; they don't know what they are missing out on when they don't fly Virgin America. To reach those who haven't flown our airline, our idea was to bring the amazing Virgin America experience from the plane directly down to the people on the ground. And what better place to broadcast the amazing feeling of flying Virgin America than from one of the most premier screens in the world? This campaign ran exclusively in OOH; no other media supported the program. It ran for one month in one location: Times Square.

The campaign took social sharing to a new level, letting flyers send tweets and Instagram photos from 35,000 feet for the first time ever. The campaign kicked off with Virgin Group Founder Sir Richard Branson surprising flyers on board a flight from JFK to SFO. Other notable surprise guests included Dick Costolo from Twitter and filmmaker Kevin Smith, among others. Guests could use in-flight WiFi to live tweet and Instagram from the sky to Times Square. With the #myVXexperience hashtag, flyers were able to share with their friends and followers on the ground what it's like to be on Virgin America in the air.

Plan Details

Markets: New York (Times Square)

Flight Dates: September 19 - October 14, 2012

OOH Formats Used: Digital spectaculars

Estimated impressions: Starting point—11 million from paid media

Results

Thousands of people tweeted and Instagrammed with the new #myVXexperience hashtag. The campaign gathered over 69 million incremental earned media impressions from news outlets, not to mention the incredible increase in social presence from the campaign. This press was valued at over \$2 million, and we saw an increase in online bookings during the campaign.

Here is one of the many news articles about the Virgin America event:

<http://www.johnnyjet.com/2012/09/sir-richard-branson-surprises-virgin-america-passengers-in-flight/>

