

American Airlines

Problem

How does a brand remain top-of-mind to retain the loyalty and share of high value customers in key markets?

Solution

Develop out of home (OOH) headlines for specific locations to localize messages and address improvements being made in each market.

Background

American Airlines is an evolving airline. Between the recent merger with US Airways and historic upgrades to its fleet and product offerings, American is taking steps forward to “restoring itself as the greatest airline.” As merger and operational issues are sorted out internally, American Airlines wants to keep its progress top-of-mind to retain the loyalty and share of high value customers in key markets, and, where possible, obtain share of high value flyers from their most direct competitors.

Objective

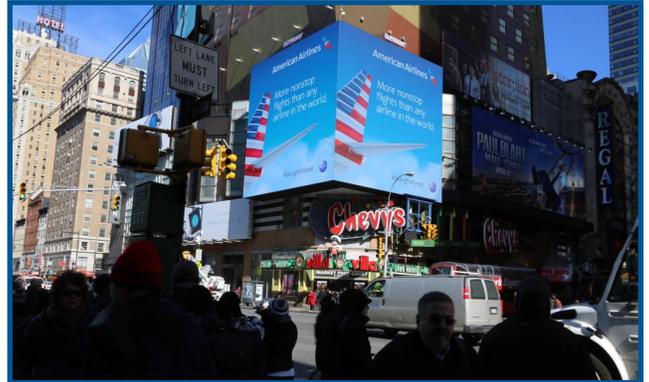
Increase awareness and reinforce American Airlines’ evolving and improving narrative through a focus on product and service improvements among high value customers (HVCs), the top 20% of flyers:

- High-end business travelers
- Travel a minimum of ten times a year
- High propensity to fly internationally
- Reside in one of the top three competitive airline markets: New York, Los Angeles and Chicago

Strategy

The communications strategy ladder up to delivering against specific effective reach goals in each market. OOH was identified as the lead medium for an integrated creative and media strategy that would provide a high-visibility canvas to launch the *Going for Great* campaign. Headlines were developed for specific OOH locations to localize the message and address improvements being made in each market. In all markets, locations were selected based on a multitude of factors: proximity to airports, proximity to financial centers or central business districts and premium, high-impact units. Additionally, local market considerations, such as consumer commuting trends, availability and utilization of mass transit, as well as geographic concentration of business districts, were analyzed and considered when evaluating OOH locations and determining the final recommendation.

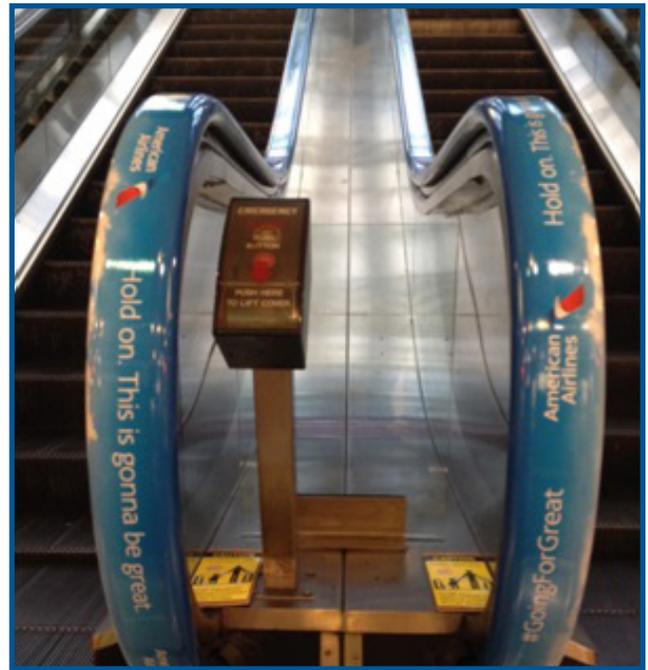
Going For Great included numerous headlines for OOH, written to localize the messaging within each canvas. A 14’x48’ bulletin outside the entrance to O’Hare in Chicago read “O’Yeah, over 500 flights a day from O’Hare,” to promote American’s expanding fleet; full wraps of Airporter transit units in NYC utilized a play on words with a headline that read, “Get there in no time flat;”



takeovers of the Citygroup Center building in Chicago’s central business district and the Wall Street subway station in NYC, utilized numerous units from escalator handrails to turnstiles and stair risers to ceiling beams, as well as standard displays to create a surround sound strategy with consumers. Bus shelters and newsstand kiosks throughout downtown Chicago and Manhattan communicated product messages like “Wi-Fi? Why, yes.” and city-specific messages like “Da Partures and From Second City to almost any city” (Chicago) and Start “Spreading the News and Relax Your NY State of Mind” (NYC). In Los Angeles, a focus on reaching the entertainment district in Hollywood gave way to headlines like “LA’s newest star makes its debut in the sky and Stay classy, LA.” The integration between the OOH media strategy and the creative strategy was unparalleled, and the results were evidence of that.



With specific reach and frequency goals for each market, TAB Out of Home ratings were vital to determining the contribution of OOH against the overall communications goals. However, because American’s target audience is not a traditional buying demo, and represents more of a behavioral target, TAB Out of Home ratings were manually adjusted to reflect delivery against the high value customer (HVC), utilizing syndicated research tools (GFK MRI) to reflect target composition against all channels.



Plan Details

Markets: New York, Los Angeles and Chicago

Flight Dates: mid-September, 2014 and ran through the week of Thanksgiving.

OOH Formats:

- Dominations (Wall Street in NY and Citigroup Center in Chicago)
- Airporters
- Double decker buses
- Multi-facing digital units
- Newsstand kiosks
- Bus shelters

Metrics used in the planning of the campaign reflected TAB ratings to determine impressions and reach against the target audience. A brand tracking study was conducted pre and post campaign in order to evaluate a number of other business KPI’s.

Results

A pre and post campaign Brand Tracker study was implemented to evaluate the success of the *Going For Great* campaign launch. Advertising effectiveness was measured utilizing three major KPI’s: reach among HVCs, net promoter score and key attribute ratings. Overall, the impact of the campaign launch yielded positive across all KPIs and the launch deemed a success.

- Advertising reach among HVCs
- Overall, the multi-channel campaign generated a 70% awareness against HVCs and 54% is attributed to out of home strategy.
- Net Promoter Score
- When looking at the total shift from the pre-wave to the post-wave results, American’s positive movement significantly outperformed the competition, with a 21 point lift in Ad Awareness (definitely WOULD recommend to a friend or colleague), nearly double the closest competitor.
- Key attribute ratings
- The post wave tracking study illustrated the campaign’s effectiveness, with every measured attribute (11 total) reflecting significantly higher ratings for flyers aware of the advertising versus unaware. The top scoring attributes included those that related to American’s expanding fleet, and those that reflected American’s focus on modernization, evolution and progress, both key campaign messages.

Overall, the fall campaign had significant positive impact across all KPIs, allowing American Airlines to rebound from significant decreases seen during a dark advertising period. Positive shifts were apparent not only when looking specifically at ad aware vs. unaware during the post launch period, but also at the total level, comparing pre launch to post launch scores. In addition, not only did the campaign influence positive sentiment (reflected in Net Promoter Score) and higher level brand positioning, it effectively communicated key intended messages to the target audience as well.

The campaign received press features like this example in the New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/17/business/media/ads-for-american-airlines-see-great-results.html?_r=0) as well as other trade publications, which garnered significant positive PR value.

Following the success of the *Going For Great* launch in North America, the campaign was translated into numerous languages and launched worldwide. This YouTube video is a campaign wrap-up http://youtu.be/9Rn_bbf3xm4

