

4A's Jay Chiat Awards 2014

Client: British Airways

Campaign: 'Magic of Flying'

Summary

British Airways operate in an incredibly competitive marketplace where costs, networks and schedules dominate the reasons for flying. Choice of carrier has become a very rational decision. How could we differentiate? How could we bring more emotion into flight? How could we create cut through in a crowded world dominated by these rational factors?

A very simple and emotional insight provided a springboard for the project – when children look into the sky and see a plane flying overhead, to them it is magical. Our challenge was then how could we encapsulate this, how would we bring this insight to life and make that childhood moment a sense of wonder and amazement for all?

The solution was to combine technology and creativity to create a powerful emotional connection with the audience. We created a first in advertising technology – an outdoor billboard that reacted to BA planes flying overhead. Despite having only two sites this became one of the most talked about pieces of advertising in 2013 and drove over 75,000 unique visits to BA's website.

The Campaign

Background and Business Challenge

British Airways fly from the UK to more destinations than any other carrier but most people aren't aware of the breadth of destinations and frequency of flights. And although BA are not the cheapest, people think they're more expensive than they really are.

We needed to raise awareness of the breadth of destinations offered from London, new routes and frequency of flights as well as delivering a compelling price. In a world where customers are not only bombarded by marketing but one in which travel has been seen to have been commoditised by the low cost carriers we need to find a way in which we could get a retail message through to busy customers in a non-traditional way in order to get their attention and crucially consider BA.

Key insight

Often an insight comes from a deep dive of research, conversations with customers or sometimes just a purely emotional moment. This was one of those times – watching our children being amazed by planes in the sky sparked a thought. Could we harness this? Could we bring this moment of magic to the masses – to the grown ups!

The solution

We knew that people are more receptive to buying when they're in a 'hot state' – when they're emotionally charged.

The solution was to combine technology and creativity to create a powerful emotional connection with the audience. Using the wondrous gaze of a child pointing up to the sky, taking us all back to that magical moment when we first flew, we built the world's first outdoor billboards that reacted to BA planes flying overhead.

The challenge of where the outdoor billboards would be displayed had to be carefully considered – where would we get the relevant audiences as well as there being a direct relationship to a BA flight path. In the end we had placements in Piccadilly Circus and along the M4 (one of the main motorways in and out of London).

As a billboard the execution needed to be simplistic in it's nature, the technology behind our billboards was anything but.

Using a special ADSB antenna, we read every aircraft's transponder data within 200km. The ads not only displayed the flight number and where the plane was flying from but dynamic retail messaging also updated on a daily basis, displaying targeted copy for each route, showing live pricing, special offers and weather information.

This technology allowed us to target a very specific, special moment a BA plane flew overhead, raising awareness of the huge variety of destinations. This captured people's imaginations and inspired them to make a booking. Importantly we also monitored the weather so that if it was cloudy and no plane could be seen the BA ad wouldn't be shown. Meaning we maximised our budget by created a brand new way in which outdoor advertising is paid.

Using a very simple hashtag #lookup as a call to action people were driven to the "Look Up" site where they could find out more about the poster and explore the destinations, even their weather reports, and of course to book a flight.

As per our objective of cut through we needed something which would stand out from the rest of the airline advertising. With only 2 media sites, and 2 days of paid activity (which due to the way

in which it was served lasted 6 weeks) we knew that it would be a steep challenge but the results were phenomenal.

The results

- 45M earned social impressions
- 1,360,000 video views (& still counting)
- Over 364 articles published
- Talked about and featured in news in 118 countries around the world
- #lookup trended being used over 3,400 times
- Over 43,300 visits to the ba.com/lookup page

It was not only picked up by some of the most influential publications such as mashable (generating over 20,000 shares) but also received praise from others in the industry with American Airlines tweeting 'That's a very cute billboard by British Airways!'. Domino's even did a spoof using the line #lookdown – they do say imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

It became the most talked about piece of airline advertising in 2013.

So did we achieve what we set out to?

We created a world first in advertising terms

We created a new advertising model

We created cut through and mass talkability

We generated increased traffic to BA.com

.....and some very happy clients