

Cathay Pacific Airways Case Study

Leveraging member profiles to reach business travelers to Asia



CATHAY PACIFIC

“Reaching our target market and measuring success with LinkedIn is quite easy. You get immediate feedback. As LinkedIn creates more tools to help us be more targeted, I can only see our relationship deepening in the future.”

Dennis Owen, Vice President Marketing Americas,
Cathay Pacific Airways

Reaching customers in a noisy, crowded market

Cathay Pacific Airways is an international airline based in Hong Kong, offering scheduled cargo and passenger services to over 140 destinations around the world. The airline’s primary product is premium non-stop service to Asia with a focus on the business class market.

“For Cathay Pacific, the challenge is that there is a lot of noise in the market. The question is always, how do we reach that target audience that we’re looking for with a message that is compelling to them as an individual?” asks Dennis Owen, Vice President Marketing Americas for Cathay Pacific Airways.

Cathay Pacific turned to LinkedIn to help increase brand awareness among people who fly business class between the United States and Asia.

“We knew we needed to advertise where the business people – and especially business travelers—are going to be. And on the social media side, where is the business person? They’re on LinkedIn.”

Challenge

- Increase brand awareness among target market segment – people who fly business class between the U.S. and Asia

Solution

- Identify members who belong to LinkedIn groups related to business travel in Asia, such as Global Workers, China Networking Group, Hong Kong Connection
- Target these members with Display Ads and Sponsored Polls
- Establish Cathay Pacific Company Page on LinkedIn and use Status Updates and Recommendations to build awareness and drive engagement

Why LinkedIn?

- Uniquely precise targeting by industry, group, job title, company
- Engage with time-strapped business travelers in an environment where they’re already comfortable, engaged and spending time

Results

- Three Sponsored Polls generated a total of 1,324 responses from business travelers
- Recommendation Ads generated 97 recommendations on company Product Page
- LinkedIn Research Network provides ongoing insight to ad effectiveness and provides useful data for future campaigns

Targeting tools at your fingertips

LinkedIn has a variety of ways in which companies can target members. First and foremost, companies have access to a wealth of user-provided profile data. For example, members can be identified based on seniority, function and company size, as well as their affiliation with LinkedIn groups. For Cathay Pacific, the airline looked at the large number of Asia-focused business groups, such as China Networking Group, Global Workers and Hong Kong Connection, and targeted members of those groups, wherever they were on the LinkedIn site. Pre-campaign research validated that the targeting was on track, showing that 70% of the target audience planned to take one or more business-class flights between the United States and Asia in the next 12 months.

Once the target audience was identified, LinkedIn's marketing solutions experts worked with Cathay Pacific to put together a program to reach this audience through Display Ads and Sponsored Polls. Sponsored Polls asked business travelers what else they might want to redeem their airline points for, in addition to free airline tickets. Poll results gave the company valuable insight into customer preferences, as well as identifying prospects and loyal customers.



Cathay Pacific established their Company Page on LinkedIn, enabling them to message their company followers and acquire recommendations from existing customers. The company also leveraged Recommendation Ads both to identify and engage with existing customers and to spread brand awareness to other potential business travelers. Experience has shown significantly higher clickthrough rates with user recommendations than with standard display ads. When a user recommends a product or service on LinkedIn, an update goes out to the user's entire LinkedIn network, increasing the impact of the recommendation exponentially.

Promoting engagement with Status updates, Recommendations and Polls

LinkedIn's precise and very efficient targeting resulted in 1,324 poll responses from business travelers and a total of 97 product recommendations. Dennis Owen says the campaign was successful in spreading brand awareness and connecting with customers. "Every time someone clicked to recommend us, probably one-third of the time they also would write comments, all positive, about flying on Cathay in business class. And I would get an email...with a name, title and a company of someone that's going to Asia."



Dennis also praises the value of LinkedIn in reaching more customers. "We already know the big companies going to China, but a lot of the small and medium-sized companies and individuals fall below our radar. Of the people that were recommending Cathay Pacific, there were very few company names that I already knew. This was great information that will enable us to learn more about our customers."

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