

MEDFA 2012

360 365 24/7 121

ESSENTIAL CO-ORDINATES IN TRAVEL RETAIL

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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VIDEO INTRODUCTION:

SOCIALNOMICS 2013 BY ERIK QUALMAN

<http://bit.ly/UwHs8g>

A lot of books have been written and money made over the years on the subject of communication and its influence on how we create, build and rescue the many kinds of relationships in our lives. When we get it right the benefits make life sweet...

We feel happy, connected and balanced, we listen and we talk. We share the conversation. We are actually communicating.

The Social Media revolution has brought seismic shifts in how we communicate in all aspects of our lives, and it's put the word relationship sharply in focus in our expectations and requirements of how we connect with brands, businesses, services and even governments.

Global citizens have ever-higher expectations from their communication experiences with the brands and businesses important to their lives, how it happens and what's appropriate. The power base has shifted forever and personal choice, relevance to me/my life is the key driver.

Social media is now simply the new definition of media – our own personalised mix of what and how we share and connect with the new connected world.

Broadcasting – of news and equally of retail offers at a supermarket or an airport – is dying fast and that's where the power change really impacts Travel Retail. We all demand more personal choice in how, where and when we connect with the brands and businesses we invite into our lives and we set our own ground rules for those relationships. We're less open to the old school of ads and posters. Everything needs to make us feel this is special, for me. This company understands me.

We articulate that choice more and more and we tolerate imposition less and less. Our actions speak louder than our words.

The good news is when we exercise this choice we're likely to become more deeply connected with those brands than ever before. Travel Retail can harness that opportunity.

As more and more of us travel and the majority of consumer social interaction with the commercial world is through lifestyle brands, retail, travel and tourism ...we have a winning formula for establishing Travel Retail in their lives and many platforms to do it through.

Stunning geo based technology means we can connect personally at more touchpoints than ever before and open the opportunity to influence purchase behaviour.

Example Korea Sunny Smile QR code:

<http://bit.ly/SzBy41>

In such a fragmented industry as ours, there's no one-size fits all approach to 360 communications but one thing is consistent ...for it to work we must always view this relationship outside in - from the need state of the consumer, the prospective and often elusive shopper.

Shopping isn't the primary reason for them being in our world. It's travel of course and airport and airlines are the 2 major pathways to bring their thinking and them in person right to our door in Travel Retail.

In this new approach to consumer engagement and conversation, we may find ourselves feeling off-piste with where retail normally sits, not comfortably commercial enough but the fact is there is inherent value in establishing emotional resonance... interest, intrigue, loyalty ...just like the major brands have been doing for years on social media platforms. A growing number of airports, travel hubs and retailers are doing adopting this strategy.

Helsinki airport ran a brilliant campaign in 2012 to find out what people think would improve their airport experience. One of the answers is a book swap and Helsinki now boasts a specially dedicated area to help people feel they've discovered something new, take a book and leave one behind ...and tell their friends about it.

In Copenhagen this summer, a down-town food festival was extended to the airport where travellers could watch top chefs in action preparing great food and sampling it for themselves. Food after all is a great emotional driver.

In London everyone's talked about bottling the Olympic after-glow – the feel good factor that brought smiles to people's faces and had random strangers talk to each other. At St Pancras International railway station, pianos that were brought just in for the Olympics as part of a bigger city initiative have been kept on as people just love to sit down and play and others love to watch and listen ...and tell their friends. Adelaide airport is doing it too.

Gatwick airport's efforts to connect with families through their listening stories campaign has been widely talked about throughout the UK, with masses of on-line sharing that helps make other families feel good about Gatwick and helps Gatwick shake off its old image as a nightmare to travel through with a family.

So where's the commercial value in this?

Happier people enjoying their dwell time?

Discovering something new and sharing with friends?

Dwell times at St Pancras have extended, people are getting there early to enjoy their time. And they are spending more.

They're also sharing it like crazy on social media.

It's emotional ergonomics.

Changi Airport has been a master in this domain for several years from their 'Be a Changi Millionaire' campaign through to the current art installation Kinetic Rain.

There's a lot to be said from the communications perspective for creating this kind of atmosphere and personality at airports. People like being there more than they did before so their mind-set is more open to what else is going on around them. People talk, connect and share and word of mouth is such a priceless commodity. It's a perfect backdrop for Retail.

Who wants to shop if the rest of the experience is beyond bad? Word of mouth also kicks in there and the reverse effect of it as a priceless commodity is so powerful it can literally kill business.

Consumers definitely care a lot about the brand they're buying and that they're finding it in a suitable environment. Many of them care where – which city, which airport – they make a purchase.

They care less about the name of the retailer over the door although they do care a lot about the in-store experience and that plays a massive part in the holistic 360 communications strategy of course. I'm not suggesting social media replaces the importance of the in-store experience; what I am saying is that they are perfect partners in creating more connections to support retail performance.

So the way people are most likely to come to connect with Travel Retail is through those communications pathways of airport and brands, and if airlines are working together with the airport even better. It's a perfect Trinity opportunity for a shared approach.

Many airports and airlines already have well-established facebook, foursquare and twitter platforms with increasing interaction with Pinterest – its visual focus being perfect for people on the move. The opportunity for Travel Retail is to join forces with those travel platforms and to think location first, then to populate the opportunity with messages about the brands through the shopping needs hierarchy of the traveller.

Remember too who your audience is – think about not only messages in core languages but also that in certain countries facebook does not exist – in China you need to look at RenRen and Sina Weibo. In Brazil and India, Google's Orkut is a strong rival to facebook.

Let's follow in the footsteps of the brands and work with them to maximise the communications mix in a way that appeals to the consumer. Brands are dominating the media revolution, creating multi-dimensional relationships with their consumers, nurturing and empowering them to go forth as ambassadors. They were the early adopters ... understanding the commercial opportunity in holistic communications and being the first to hand over the reigns.

When it comes to airports and airlines, the majority focus on customer service with occasional bursts of facebook competitions and the now ubiquitous flash mob. This means there's plenty of room for retail to turn up the volume.

In the Middle East the focus is currently weighted towards some excellent websites and digital activations in the airports but it's good to know there are active plans for moves in 2013 into facebook, twitter, foursquare, pinterest all of which enable 2 way connections on the consumer journey and can influence buying behaviour.

Beirut is a good example to look at for facebook and twitter although an expansion beyond the Take Back More message will drive connections and grow the audience.

For current best in class it's hard to beat Delhi and Singapore. In both cases there's a very strong airport or location focus to the message hierarchy and that's a huge part of what makes them so successful.

Further afield, Schiphol, San Diego, LAX and Toronto, Dufry in Brazil, Duty Free Philippines are also genuinely exciting to interact with as the communication is also so much more holistic and retail again plays a strong role in a bigger story that mirrors the consumer hierarchy of thinking and connection. Retail, service updates, sense of community and even regional tourism ownership are all integral to their communications across facebook, twitter, pinterest, foursquare and websites.

Social Media presents a brilliant opportunity for Travel Retail and let's remember why we need to accelerate communication in this way ...

- travellers can now compare prices right in the middle of an airport store and order it online from somewhere closer to home
- smart phones take away the old boredom of waiting at airports, there's arguably less reason to get up and have a wander around the shops
- social media creates a golden opportunity to create genuine relevance for travel retail before and while people are travelling

Don't do it alone - airports/retailers/brands - whoever you are - work together to communicate the whole story in a way that's relevant to the consumer. A collective expression of personality and sense of place will deliver a multitude of rewards.

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