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Taking your airline to new heights

JET STREAM

A conversation with Wolfgang Prock-Schauer, the chief executive officer of Jet Airways.



Special Section

FUELING UP

A look at the rising cost of fuel and its effect on the industry.



INSIDE

6	Turboprops make strong comeback
36	WestJet saves US\$5 million annually
78	GOL scores big in Latin America

Right Offer, Right Person, Right Time

Through the use of behavioral targeting tools, airlines can better use travel agents to reach potential customers through specific, targeted messages.

■ By Rebecca Daniels | *Ascend* Contributor

The airline industry is evolving into a competitive landscape of carriers that need to differentiate themselves through superior service, value-added offerings and fare specials, so it is essential for them to find new ways to position and promote themselves.



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Through its suite of advertising solutions with behavioral targeting functionality, *Sabre Travel Network* offers airlines the ability to reach more than 250,000 travel agents throughout the course of travel shopping and booking.

To proactively respond, many airlines are looking to the retail industry for insight into how to enhance their marketing and advertising strategies with fresh ideas. Retailers have long embraced the enhanced targeting capabilities that online advertising offers. According to eMarketer, a provider of e-business research, the use of online advertising grew by 30 percent last year and is projected to grow another 24 percent this year. Much of this growth is due to the strides that online marketing has made to enable advertisers to utilize behavioral targeting to display highly relevant ads to the consumer during the shopping process.

Benefits of Behavioral Targeting

Behavioral targeting enables advertisers to display ads to users whose online searching behavior implies interest in a particular product or service. In a recent MarketingSherpa survey, 36 percent of marketers claimed that they got “great results” using behavioral targeting over traditional online advertising.

In a separate Forrester study, among marketers interested in using behavioral targeting, 52 percent said they’re already using it, 17 percent are pilot testing it and 31 percent plan to test it by year end. The study highlighted the top three benefits of using behavioral targeting:

- Generate more click throughs (35 percent response),
- Increase conversions (26 percent response),
- Improve return on investment (21 percent response).

The *Sabre Travel Network*™ business offers a suite of advertising products with behavioral targeting capabilities that enable airlines to message more than 250,000 *Sabre Connected*™ agents during the travel shopping and booking processes. Each product is designed to highlight an airline’s promotional message to the agent at the optimal time in that agent’s decision-making process.

Targeting key Destinations

Sabre® *PromoSpots*™ promotional offers help reach a target audience by displaying an ad to agents while they are shopping for air segments for their travelers. Using behavioral targeting, a special offer will be targeted to the destination cities that agents are shopping while they are looking to book and sell a flight. The message can also be targeted to a community of specified agencies based on their location, agency type or relationship with the airline.

PromoSpots are available in text or graphical formats. Text *PromoSpots* messages can be delivered to the entire *Sabre Connected* agency network — more than 53,000 agencies in 113 countries, a total of about 250,000 agents. The ad appears as a line of teaser text directly below the air-availability and air-sell responses. When the agents action the ad, they view an additional 10 lines of text about the offer with a call to action to book the offer. Graphical *PromoSpots* appear as a square banner ad in the bottom right corner of the *MySabre*™ agent booking portal. Use of *MySabre* accounts for about 67 percent of the total *Sabre Travel Network* audience, but is rapidly expanding as it gains popularity in the agency market. Graphical *PromoSpots* offer an agent the ability to click the banner ad and move to a microsite jump page that details more information and a call to action to book the offer.

Better Communicate Differentiators to Agents

The *Sabre*® *Sales Manager Marketing Messages* feature provides airlines another way to differentiate themselves by highlighting notices such as new routes, improved service or a remodeled fleet for a specific flight or itinerary. The behavioral targeting capabilities available through the *Sabre*® global distribution system enable the airline to control the display of the mes-



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Behavioral targeting provides carriers with another avenue to offer first-rate, value-added amenities while a travel agent is selling a segment on an airline but prior to the sale being finalized.

sage by a specific flight number, an origination and/or destination city, a frequent flyer number, or a corporate identification that is entered by the agent during the shopping process.

Sales Manager Marketing Messages are displayed as a 15-character string next to an airline's return on the air availability screen. Once the agent actions the ad, five additional lines of text are displayed with further details about the offer and possibly a call to action providing the agent with details needed to book the featured offer. *Sales Manager Marketing Messages* can be delivered to the entire *Sabre Connected* agency network.

Increase the Value of Each Booking

Sabre Travel Network offers a new advertising position, *Sabre® TopSpots*, on *MySabre* providing the ideal location for airlines to up sell class of service, offer value-added amenities such as meal service or priority lounge access, or promote a last-minute deal. Behavioral targeting enables airlines to offer these premium value-added services while an agent is selling a segment on an airline and before the agent finalizes the transaction. Each message can be displayed based on the class of service, the length of time until travel, or the origination and destination cities in the itinerary.

TopSpots messages display as two lines of text above the air-sell response in *MySabre*. When the agent clicks on the message, a graphical microsite appears that includes additional information about

the relevant offer for that agent's particular search criteria. The graphical microsite could also include a call to action instructing agents how to book the featured offer. The click-through metrics for the microsite are a great way to measure how many agents took interest in the campaign.

Promote Incentive Program

Sabre® Sign-In messaging is a sure way to communicate key messages to the *Sabre Connected* agent network. This advertising tool enables airlines to capture agents' attention for the next agent incentive promotion or corporate announcement. Sign-In messaging can broadcast globally or be customized to the region where the agent is located.

Sign-In messages are displayed instantly after signing in to the *Sabre* GDS and are available in text or graphical formats. Text Sign-In messages can be delivered to the entire *Sabre Connected* agency network. Graphical Sign-In appears as a square banner ad in the bottom right corner of the *MySabre* sign-in screen. Graphical Sign-In messages offer the ability for an agent to click the banner ad and move to a microsite that details more information about the promotion.

Target Agents in Their Workflow

The *Sabre Connected* agent network is the largest agent community in the world. It directly influences the purchase of more than US\$70 billion in annual gross travel revenues for more than 900 travel suppliers. By utilizing behavioral targeting, the latest in online advertising technology

A Regional Airline Succeeds With new TopSpots Advertising Placement

A regional airline recently ran a promotion to increase revenue by notifying agents of the possibility to up sell the class of service for any customer.

- The up-sell campaign has been highly successful to date with an overall up-sell conversion rate of 5 percent or about 500 segments per week.
- Economy to "economy with meal service" is the most frequent up sell with an average conversion rate of 14 percent as a result of the campaign.
- Business class to first class is the second-most frequent up sell with an average up-sell conversion rate of 5 percent.
- The airline dramatically increased revenues due to the up-sell results obtained through its ad placement on the *Sabre®* global distribution system.

available through the *Sabre Travel Network* and its complete line of advertising products, airlines can ensure their messages are targeted to the right agent at the ideal time in their shopping and purchasing process. Incorporating advertising on the *Sabre* GDS into all marketing campaigns enables airlines to influence better results across their entire travel booking channel. **F**

Rebecca Daniels is the product marketing manager for Sabre GDS advertising products. If you would like more information about Sabre GDS advertising, please contact our campaign consultant team by e-mail at sam@sabre.com.