

AWARD WINNER: Annual Campaign INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

Organisation for which the programme was conducted

The campaign was implemented by the Bombela Concession Company (BCC), who was awarded the contract to construct, operate, maintain and partially finance the Gautrain Rapid Rail System.

Problem or opportunity addressed.

The challenge was two-fold. Firstly, we noticed a year-on-year decline in ridership on the Gautrain's Airport service. Secondly, annually we experience a decline in ridership on the Gautrain's train service over the December/January (festive) period and this poses a significant financial risk for the Concessionaire.

The Marketing/Communications team implemented a strategic campaign to increase ridership on both the Airport and General Passenger services (GPS), and subsequently increase revenue. This could be achieved by targeting new audiences such as families and holiday makers, as well as by introducing new users to the Gautrain service.

Year-on-year ridership statistics demonstrate a consistent decline in ridership over the festive period and annual tactical Marketing/Communications campaigns are needed to address this. These campaigns differ to address topical operational issues. The team pro-actively engaged Mango and MoA to determine their anticipated traffic volumes.

This desktop investigation helped identify applicable campaigns.

The Marketing/Communications identified an opportunity to increase ridership and revenue by targeting new audiences such as families and holiday makers, as well as introducing new users to the Gautrain service by forming partnerships with a local low-cost airline – addressing the airport ridership, and a key attraction along the commuter service.

Measurable objective by which success is evaluated.

The primary indicator for overall campaign success would be the increased train ridership. Usage on the bus service between the Midrand station and MoA would be used as an indicator and we determined that the social media fan increase would be a contributing key indicator of campaign success.

Approaches

5-Steps to Gautrain-Mango campaign:

1. A synergy between Gautrain and Mango brands helped build the partnership.
2. 240 000 sequential complimentary cards allocated.

3. Cards were distributed on-board Mango flights inbound to OR Tambo.
4. Mango guests who loaded value onto their complimentary card qualified to receive a Mango flight voucher redeemable against their next flight with the airline.
5. Mango and Gautrain were able to track and quantify the usage of these cards.

Segment 2:

4-Steps to Gautrain-MoA campaign:

1. A synergy between Gautrain (bus and train) and MoA helped build the partnership.
2. 3 000 voucher booklets valued at over R6 000 distributed in Midrand station paid area.
3. Booklets validated at MoA on same day of issue.
4. R1 per bus trip

PR messages to target audiences.

Gautrain-Mango audience was incentivised to use the complimentary card using the message 'you could be one of the lucky recipients of a complimentary card pre-loaded with R174 value.'

Gautrain-Mall of Africa audience was incentivised to use the Gautrain by offering voucher booklets, available at Midrand Gautrain station, valued at over R6000.00 and R1 Gautrain bus rides to MoA.

Communication tactics used

Tactical through-the-line approach, communicating the benefits of the Gautrain service to the identified target audience was used. These included:

- The time-saved by using the Gautrain
- Safety and security
- Financial-saving opportunity through promotional offers

Consultation with management to secure its support

Buy-in was secured from management and partners at various levels. Support from the operations team was obtained. This proved challenging, but the team persevered and were successful in their efforts

Implementation of the communications plan

Live reads were implemented on various local radio stations, to appropriately reach the target audience. The Gautrain-Mango live reads informed listeners that the Gautrain made travel more affordable, and the Gautrain-MoA reads informed listeners that shopping was made easy and more affordable.

A joint social media campaign with both partners increased awareness and the platform was used to address queries.

The Gautrain website provided details of both campaigns and displayed the applicable Terms and Conditions.

Messaging was displayed on tactically placed outdoor billboards and the Gautrain buses were wrapped with promotional information. These served as roaming billboards to obtain wide-spread reach.

Print advertisements were published in on-flight magazines as well as a popular holiday travel magazine.

Complimentary cards were presented in an attractive information brochure and information cards that housed a sweet treat were distributed at stations.

Information was displayed on the back of train seats, a tactical location used to share key information to train-users.

In-station digital billboards were used to share messaging and information was available on in-station touchscreens.

All staff were well briefed on all campaign mechanics to enable them to accurately share information and further spread campaign details.

Creative solution

Since this promotion occurred during the festive season, our visual creative hook presented this offer to the target audience as a 'gift' – wrapped with gift wrap and a ribbon.

The campaign line 'This festive season the more we give, the more you get' was used in conjunction with our specially created 'gift' illustration. The communication featured both Gautrain and Mango Airlines logos as well as an infographic explaining the mechanics of the promotion.

Difficulties encountered and adjustments made during implementation.

The difficulty existed in combining three very different brands together into one seamless piece of communication, without diluting the Gautrain brand, and also streamlining a suitable offer that tied together the three brands with an offer that was perceived to be of high-value to Gautrain commuters

Identification, analysis and quantification of results.

Complimentary cards were ordered in a sequential batch to facilitate usage monitoring.

In order to entice recipients of the complimentary cards to the Gautrain station, guests were required to check the balance on the card at a Gautrain station to see if it was pre-loaded with R174 value. We knew that if passengers made their way to the Gautrain station situated in

OR Tambo precinct, that they would be more likely to load value onto the card and complete a train trip. We believed that this would be the case even if they were not one of the lucky guests to receive a pre-loaded card.

To encourage return users and afford Mango Airline the opportunity to capture a market, Mango Airlines offered guests who loaded value onto their complimentary cards, a flight voucher for the equivalent value (up to R250), redeemable off of their next Mango flight. This ultimately meant that passengers taking advantage of the promotion travelled 'free of charge' on the Gautrain.

Gautrain users travelling to MoA received a voucher brochure valued at up to R6000 and usage of these was monitored to establish correlation in system usage and the campaign. R1 bus trips were offered and ridership for both train and bus service to and from the Midrand station was monitored. The voucher offering coupled with R1 bus trips, resulted in a perceived high value offering, attracting a great deal of attention.

Tangible results which achieved the measurable objectives.

Usage of the complimentary cards on the Gautrain service during the campaign period resulted in more than 15,000. Usage of the cards continues to be reported, proving the long-term success of the campaign. As at the end of September 2017, a total of 79,944 trips were completed using the cards. The usage monitoring of the cards and overall ridership monitoring on the Airport service showed an increase in usage of the service and the team was confident of success in meeting their objectives.

An excess of 10,000 train trips were recorded on the commuter service as a result of the Gautrain-MoA campaign. This, for the team, translated to clear success.

The Gautrain's social media accounts gained an exceptionally large reach and new following for the campaign period. Questions as to the mechanics of the campaign were few, demonstrating that the communication plans were effectively implemented. The Gautrain's social media following increased by 20,362 users. An astounding 992,000 impressions and a reach of 108,370 was obtained during the campaign.