

MSC IN MARKETING PRACTICE STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH RYANAIR'S INFLIGHT TEAM FOR FUTURE RETAIL STRATEGIES



BACKGROUND

Ryanair's Inflight service was the focus of this live case study for CIT students. The inflight service combines crew operations, product sales, buying, merchandising and health & safety on board. Ryanair manages 10,000 crew members who deliver the highest standard of customer service for 129 million passengers per annum.

Inflight retail is one of the top 3 drivers of ancillary revenue in Ryanair. Market trends, range refresh and a motivated crew are what Ryanair inflight team believes to be the key to their success. The inflight range extends to 85 hubs across Europe and North Africa which opens up different challenges in a number of markets and cultures. Research and development are key when deciding if they have the right product, in the right place, at the right time.

THE NEED

Ryanair's inflight team were looking for strategies that could further improve their internal and external relationships. They were focused on how to make the inflight experience more engaging for passengers. They stressed that marketing inflight retail campaigns are difficult to implement in comparison to seat sales. They felt this was due to the sales and marketing teams not being in sync in regards to campaigns. To manage this, an effective relationship strategy and communication plan could be applied both internally and externally.

THE SOLUTION

The class eagerly took on the opportunity to work with such an established company. The live case study required students to devise a relationship management strategy and a communications plan for Ryanair's inflight team. Furthermore, the students proposed strategies that Ryanair could implement to improve internal and external communication.



RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WINNING TEAM

The recommendations presented by the winning team included:

- Pre-purchase database and personalised gift wrapping service for retail products to create more engagement between the inflight team and passengers.
- Promoting a positive brand image through their charity work by selecting a day once a year on which they would have a flight dedicated to giving underprivileged children or children in care a wonderful experience.
- Having various fictional characters for children on-board to brighten up their day!
- Interactive customer feedback systems when passengers are exiting flights to monitor and analyse customers' perceptions of retail products.

BENEFITS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

Extensive market research reports were provided, this included surveys, interviews and customer journey maps. The relationship management strategies and communication plans proposed by the students gave Ryanair insights into further plans they can implement in the future. The inflight team left with realistic strategies and a clear outline of how to achieve them. Ryanair also kindly provided the best speaker and the winning team members, each with €100 Ryanair gift vouchers.

"It's safe to say we left for Dublin with a portfolio of ideas that we can now implement into our inflight strategies in the future."

- Darren Delaney, Assistant Buyer, Ryanair Inflight Team.