TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Mobile app due diligence sets Skyjet up for success

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Skyjet jet

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Private aviator Skyjet has transformed its business method thanks to the success of its instant booking mobile application.

According to a case study by Marketing Sherpa, Skyjet's app, equipped with a real-time processing tool, processes 1,500 itineraries weekly and grew at an average 38 percent rate per week for the first 12 weeks. Fine-tuning an app not only gives consumers another place to book through the brand, but can also encourage booking in a way that adds revenue instead of merely dispersing it through new channels.

"No matter how people prefer to price and book a charter flight, a foundational principle at Skyjet is to ensure every avenue is open for them to do so, said Greg Richman, president of Skyjet. Unlike our competitors, who often focus on one point of access, our clients can book a jet instantly via our app, our website, by email and by phone.

When we first approached the development of the app, our research indicated it would appeal to a younger demographic more comfortable with making substantial financial transactions via mobile device," he said. "The app has been in the marketplace for a year, and the 35-44 demographic, which is very much considered young in this industry, appears to download and engage with the app with the most frequency."

Due diligence
As new channels for interaction opened up and consumers abandoned certain models for others, Skyjet simply wanted to ensure that it remained visible. Last August, it launched an app to capitalize on mobile's growing influence.

After reviewing the apps of competitors, the brand determined that one way to gain an edge was through a system that would instantly calculate prices and offer consumers a small selection of potential itineraries. Such a process considerably mitigated the necessary research of the consumer.
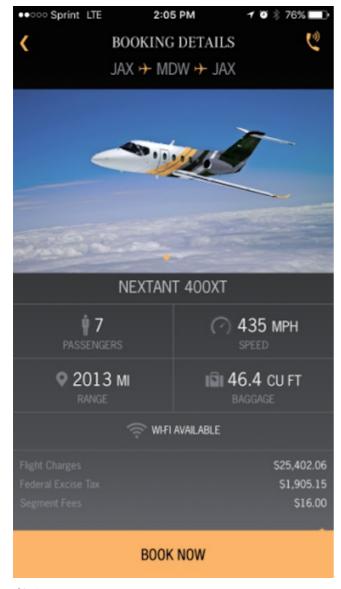
Skyjet app jet selection

By consolidating the process and easing consumer labor, a step they took further with Apple Pay integration, Skyjet stood out from competitors and became a more convenient brand for private jet flyers.

After designing the app on a macro scale, Skyjet made extensive use of A/B testing smaller aspects of the booking, such as the color of a button. The results of each change were tracked, allowing Skyjet to ensure even small details resulted in optimal returns.

Skyjet also continually updates the application. In April, instant booking, which allows consumers to select their jet and book flights up to 48 hours beforehand, was added (see story). Earlier this August, the app was updated to a version that asks consumer for permission to send push notifications.

This added permission, a "soft ask," allows a "not now" option instead of the usual "yes" and "no." Unlike a "no," a "not now" select allows the app to ask for permission again rather than relying on the consumer to change permissions in her settings.

Skyjet app

The diligent updates and testing and the precise monitoring brought Skyjet to the point where conversion rate on the app outpaced conversion on the Web site. That necessitated a change in priorities and work organization on the employees, but the brand was willing to make changes rather than fit new consumer behavior patterns into old models.

In total, SkyJet has seen more than 22,000 downloads during the year of availability. It averages 500 to 600 installs per week.

Mobile customers
Skyjet's instant booking, mobile-based model is evident in adjacent sectors as well.

New luxury travel company Immidia recently launched its app with a promise to be Uber for yachts.

Immidia allows consumers to hail a yacht to charter for private use, with delivery promised in no more than a couple hours. The new digital economy has encouraged a consumer mindset based around immediately fulfilling wants and needs, and the app represents a further step in the direction of on-demand luxury (see story).

Mobile users' eclipse of desktop is also not exclusive to Skyjet or to travel brands. Throughout luxury, mobile is becoming the channel of choice for consumers.

Yet seen as mobile surpasses desktop, a recent L2 report shows that some brands remain stubbornly behind the curve.

While some brands are privy to today's rapid changes and are implementing innovative marketing strategies, others stay the course with outmoded practices. The continuing decline of desktop is recalibrating consumer demands just as brands were catching up, meaning it is time once again for brands to pivot and win over the impatient consumer (see story).

" I will tell you when looking at our app's utilization through the lens of age, it is not a clear young versus old dynamic, Mr. Richman said. "Everyone from retirees that no longer rely on executive assistants to make their travel arrangements to young tech entrepreneurs chasing capital in real time are using this app."