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Clear skies: launching Turkey's leading no-frills airline



The number of unique visitors to the UK website jumped 15,000 in the first month of the advertising campaign.

In high summer we pinned down our plans to act as the UK marketing wing for Pegasus Airlines, Turkey's second largest airline after the flag carrier. We knew consumer advertising called for a strong design partner. We made our way to DogStar. A talented and friendly bunch, they understood the PR program we'd already launched in the UK, and clearly know how to localise an overseas brand.

Our first aim was to publicise the airline's expansion of its UK service. Pegasus Airlines is already an established and highly successful brand in Turkey having flown since 1990 and named one of the country's 26 'Superbrands' in 2007. The Sabanci dynasty that owns Pegasus is bigger than Branson, but few Britons have heard of this famous family. We had to make the brand appeal to the UK market.

For us, it's an ideal brief. The Pegasus model is based on no-frills flying, like Ryanair or EasyJet: low fares and online booking – but with a more humane approach to baggage allowance and seat assignments. Even better, the business heads in Turkey understand the power of marketing and were willing to invest in Britain.

On September 11th 2008 XL Airways collapsed, and consumers in our

British market felt the sting sharply. Clearly, the second half of 2008 would not be an easy time for a budget airline to capture their hearts and minds. DogStar responded immediately with some hard-hitting research into the low-cost airlines market, documenting Britain's crowded skies with maps from the Civil Aviation Authority and explaining how fatigued many Britons have become by no-frills operators. Overall, their research helped consolidate both our and the Pegasus marketing team's thinking. And when Simon emphasised "the need to understand the business behind the design" in an initial meeting, we knew their approach to blending powerful design with concrete business goals fits with ours.

In developing a confident and trustworthy brand for Britain, we all agreed that it's important to highlight the airline's robust track record, credibility and its financial good health. These features synched well with our media messages: as Turkey's second largest airline, Pegasus has pioneered the low cost model with fourteen international connections and sixteen domestic destinations bringing all of Turkey and North Cyprus within easy reach. We used DogStar's research to

illustrate to HQ the joint recommendations we were making.

Steering away from stock shots of historic sites in legendary Istanbul as a way to capture the imagination of the British consumer, DogStar created a fresh graphic approach. The result makes a much more powerful visual statement by using the Pegasus colours in a fresh, dynamic way. The visual message is eye catching, fresh and reassuring.

Best of all, it's practical. The ads work across media (from cross-track billboards to dynamic online banners) and we're not relying on photos to tell the Pegasus story. As we see it, the adaptability saves time and budget as the campaign evolves across media. It's also robust: we can adapt the messages as Pegasus becomes better known, but the swooping horse we feel is here to stay.

With the London Turkish Film Festival sponsored by Pegasus heading to the Southbank in December we expect the year to end on a high. And the plan for 2009 should see our marketing budget double with a glowing endorsement from Pegasus PR & Marketing Manager Ozlem Mutluer (how many teams can report that in the midst of the credit crunch?). With campaign velocity picking up, Pegasus is well and truly on the move.

Business class

Paul Turner
Executive Creative Director

We're working with Redmint in an integrated way. It's not the first time we've had such good teamwork, but it reminds me that bringing all that expertise around a single table is the fastest way to craft an effective, affordable solution. Three things I like most about this collaboration: First, Redmint knows Turkey. Their insider knowledge is a huge help. Second, they involve us as a partner – and the client gets the benefit of our joint expertise. Third, they appreciate the power of design to make key points, create impressions and influence consumers' actions. All adds up to a good way to work.

“Our approach is: You pay for what you get. But when people pay for something, we aim to deliver with style and provide value-added services for our guests.”

Ali Sabanci, Pegasus Airlines Chairman

Quote from *No Frills: The truth behind the low-cost revolution in the skies* by Simon Calder (Virgin Books, 2003, p.10):

Some people in the traditional airline business have yet to grasp that what people are buying is not the dubious pleasure of sitting in an aluminium tube for a couple of hours, eating questionable food and sinking as much “free” alcohol as possible in the time available. We are buying the sensation of warm sand and cool Mediterranean between our toes; the surge of adrenalin when a deal is done; the scent of a strange and beautiful Italian town; the euphoria of a goal at the Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona; or the smile on the face of your loved one who realises that the distance between the two of you has diminished. With thrills like that, who needs frills?