



CORPORATE VISION STRATEGISTS

A Gold Mercury International Consultancy

Transforming travel distribution in Europe, creating Europe's leading online travel business in record time

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Opodo: The online travel market is challenging but very exciting. It has great potential and has been predicted to reach a value of 38 billion Euros in Europe alone by 2006.



A travel revolution: Opodo required a vision that would start and sustain a business, marketing and technological revolutions all running in unison and synchronised to perfection.

History in the making: Europe's leading airlines come together to create a new company

Opodo was formed in 2000 by nine of Europe's leading airlines (British Airways, Lufthansa, Air France, Iberia, Alitalia, Finnair, KLM, Air Lingus, and Austrian Airways). It had two core objectives: firstly, to become a low cost distribution channel for travel products; and secondly, to become a leading player in the increasingly lucrative online travel market.

Business plan delivery essential for sustained financial investment

Speed to market and revenue delivery were crucial. Investment in the service had to show a reliable return. All our activities, from product and service creation to training, customer service and marketing communications, were therefore driven by a single Vision: Opodo's greatest asset would be its level of service. It would bring together the most skilled people in the travel industry, offering online customers an unparalleled depth of industry experience.

The marketing strategy was simple: attract, convert and retain customers.

To achieve this we set out to spend against targeted customer acquisition and focus on website design, improving the experience to maximise conversion ratios as fast as possible.



Web Traffic building records:

Our strategy of highly targeted and segmented communications through a precise selection of channels delivered rapid brand awareness, traffic volumes and record sales.



A marketing framework based on results – Attract, convert and retain customers

Revenue targets were extremely challenging, but Opododo's launch had to deliver immediate results. The pricing strategy would be the most aggressive in the marketplace - and yet the attention to detail in our customer service would be unsurpassed.

The key to our strategy was measuring return on investment immediately, using any relevant results to increase the effectiveness of all possible marketing activities. Central to this approach was the 'Customer Lifecycle' model created by Waves, our company specialised in communication planning. This allowed to develop different marketing techniques for each crucial stage of the marketing campaign: creating awareness of the brand; driving traffic to the site; and enhancing the conversion of customers from lookers to bookers (L2B).

Opodo today: one billion Euros of gross sales across Europe

Opodo launched across Europe with mass communication campaigns focused on key customer groups. The costs of commissioning selected partners were kept low by linking rewards to results.

With 700 staff and 1 billion Euros of gross sales, Opodo has become one of Europe's most successful online business launches ever, becoming the first travel portal in Germany after only one month of its launch, and one of the top 2 most visited portals in the UK and France.

Opodo was voted the Best Travel Website at the Chartered Institute of Marketing Travel Advertising Awards and won the prestigious 'Revolution Award' for Best Brand Building by an Online Business. The Revolution Awards are recognised as being the peak of recognition in the digital industry. Further product and customer service innovations will capitalise on this success and ensure continued growth.



Managing in uncertain times:

Opodo had to launch soon after the 9-11 attacks, probably the worst time in the travel industry's history. The new unknown company became instantly the number one player in key markets by carefully managing messaging in this time of reflection. Opodo represented a great technological and commercial challenge. Opodo's launch was regarded as a phenomenon. Nicolas De Santis was in charge of the marketing and sales operation for Opodo, seen below speaking on CNN at the time of the launch.



"Opodo is one of the best online business launches ever and among the fastest rises we have seen in rankings in the travel category. In a matter of weeks Opodo has established itself as one of the most trafficked travel sites in the UK, close behind established leaders Lastminute.com and Expedia which have been in the market for years"

Bernard Ochs, Founder of Net Value Internet Research

