

KLM Surprises Travelers to See ‘How Happiness Spreads’

Traveling by air can be stressful; you're rushing to get things packed, leaving loved ones behind or maybe even ending a wonderful vacation. In November 2010 Dutch airline KLM started a new campaign to surprise travelers who check in on Foursquare, a location-based social networking website, with something personal that might make their travel a little less stressful.



When someone checks in on Foursquare at one of KLM's venues at Amsterdam Schipol Airport, their main hub, the airline's KLM Surprise team goes to work. They do as much research as they can about the person using the information they've posted publicly on Twitter and Facebook and find a gift that's customized to that particular customer. They then attempt to make contact with the person through social networks and other means to meet up with them to deliver the gift.

It's clear the KLM team is really taking this to heart. One customer, Willem, was going to miss his team's biggest soccer game of the year while on a trip to New York. KLM surprised him with a Lonely Planet guide to New York with the best soccer bars highlighted to make sure he wouldn't miss the game. They found that another customer, Perry, was celebrating his birthday and surprised him with a birthday card

and glass of champagne.



The airline is using the KLM Surprise campaign as an experiment in using social networks and to see how their customers respond. They're closely monitoring tweets and Facebook posts about the campaign to see how "happiness spreads" and what kind of conversation develops around it. The promotion ran until the end of November. The airline says it may pop up again from time to time.



Greeting your customers and thanking them for visiting your business after they've checked in is, of course, the best practice for any company using Foursquare, but KLM Surprise takes it to a whole new level. The personal touch that's exhibited through each of the interactions shows that the KLM team is really looking to make peoples' days while they're traveling, and that goes a long way to "spreading happiness."

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