AIRLINES EMBRACE STAR WARS DROIDS, HOBBITS AND BATMAN TO CAPITALIZE ON HOLLYWOOD TIES

News / Airlines

With its new Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice campaign, Turkish Airlines becomes the latest airline to announce a high-profile Hollywood franchise brand cross-over.

The airline has partnered with Warner Bros to become the official carrier sponsor of Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice, which will debut in theaters around the world starting on March 25, 2016.

Turkish Airlines has announced a complement of movie-themed experiences which will align its brand with the franchise fan base around the world, and give them an inside peek at the filmed world of the iconic Super Heroes.

“The excitement around Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice will enable Turkish Airlines to showcase our global network and unrivaled hospitality to a legion of moviegoers across the world,” said M. Ilker Ayc?, Turkish Airlines’ Board Chairman.

Turkish Airlines announced the partnership last week with a special promotional trailer running on its YouTube channel.

In the theme of the campaign, Turkish Airlines is unveiling movie-themed activities including:

An exclusive 777 Turkish Airlines wrapped in Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice imagery

Limited edition movie-themed in-flight amenity kits for adults, with eye mask and slippers

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Limited edition movie-themed in-flight amenity kits for children, including headphones, slippers, and a watch

Movie-themed in-flight menu items, such as branded cookies and cupcakes

A dedicated Time Out travel guide featuring content focusing on Gotham City and Metropolis, which will be distributed to moviegoers, passengers and at select venues

A special edition frequent flyer Miles & Smiles card.

Turkish Airlines was even written into the script, with a pivotal scene unfolding aboard a 777 Turkish Airlines plane.

Turkey's Dogan News Agency reports that two of the films stars, Ben Affleck and Jesse Eisenberg feature in a commercial short film to promote the partnership, which will be revealed in the coming days.

"What made Turkish Airlines such an inspiring partner was their aspiration to dream up something more than just a promotional program but an experience that would be as original and epic as the film," Gene Garlock, Warner Bros. Pictures' Executive Vice President, Worldwide Promotional Partnerships.

Turkish Airlines also plans to get fans involved in the Batman v Superman rivalry, with a unique fantasy destination marketing twist.

The airline will soon add both Gotham City and Metropolis to its list of U.S. destinations and from February 8 through Mid March 2016, Turkish Airlines will open dedicated sites, turkishairlines.com/flytogotham or turkishairlines.com/flytometropolis to reserve their tickets. Participants will get an exclusive virtual view into the life of each city, including the activities, culture, nightlife and more.

For added buzz around the campaign, the airline invites fans to join the conversation online with the #flytogotham and #flytometropolis.

Turkish Airlines will also sponsor the movie's premiers in Los Angeles and London and launch themed contest with the winners attending the movie's Los Angeles premier as guests of the national carrier, according to Doga News.

The Empire Flies Back

The Turkish airlines partnership is on a scale to rival ANA's very successful Start Wars: The Force Awakens brand cross-over promotion which was announced with the introduction of an R2-D2 livery.

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The foundations for this creative airline brand-crossover strategy have been in place for many years. They are nurtured through the direct partnerships airlines already have with studios which supply in-flight entertainment content. And are strengthened by the work of the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX), which, as part of its passenger experience improvement mandates, facilitates networking and collaboration between airlines and studios, helping address technical and licensing matters and improve in-flight entertainment.

These relationships have evolved from suppliers and buyers to partners over the years with other notable brand-crossover campaigns.

Arguably the most successful and long-lived partnership with a film franchise, both for the airline and destination, was Air New Zealand's Lord of the Rings and Hobbit franchise partnership.

American Airlines also had success with its Planes franchise partnership with Disney Studios in 2013.American got a cameo appearance in the animated film with its Boeing 777-300ER jets embodied by thecharacter Tripp, decorated in American's new livery at a time when its introduction, replacing the iconic design which had marked the brand for decades was the topic of hot debate.

KLM also hopped on Disney's Planes, coordinating a special screening for children of the movie on one of its aircraft.

Last year, WestJet partnered with Disney studios for a brand-crossover campaign framed around the popular animated film Frozen. The promotion included the reveal of an elaborate livery, and themed aircraft interiors trim. In this video, Bob Cummings, WestJet Executive Vice President, Commercial, shares how this film franchise partnership fit the Canadian carrier's brand strategy.

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