



TMI SPY
TRAINS

Autumn 2012

TMI 
ENGAGING PEOPLE



All of us at TMI are relentlessly curious – some might even say downright nosy! Whether at home or when travelling abroad we love to spot trends, people watch, mystery shop and look out for the latest developments in service.

For this autumn edition of TMI-Spy Trains we have identified five key trends that are prevalent in the industry as well as examples to illustrate each trend. We hope they will provide you with some good food for thought. If you would like to know more, do drop us a note or give us a call and we would be delighted to kick a few ideas around with you.

1. TRAINS NOT PLANES OR AUTOMOBILES

With trains becoming faster, more comfortable, better-equipped and greener, rail's popularity has significantly increased over the last few years. And where city centre to city centre journey times are three hours or less, rail has started to succeed over air or car. In fact travellers are more willing to spend up to four hours on their train journey in return for hassle free travel. Rail travel avoids out of town airports, their lengthy check-in and security procedures. When times are reduced to below two hours e.g. London to Brussels, train travel has an overwhelming share of business.

UK rail's market share on the 10 most popular domestic air routes in 2011 grew to 44% - up from 29% in 2006. Catching the train could be more popular than going by air on the main routes between big cities if the shift from flying to the railways continues at its current rate.

2. LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU

In today's multi-tasking society customers are constantly looking out for added value services as well as a bit of fun and inspiration. These days it doesn't seem to be enough anymore to just provide a standard product or service. Customers want to have the option to engage and be entertained to enhance their overall experience. Deutsche Bahn seem to have a whole range of tricks up its sleeve to keep their customers happy – including music plug-in stations at each seat with radio channels and audio books available or a beer happy hour from 8pm onwards for tired travellers who want to reward themselves at the end of a long day.



Gatwick Express offers free custom music for the trip to Gatwick Airport with the aim of giving travellers a musical description of their journey. This free Gatwick Express Tracks service, offered exclusively to customers who buy their tickets online, includes three custom-recorded musical interpretations of the journey from recording artists Philip Sheppard, Benga, and The Milk.

The Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government Railways) has placed posters on the exterior of the central carriages. Each poster encourages commuters to join the ‘reading train’ and once inside, interior posters provide riders with a selection of 40 popular novels from which the first chapter can be downloaded via their respective QR codes. It’s part of the National Reading Plan, which aims to improve literacy. The scheme is set to run for two months and will be repeated three times a year until 2016. As well as seeking to improve the literacy of residents using the train service, the scheme also serves to promote great works of literature while keeping travellers engaged during their daily commute.



In Italy, tourist train ‘Il Treno di Sapori’ or “Train of Taste” — offers gastronomic excursions featuring delicacies of the regions it passes through. The Train of Taste travels on Italy’s Brescia-Edolo railways from Iseo through the Franciacorta region along Lake Iseo and through Valle Camonica. As it travels, tourists can not only enjoy the scenery, but they can also taste typical products and dishes of the regions they see, accompanied by local wines. Professional guides are on hand to curate the sensory experience, and both electric cars included in the specially refurbished train are equipped with audio and video broadcasting systems, as well as external cameras that give passengers a large-screen view of the landscape passing by.



3. HELLO CHILDREN!

Everyone who is a parent knows how much organisation, patience, skill and most importantly strong nerves it takes to travel with kids, especially on longer journeys. And everyone who doesn't have kids or travels without them appreciates quiet, well-behaved children sitting next to them. Some train providers are starting to realise that looking after children means that everyone wins!

Deutsche Bahn offers a Deutsche Bahn branded kids magazine called 'LeseLok' to their little customers. It contains engaging stories, quizzes and expert knowledge, featuring kid journalists reporting back from Deutsche Bahn offices, explaining how trains stay on the tracks etc. Deutsche Bahn also produces a selection of booklets about Oli and his travel adventures on the train, at the train station, on holiday etc...



Swiss rail provider SBB offers a playground on wheels in their InterCity double-decker trains to keep the journey exciting for kids. For example in the Moon Coach children can play in the "Moon Mission" space capsule, or enjoy shooting down the slide. And in the Jungle Coach, little ones are free to let off steam as they please. The tables next to the play area on the upper deck of all these family coaches are fitted out with board games like "Jungle Hunt" and "The Snake Game".



4. BEYOND THE JOURNEY

In a world where integrated end to end experiences become more and more important and where brands continually offer added value services designed to make a positive impact at every single touch point, it comes as no surprise to hear that some rail companies are doing the same.

Thalys, the rail service provided jointly by the Belgian, French, Dutch and German railways have an on-board taxi booking service on selected routes. Your travel requests are taken care of by the on-board team and you'll be welcomed in the station by a taxi driver when you alight from the train.

Deutsche Bahn offers a bicycle hire scheme (Call a Bike) based at train stations or nearby. Operating on a similar basis to the UK's Barclays bike hire scheme, it is a Deutsche Bahn-owned and branded offering that helps their customers plan their onward journey in a healthy and environmentally friendly way.





5. READY FOR BUSINESS

With train travel on the increase and attracting a growing number of business travellers, rail companies need to think about how they cater for the business traveller. Business travellers like to use their time efficiently and be able to get work done whilst travelling but are also looking for moments to unwind and relax.

Different rail operators are adapting their environment to better suit the needs of the business traveller.



Thalys offers a business lounge on-board called 'Le Salon'. It is equipped with four luxurious seats around a real meeting table, designer coat racks and electrical outlets and WIFI. This meeting place offers passengers a semi-private area for up to four people.

The new Chinese high speed commuter trains are now equipped with full-length lie-flat beds with your own lamp, and TV screen, as well as your own power socket, fold-out table, and free food. Perfect to work and then have a well-deserved little snooze to arrive refreshed at your meeting destination.

If you've enjoyed reading this trends sheet and would like to receive future editions please drop Anne-Cecile our Customer Experience Curator an email: annececile.bertrand@tmi.co.uk or give her a call on (+44) 7740771901.

We also curate trends sheet in the following categories: Retail, Airports, Financial Services, Health and Airlines. If you would like to find out more about any of these industries, just let us know and we'll make sure we keep you up to date.

Happy travels!

