

Asia budget carriers eye social media to cut costs

January 27 2011



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Singapore-based Tiger Airways, which already has a Facebook account, plans to expand its social media team as it looks increasingly to the Internet to drive its [marketing campaign](#), its chief executive told a low-cost airline conference in Singapore.

Tony Davis, who has overseen Tiger's rapid regional expansion since 2005, said print media now barely figured in his company's marketing budget.

"What I have seen in terms of marketing budgets over the last few years is we spent almost nothing now on print," Davis said.

"[Spending money](#) on print advertising just seems so old-school now, so why do it? We spend nearly all our marketing budget on online media."

Davis said the issue now is whether companies are willing to embrace new technology.

"Using things like Facebook helps you reduce cost because it's cheaper than putting an ad (in a newspaper) every week," he said.

Azran Osman-Rani, chief executive of Malaysia's long-haul budget airline AirAsia X, said social media served as an interactive medium between passengers and carriers.

"Once you have got a sufficient size, you got to realise you have to keep customers coming back to you," he said at the same conference.

"You got to be able to engage with them and there is only so much communication you can do with just putting ads in the newspapers," Azran said.

"People today are expecting a dialogue and it's incredible how much more loyalty you can build, even with customers that are upset with you when you give them a channel to air their grievances."

Cebu Pacific, a Philippine low-cost carrier, said it has enjoyed significant success on Facebook.

"[Facebook](#) is one of the [social media](#) channels that we use a lot," said the airline's chief executive adviser Garry Kingshott.

"We have our own fan page but we actually have people create other fan pages -- Cebu Pacific fan pages that have even got bigger."

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Citation: Asia budget carriers eye social media to cut costs (2011, January 27) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-asia-carriers-eye-social-media.html>

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