

Source: Statista

4.3 SALES AND PROMOTIONS

Ryanair continuously launches new promotional campaigns to attract as many customers as possible. The airline is known for its frequent discounts and promotions, offering cheap fares during specific periods of time. This creates a sense of urgency among customers to book flights and helps attract price-sensitive travellers.

These campaigns include offers that consumers might find appealing, such as 2-for-1 ticket offers, Black Friday or Cyber Week sales, limited-time discounts or even £5 flights (Ryanair, n.d.). But the reality is that many of these offers do not correspond to reality. For example, 2 for 1 flights are sometimes half the price they were at the time of the offer the day before, so customers are actually paying the same price buying during the period in which the offer is active as if they were b

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Figure 13: Ryanair's Seat Sale



Source: Ryanair

Figure 14: Ryanair's 48h Flash Sale



Source: Ryanair

To find the best deals and promotions, Ryanair recommends checking their main website, subscribing to their newsletter or following them on their social media platforms where they regularly advertise and promote their deals. It is also possible to find deals through travel agencies and deal comparison websites such as Skyscanner or Kayak, which also show Ryanair promotions and discounts. It should be noted that Ryanair offers and promotions usually have certain terms and conditions, such as travel dates, booking periods or restrictions, so it is important that customers read these carefully before making a booking.

The company always recommends booking flights from the official website to avoid any kind of scam or future problems when it comes to customer service, like receiving any kind of compensation.

4.4 LOGO AND VISUAL ELEMENTS

If we look closely at the Ryanair current logo displayed in a picture below, we can see that it is a somewhat minimalist design that presents flight and freedom through its wings and also the silhouette of a person representing height, striving towards the sky. Combined, they form the Irish national symbol, the harp. The Ryanair logo is directly based on the geographical location of the company, as well as its business. For the design of the logo, the designers

proposed different fonts that have always maintained their italic appearance. However, we can appreciate a change in this tendency since the letters for the last logo have become flat, vertical and smooth (Logos-world, n.d.).

Figure 15: Ryanair's Logo Evolution 1984-2023



Source: Logos-world

4.5 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

Despite Ryanair's claims of high customer satisfaction, the reality is that it has been ranked as one of the worst airlines in terms of customer satisfaction. According to the BBC, the airline scored just 45% satisfaction in 2019, marking the sixth consecutive year in which it has come last (BBC, 2019). Ryanair was described as "arrogant and greedy" by some of their customers.

However, Ryanair states on its website, as can be seen in the image below, that the lowest CSAT score (Customer Satisfaction Score) during 2022 was in June with 79% (Ryanair, n.d.). This data comes as a bit of a shock, since as mentioned previously, Ryanair does not have the best reputation among the general public. To understand this data a little better, we can take a closer look at the concept of customer experience.

Figure 16: Customer Satisfaction 2022

December 2022	87%
November 2022	88%
October 2022	83%
September 2022	82%
August 2022	82%
July 2022	81%
June 2022	79%
May 2022	86%
April 2022	85%
March 2022	91%
February 2022	90%
January 2022	91%

Source: Ryanair



Figure 17: Customer Satisfaction in Detail 2022

95%	Overall trip rating	89%	Reliability
90%	Inflight experience	92%	Punctuality
92%	Crew friendliness	97%	Realism
95%	Customer service	5/5	Website rating

Source: Ryanair

Ryanair understood perfectly where their strength lies and which consumers they should focus on, and that price is the most important element on which to pivot their strategy.

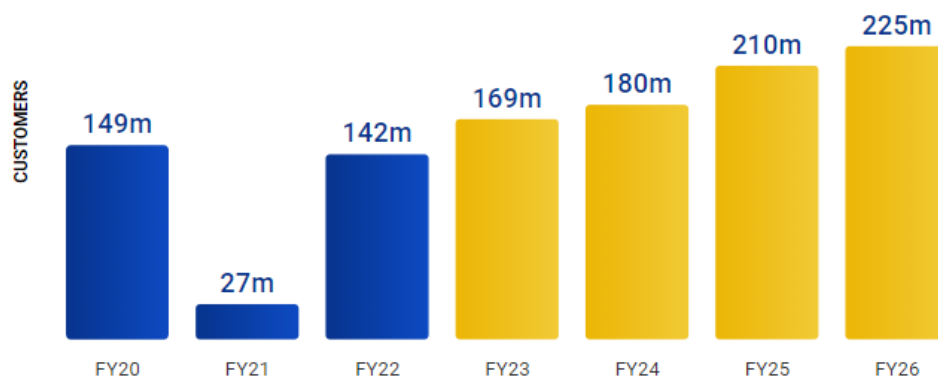
The managers of the Irish company know that even if other aspects of their product or service are of lower quality than other companies, if they manage to focus their efforts on offering the best prices, their loyal customers will continue

to travel with them. Because customers are able to travel at reduced prices, the customer experience is satisfactory, which allows them to maintain high repeat purchase rates and strong word of mouth.

There is no denying that Ryanair is an incredibly unique organisation. They understand perfectly what is important to their customers and they know that this is what will make them successful. They are also aware that there are elements that will make them thrive even more. Apart from factors such as price or punctuality, they cannot neglect aspects such as the interaction with customers by their staff. A bad experience in this regard can have a significant negative impact on customer trust in the airline.

Ryanair appears to be in an increasingly favourable position when it comes to customer experience, reporting a Customer Satisfaction Score of over 85% with a crew friendliness of over 90% in 2023, according to official sources from their website (Ryanair, n.d.). The reality is that many companies focus on highlighting their strengths at the expense of detriment to others. Ryanair may not be the company that people like the most, but its focus on bringing value to the elements that matter to its customers is exceptional.

Figure 18: Ryanair's Customer Growth 2020-2022 and Prediction for 2023-2026



Source: Ryanair

5.0 DIGITAL MARKETING AND ONLINE PRESENCE

While the vast majority of airlines continue to maintain a serious and polished corporate image on social media, Ryanair has in recent years sought to make a drastic change to its social media approach. The Irish airline has been able to win over the public with its social media marketing strategies, which at first were not very well received, but over time have given it a fresh and innovative look. Often even close to going over the edge, they have gained a lot of popularity and have made people talk about them, share their posts and keep up with their social media activity.

Ryanair first had to surround itself with a team full of talent and social media experts to tackle this new digital approach. The creation of the so-called "Ryanair Labs" allowed the company to significantly improve its digital presence as they were able to gain a much more accurate and precise view of the digital possibilities they had (Gleeson, 2015).

By 2015, Ryanair was already attracting more than 40 million visitors to its website, even with some digital limitations and little activity on key channels (Gleeson, 2015). In November 2023, Ryanair had 73 million visits to its website (Semrush, 2023). This demonstrates the importance of digital presence and the great potential it holds if done right. With an increased focus on engagement, personalisation, value and segmentation, Ryanair has managed to improve its digital presence nowadays.

Online Advertising

Ryanair's traditional advertising policy was based on owned and earned media, mainly free public relations. But this trend has changed in recent times as they have relied more on advertising platforms and marketing tools, from retargeting applications to programmatic marketing advertising solutions (Gleeson, 2015).

One of the advantages of digital marketing is the ease of managing and monitoring metrics. It also allows the company to analyse campaigns at a reduced cost. Targeted advertising allows them to fully focus on each type of target audience and deliver personalised ads in order to beat other airlines in the race.

Ryanair's Website

When it was launched, Ryanair's website (www.ryanair.com) was unintuitive and users got lost through it like a maze. It also had a rather sloppy visual appearance. You could say it was a blip in the past. Understanding that it was launched in 2000, technology has changed a lot since then.

Thanks to the aforementioned Ryanair Labs, the company managed to improve this aspect by investing much more in research to significantly improve the UX (User Experience).

All the improvements implemented on the website have always been designed to facilitate the booking process for passengers, trying to reduce the number of clicks needed to book a flight. Also noteworthy is the introduction of My Ryanair, a section where customers can log in and securely store their details and documents, check their wallet or even add travel companions to make bookings even faster. The focus towards relationship marketing is increasingly evident.

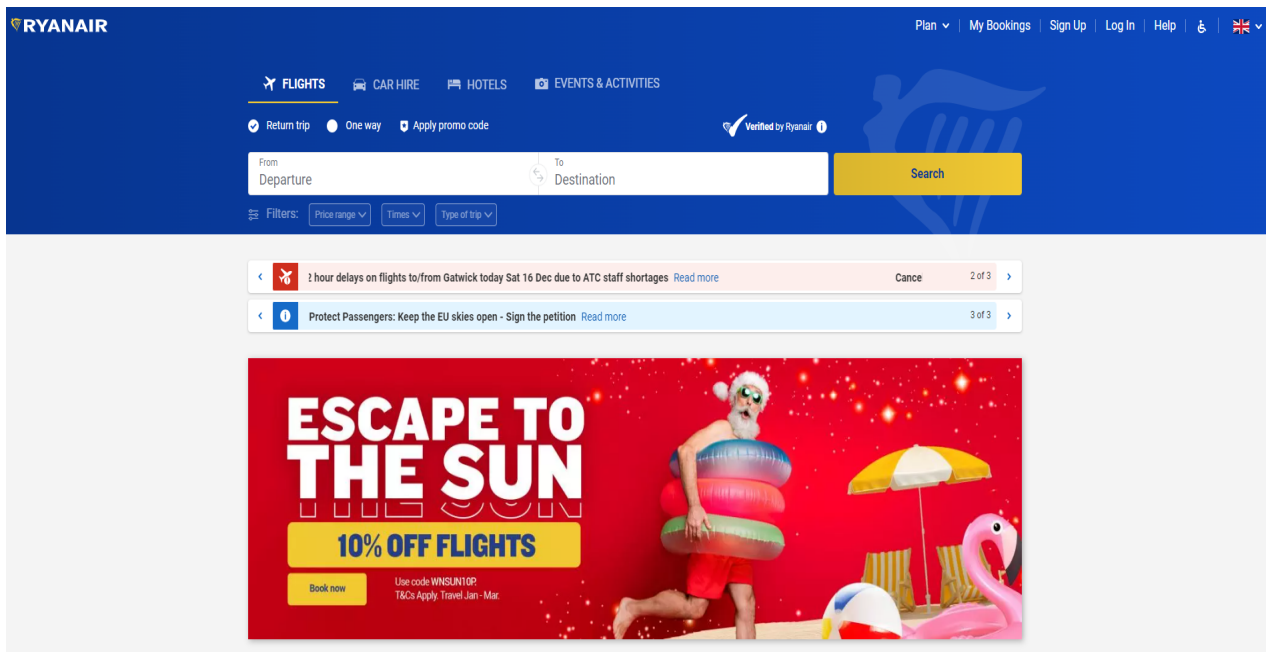
Figure 19: Ryanair's Website 2011

The screenshot shows the Ryanair website interface from 2011. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, CHEAP CAR HIRE, TRAVEL INSURANCE, CHEAP HOTELS UP TO 75% OFF, AIRPORT TRANSFER, CREDIT CARD, GIFT VOUCHERS, HOSTELS & B&B'S, CRUISE HOLIDAYS, FREE ROAMING SIM CARD, VILLAS & APARTMENTS, and CAMPSITE HOLIDAYS. Below this is a search bar and a 'Route Map' section. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Flights:** A booking form with fields for 'Departing from', 'Going to', 'Depart Date', and 'Return Date'. It also includes a 'Number of Passengers' section for Adults, Children (under 16 years), and Infants (under 2 years).
- Travel Feb-Mar:** A promotional banner for winter travel, including a 'BOOK UNTIL MIDNIGHT THURSDAY!' offer and a list of destinations from Birmingham with prices: Derry (£8.00), Düsseldorf (Weeze) (£8.00), Trieste NEW (£8.00), Dublin (£9.98), Krakow (£15.99), Bratislava (£16.99), Bydgoszcz (£16.99), Gdańsk (£16.99), Katowice (£16.99), and Rzeszów (£16.99).
- Hostels B&B's:** A promotion for budget accommodation, stating 'beats from £6'.
- WIN CASH!** A promotional banner.
- Peace of mind on your Holiday:** A promotional banner.
- CHEAP TRAVEL BARGAINS:** A section with two sub-sections: 'CHEAP HOTELS' (offering up to 50% off and a best price guarantee) and 'CHEAP CAR HIRE' (offering up to 25% off).
- Other Promotions:** 'LAST MINUTE OFFER', 'Private Transfers from the airport to your hotel from £7', and 'Stansted Train' (saving 24% on booked express).
- Footer:** Links for 'MANAGE MY BOOKING', 'ONLINE CHECK-IN', 'BUDGET BEDS', and 'PLAY GOLF!'.

Source: Diggintravel

Figure 20: Ryanair's Website



Source: Ryanair

Ryanair's App

The launch of the mobile app in 2014 was a success for the company. This allowed customers to have their boarding pass on their device without the need to print it out or have to take it out at the check-in desk before each flight. This was a marked improvement, and by 2017 the app had been downloaded by more than 20 million people (MacDonald, 2017). Basically every commercial airline has their own app, however, Ryanair has continued to make improvements to the app over the last few years based on customer feedback and experience. Among the latest enhancements introduced in 2021 is a new, redesigned digital self-service hub where customers can do the following without having to contact the customer service team:

- Change their flight
- Change the name entered at the time of booking
- Update contact details
- Add baggage
- Choose seats
- Chat with customer service online

- Consult the FAQs
- Watch how-to videos

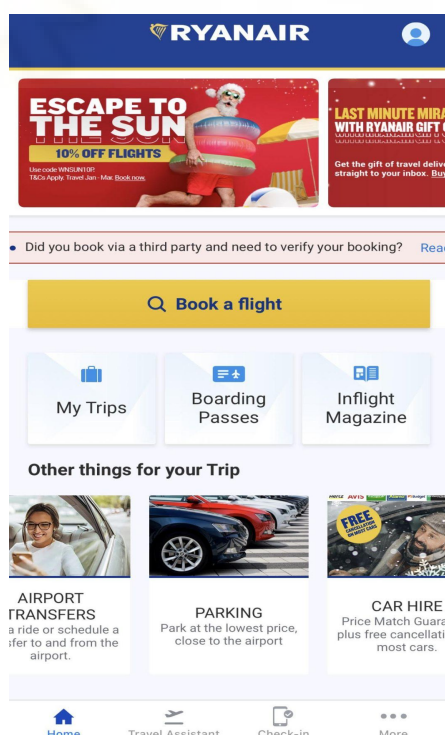
A travel assistant has also been added which allows customers to obtain information 48 hours before the trip and in real time to facilitate the journey through the airport, indicating the boarding gate, check-in desk number and take-off time.

Real-time video footage recorded from Ryanair's operations centre can also be viewed from the app to keep travellers informed of the reasons or measures Ryanair is currently taking to deal with each flight delay.

In case of flight cancellations, Ryanair states that refund requests will be processed within 24 hours and will be deposited in the Ryanair wallet, from where the money can be withdrawn to the payment method used and will be credited within 5 days or the card balance can be used to book new flights.

The Ryanair app is available for Android and Apple devices, and can be found in the Apple App Store, and in Google Play.

Figure 21: Ryanair's App



Source: Ryanair

5.1 RYANAIR'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS

Ryanair ranked ninth in the top 15 most popular social networks worldwide in January (Statista, 2022). Ryanair has managed to reach a lot of people through its posts on platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Youtube or TikTok. This has allowed the company to have a memorable online presence. Their social media team is known for their quick responses and interactions and for basing their content on jokes and viral content. This rejuvenating spirit has allowed them to connect with their younger audience and differentiate themselves from other social media accounts that often feel impersonal. Ryanair has taken risks and people have appreciated it.

One of the most important and standout parts of Ryanair's social media proposition is its ability to find the perfect balance between entertainment and information. Their posts not only provide relevant information about their promotions, destinations or services, but also entertain. Therefore, they not only generate interest in their offers, but also create an online community.

Along with promotional content, they share more relatable content such as behind-the-scenes, travel tips or stories about their customers. This approach allows Ryanair to give a true and attentive image, which enhances the connection with their target audience. Thanks to the intention to show the more human side of the company highlighting the experiences of its passengers, they awaken a sense of belonging among their followers.

Ryanair started its social media presence in 2009 (Bikales, 2022), somewhat later than its main competitors. When the company decided to join these social networks, they did not follow any particular strategy, but were simply content with the fact that any publicity is good publicity.

However, this has now changed substantially as they have incorporated that humorous touch and kept their main account for marketing, while at the same time creating another account to deal with customer queries, called "AskRyanair". The current strategy is to split the work into planned marketing campaigns and reactive content. The Ryanair team has few limitations in this respect and is free to get involved in the most controversial topics, which will make them draw the attention of the most curious users. Ryanair focuses on

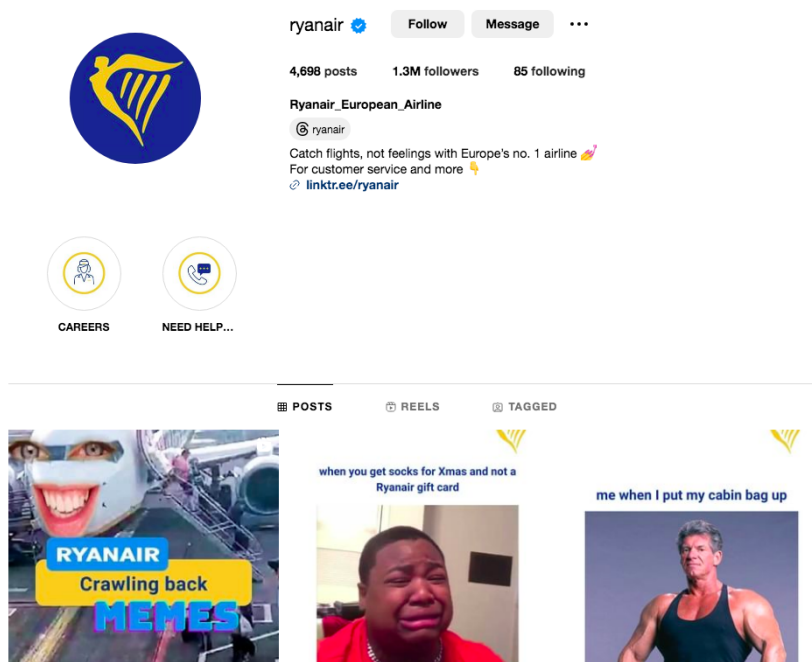
joking about its competitors or passengers who have complaints about the service they have received, and also attacks some public figures or famous people who have nothing to do with the world of aviation. It could be perceived that instead of taking into consideration the feedback and criticism of their customers, Ryanair chooses to create social media content out of it, not actually meaning to change anything in their service.

Figure 22: Ryanair's X Account



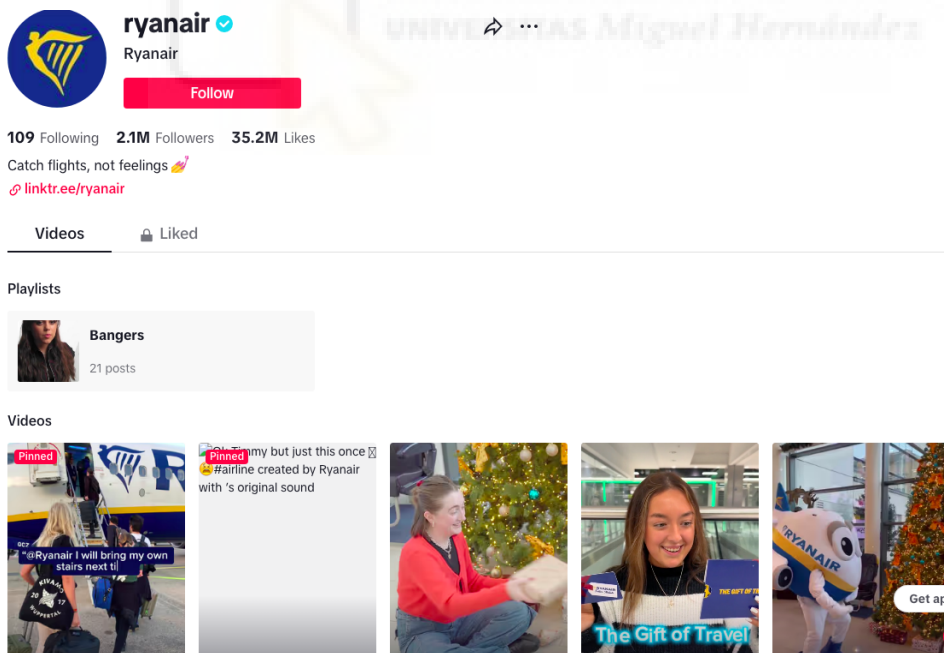
Source: X

Figure 23: Ryanair's Instagram Account



Source: Instagram

Figure 24: Ryanair's TikTok Account



Source: TikTok

6. FUTURE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY

In an increasingly digitised world, trends are constantly changing and customers have increasingly specific and personalised tastes that they expect airlines to be aware of. As we look to the future, many questions arise as to what the industry trends will be and how companies will adapt to them. The way travellers plan, book and experience travel has been radically transformed by digital marketing (Diaz, 2023).

Artificial Intelligence

The entry of artificial intelligence is one of the major game changers in the world and in the airline sector. Its ability to analyse vast amounts of data in seconds and deliver a personalised experience to travellers is transforming the aviation landscape. The ability to collect, analyse and leverage data will allow leaders to differentiate themselves from the rest. From chatbots offering personalised instant assistance to recommendation engines suggesting the best itinerary, artificial intelligence is undoubtedly improving consumer experience and satisfaction. Airlines are employing artificial intelligence to predict flight delays and proactively notify their passengers, seeking to reduce frustration and improve the travel experience.

Omnichannel Marketing

Omnichannel Marketing allows companies to be consistent across multiple channels simultaneously and deliver a rewarding experience. Businesses will increasingly succeed by integrating online and offline channels to guide customers through the entire process. This allows for smooth transitions and customer satisfaction at all times. When travelling, not having the possibility to talk to a person or find a channel to solve problems can cause a high level of stress, which has a negative impact on the customer experience (Sookdeo, 2023). Managing just one channel or directing customers to a total self-service option is no longer an option for a satisfactory traveller experience. An organisation needs to have different channels available for customers to communicate with the company. People usually reject answering machines or robocalls that provide the same standard response to everyone. It is not enough

to just offer customer service from the website, app, social media, email or SMS. Customers respond positively when their problem is solved in a personalised way and when they feel that they really connect with the person who is trying to solve their problem, for example at the check-in desk or on the phone.

Conversational Marketing

Conversational marketing will make it easier through voice assistants and chatbots for airlines to establish real-time conversations with their customers, opening doors to provide personalised recommendations and immediate customer support.

User-Generated Content and Influencer Marketing

User-Generated Content (UGC) will be a powerful tool to enhance authenticity and build trust (Diaz, 2023). Travellers rely on the opinions, reviews, photos, videos and previous experiences of others when making their decisions. One way to reach younger audiences, especially, is to collaborate with influencers or celebrities. If these influencers or even normal customers show destinations, experiences or products through photos or videos on social media, this will help to amplify brand authenticity. Collaborating with famous influencers who are known for their honest reviews can be a good and inexpensive way to increase the customer base.

For airlines that want to stay on the cutting edge and not lose customers, keeping up with the latest marketing strategy is not an option, but a must (Diaz, 2023). By staying on top of the latest trends, they will be able to keep up with the changing expectations of travellers and also gain a foothold in a crowded and competitive market. In the future, airlines will seek an even more digitised and contactless customer-centric experience. Future trends include the elimination of check-in, facial recognition boarding, simplified purchasing and ticket exchange processes, and the use of virtual reality for customer service and in-flight entertainment.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN IMPROVED MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS

Although the marketing strategies pursued by Ryanair appear to be effective, in this section I will propose some suggestions that may improve Ryanair's marketing performance.

Search Engine Optimization

Thanks to Ryanair's reputation, they did not need to direct traffic as they have a very strong brand name. However, it may be necessary for them to appear at the top of the search results and not to give space to intermediaries such as the flight comparison site Skyscanner or, even worse, to competitors. By following an effective SEO strategy, optimising the website for a higher rank, companies like Ryanair can improve visibility and attract new customers.

Create Loyalty Programmes

Ryanair has only created one loyalty programme called Ryanair Choice, priced at 199 euros per year. This membership programme included throughout the year and for all flights operated by the company: priority boarding, fast track through security (at available airports), standard seat selection and a 10kg bag. This programme was clearly aimed at business travellers, as if they were not going to make more than 4 trips with the company per year, the subscription was not profitable. It was not really successful since the company has not decided to launch another loyalty program after that.

My suggestion would be to add more frequent flyer programmes, for example, by number of flights per year. Other companies, such as: Iberia, British Airways, Aer Lingus and Vueling (International Airlines Group) have common loyalty programmes based on points called "avios", which allow you to redeem for flights or even reduce the cost of flights when you use them (Avios, n.d.).

Another option could be to offer exclusive airport lounges for loyal customers who have made a certain number of flights with the company, as the airports where Ryanair operates are usually quite inconvenient.

Offer Free Wi-Fi

Some airlines are already including this type of service on board and this could be a problem for Ryanair. As discussed earlier in this final degree project, the world of technology is changing faster and faster and Ryanair must adapt. Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary commented in an interview to The Sunday Business Post in 2019, that this service was not feasible for the company as they would have to install satellites on the planes and that this would result in a 4% loss in fuel and higher costs for the company (Lomholt, 2019). However, this approach might have changed in present times and we could see Ryanair's Wi-Fi on board in the future. Today's population increasingly relies on the internet to be able to, for example, work while travelling, which would be a competitive advantage over other airlines that do not yet offer this service that business travellers would take advantage of.

Airline Alliances

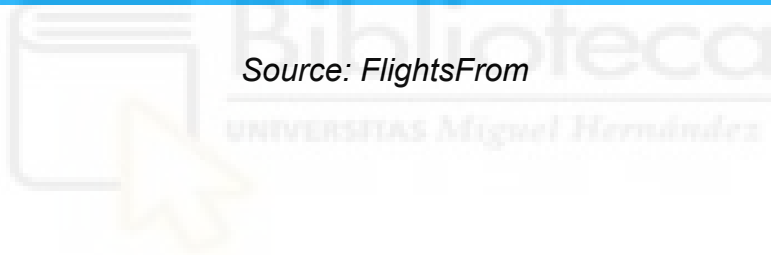
Another possible marketing strategy that would enhance Ryanair's public image and customer experience would be to improve its partnerships. Currently, Ryanair relies on three other companies that are part of the Ryanair Group: Buzz (Poland), Laudamotion (Germany) and Malta Air (Malta). However, being part of one of the three major airline alliances would increase Ryanair's potential.

When we talk about an alliance, we must understand that an airline commits to share resources with other companies to improve the passenger experience. Thanks to these alliances, it allows them to compete more effectively against other airlines. Alliances make it possible to offer connections between airlines with a single ticket and from a single website. As mentioned above, it can also be interesting to form a reward and loyalty system, but this is common between airlines. Extra baggage, free seat selection or even free in-flight meals are some of the rewards offered by alliances when customers reach a certain number of points when flying with the member airlines.

Figure 25: The Three Big Airline Alliances 2019



Source: FlightsFrom



8. CONCLUSION

To conclude and after analysing all the information described in this final degree project, it can be stated that the marketing strategies carried out by Ryanair are as unusual as they are effective. Thanks to them, and despite being constantly involved in controversy (which has helped to gain repercussions), Ryanair has managed to show the world that more personal and casual side that is sometimes lacking when buying a product or hiring a service. Using customer reviews and complaints on social media for marketing purposes is simply masterful. Thanks to this, the community has felt represented and understands that Ryanair is much more than just cheap tickets. Their clients and themselves accept and recognise that what they offer is not a premium service, but they try to make the most of it and they are undoubtedly succeeding, which has a lot of merit. With the advance of new technologies, it seems that the human side that people need so much has been somewhat forgotten.

It is clear that the airline seeks to reduce costs as much as possible and despite being exposed to multiple challenges and threats, Ryanair remains strong and continues to be a leader and benchmark in the commercial aviation market. The company's results and economic forecasts are favourable, the airline continues to grow and has been able to quickly overcome very hard blows such as the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. The Irish airline has improved a lot in recent years in order to achieve customer satisfaction and this is key for the future of the company. It should seek in the long term to maintain its policy of low prices but without neglecting customer service, which together with a combination of current and innovative marketing strategies will keep it at the top of the industry. What is clear is that with technology constantly changing, no one knows for sure what the future of marketing will hold and whether airlines will be able to make the most of it.

CONCLUSIÓN

Para concluir y tras analizar toda la información descrita en este trabajo de fin de grado, se puede afirmar que las estrategias de marketing llevadas a cabo por Ryanair son tan inusuales como efectivas. Gracias a ellas, y a pesar de verse envuelta en polémicas constantemente (lo que le ha ayudado a ganar repercusión), Ryanair ha conseguido mostrar al mundo ese lado más personal y desenfadado que a veces se echa tanto de menos cuando compras un producto o contratas un servicio. El hecho de utilizar las críticas y quejas de sus clientes en redes sociales para hacer marketing es simplemente magistral. Gracias a eso, la comunidad se ha visto representada y siente que Ryanair es mucho más que simples billetes baratos. Ellos mismos aceptan y reconocen que lo que ofrecen no es un servicio premium, pero intentan sacarle el máximo partido y sin duda lo están consiguiendo, lo que tiene mucho mérito. Y es que con el avance de las nuevas tecnologías, parece que se ha perdido un poco ese lado humano que tanto nos hace falta.

Está claro que la aerolínea busca reducir los costes al máximo y a pesar de verse expuesta a múltiples retos y amenazas Ryanair se mantiene fuerte y sigue siendo líder y referente en el mercado de la aviación comercial. Los resultados y las previsiones económicas de la compañía son favorables, la aerolínea no para de crecer y ha sido capaz de superarse rápidamente de golpes muy duros como la pandemia provocada por el virus COVID-19. La aerolínea irlandesa ha mejorado mucho en los últimos años buscando alcanzar la satisfacción de sus clientes y eso es clave para el futuro de la compañía. Deberá buscar en el largo plazo mantener su política de precios bajos pero sin descuidar la atención al cliente, lo que junto con una combinación de estrategias de marketing innovadoras y efectivas como las empleadas en la actualidad, le hará mantenerse en lo más alto del sector. Lo que está claro es que debido a los constantes cambios tecnológicos, nadie sabe con certeza qué nos deparará el futuro del marketing y si las aerolíneas serán capaces de sacarle el máximo partido.

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