

Movie product placement allows Travelpro to go 'Up in the Air'

When Scott Applebee got the call that executives with Paramount Pictures' new dramatic comedy, "Up In The Air," had requested Travelpro suitcases for on-air placement, he assumed the tie-in would be a fit.

After all, the Jason Reitman-directed movie focuses on a high-miles business traveler, said Applebee, the Boca Raton-based company's VP of marketing. Products would be shown throughout the movie – including be-



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ing wheeled about by star George Clooney.

Given that the brand is the preferred suitcase of some 80 airlines, Applebee added, serving the frequent flyer psychographic "is what our brand stands for."

Product placement deals are increasingly common, said Daniel Muggeo, principal with Daniels & Roberts. The Boynton Beach shop is the company's agency of record and handled the supporting campaign.

But, in order to work, such deals have to be a synergistic fit, he warned. It is key to ensure during negotiations that the product will be placed on-screen in the right context and among similar products, Muggeo said.

For example, when his firm handled a product placement deal for Dole Food Co. in the movie, ads and promotions for "Curious George," Muggeo saw the placement as a perfect fit. The product was "integral" to the story, and the relationship added value to the Dole brand, he said. Conversely, Dole had been approached by placement agents looking to pair it on screen with unhealthy foods or in the hands of the wrong demographic, he said.

Other "Up In The Air" placement partners were American Airlines and the Beverly Hilton. Travelpro worked closely with Hilton on a sweepstakes tie-in, Muggeo said.

Done well, the product being placed can reap significant benefit – even more than the dollars invested might suggest, he said. While neither Applebee nor Muggeo would discuss the cost, product placements can top \$500,000, not including supporting advertising and media costs, Muggeo said.

"It's one thing to have a placement, it's another to have an integrated placement," said Muggeo, whose account supervisor Fran Saleh worked closely on the program. "The price you pay is directly related to the value you're bringing to the studio. But, the reality is if your product is integral to this movie, you'll see that the movie is less concerned about the dollars they're going to receive. This really appeared that we had done a lot more, as far as financial compensation to the studio. It was incredibly rich because it worked."

The ad shop handled in-store promotions and a sweepstakes at 700 retailers nationwide. An online campaign is currently running on 10,000 travel and entertainment sites, Applebee said. The firm will also mine and measure consumer data captured through the sweepstakes to create ongoing promotional programs not necessarily tied into the movie release, he said. This could include promotions related to the future release of the DVD.

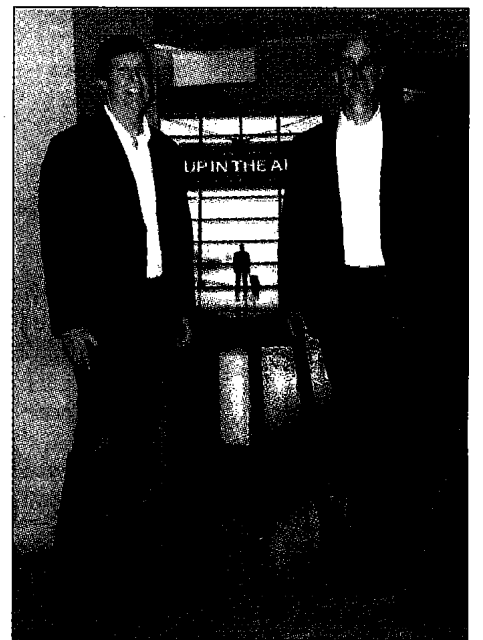
The campaign has been supported by a publicity blitz by Howard R. Miller Communications, which has offices in North Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Travelpro's PR agency of record has secured numerous placements, both domestically and internationally.

In the end, Applebee and Travelpro CEO Rob Rankin were pleased with the outcome. The movie has won raves from reviewers, and Clooney's performance has been mentioned as Oscar-worthy. In all, Reitman requested and received 70 pieces of Travelpro luggage. The brand was "predominant throughout the movie," Applebee said following the movie's Nov. 30 Los Angeles premiere. Camera zoom-ins on the logo topped at least 10, and one scene was shot in a fictitious Travelpro store.

"We were the sole luggage provider in the whole movie," he boasted. "If someone's carrying a bag, the bag is ours."

One bag was not, Applebee said, but "it was swapped out for Travelpro."

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Travelpro's Scott Applebee and Rob Rankin.



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