

EMIRATES “A HIGH-PROFILE US INTRODUCTION” PROGRAM



Situation Analysis:

As a leading expert in aviation public relations, M. Silver Associates was hired to launch **Emirates** airlines to the US market in 2004. Facing a rapidly changing, highly competitive international airline arena and with other international carriers already serving the destination, M. Silver was tasked with pre-selling the airline, its new A340-500 aircraft and establishing a dominant brand presence prior to the start up of the first-ever direct service from New York to Dubai. Challenges encountered by the agency included limited pre-launch advertising support and low awareness of Dubai in the US as a travel destination or airline hub. In addition, there was a pervading lack of general knowledge, misinformation and confusion about the Middle East among North Americans, especially following the events of September 11, 2001.



Statement of Objectives and Goals:

- Position **Emirates** as a global airline and the carrier of choice to the Gulf, the Middle East and points beyond
- Promote Dubai as one of the most modern, progressive, safe and technologically advanced commercial centers in the Middle East
- Showcase the airline's outstanding and award-winning service levels, in-flight experiences, profitability, fleet, safety record and global reputation
- Focus on the airline's highly professional and seasoned senior management to create a leadership position in the aviation industry

Program Planning and Strategy:

To create positive awareness for **Emirates** and greater demand for the airline, M. Silver devised an aggressive multi-tiered B2B and B2C communications campaign. Planning and strategy included:

- **Visiting Journalist Program** – Secured high-profile media to travel to Dubai to visit company headquarters, tour its facilities, become more familiar with the destination, meet with Emirates senior management and experience Emirates' service levels via existing routes
- **Media Events** – Organized press events, pre- and post-launch in New York City, Boston and Washington DC introducing Emirates Airlines, the new service, as well as Dubai as an emerging “hot” destination to leading travel, aviation and business media
- **Media Tours** – Brought senior Emirates management to NYC for interviews, editorial round tables, and broadcast appearances with top media outlets, including *CNN*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc.
- **News Bureau** – Created and distributed a steady stream of news and information on Emirates to a variety of media (aviation, travel trade, lifestyle, business, ethnic, etc.) throughout the year via press releases, feature stories and media alerts to build pre-launch awareness and credibility for the airline
- **Video News Releases** – Created to showcase innovative approach by the airline in creating unparalleled in-flight passenger experiences, including new “cabin in the sky” first-class suite concept



Results:

Pre-launch exposure was solid for **Emirates** in the US (especially New York) as well as for Dubai as an exciting travel destination in such outlets as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Times*, *Forbes*, *Travel Weekly* and *Travel Agent*. The VNR created to showcase Emirates' unique first-class suites was broadcast in over 20 major markets throughout the United States. In addition, the successful June, 2004 arrival of the first flight was extensively covered by business and industry media, including CNN and CNBC. Subsequently, the airline has experienced a surge in bookings from North American business and leisure travelers and Dubai is becoming recognized as one of the top international destinations of the 21st Century. Demand for the service has prompted airline management to consider adding a second flight out of New York and move ahead with its plans for additional routes across the US.

