

Portland Business Journal - August 18, 2008

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PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL

Friday, August 15, 2008

Local agency takes flight

Airport Marketing Income LLC brings airports and advertisers together

Portland Business Journal - by [Erik Siemers](#) Business Journal staff writer

As airlines slash capacity and passenger totals drop, a Beaverton company is working to help airports find creative ways to generate revenue.

Offering services like interactive advertising displays, beverage pouring rights and ad-sponsored wireless Internet programs, **Airport Marketing Income LLC** has doubled its number of airport contracts in the past year.

“There is not a glass ceiling for this business,” said Grant W. Hammersley, the company’s CEO. “As fast as we can innovate, there is no end.”

The company’s strategy is to help airports and advertisers capitalize on the average of 93 minutes consumers spend waiting idly for a flight, said Brad Jersey, AMI’s president.

The four-year-old company is a spin off of **Opus Solutions**, a Beaverton-based event management firm that specializes in trade shows. Jersey, a former Los Angeles-based sales and marketing director for **American Airlines** who had since moved to Opus, saw an opportunity to bring the interactivity of trade show displays to the airport world.

Airport advertising historically has been little more than “backlit dioramas,” Jersey said.

AMI seeks to increase the options available to airports.

At Boston’s Logan International Airport, AMI convinced Citizen’s Bank to take its tradition of giving out roses at bank branches on Mother’s Day to the baggage claim.

From Thanksgiving through Christmas last year, so-called “brand ambassadors” for the Airborne herbal supplement handed out 875,000 free samples of the anti-cold and flu tablets at airports in Chicago and Denver.

AMI also offers an array of nontraditional marketing products:

1 Specifically designed audio tracks that can be played throughout a concourse, intermingled with the ever-present security announcements. The audio track at Cleveland Hopkins Airport last fall included the voice of Cleveland Indians manager Eric Wedge as the team made an unexpected run in the playoffs.

1 Advertising-sponsored wireless Internet, allowing airports to provide a reliable connect to



Cathy Cheney/Portland Business Journal

Brad Jersey, a former sales and marketing director for American Airlines and now president of AMI, believes major companies will soon bid for corporate sponsorships of airports. He holds Leon, a ball python he calls the “company mascot.”

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passengers for free. Mineta San Jose International Airport in California is using the service.

l Exclusive beverage pouring rights. AMI secured a \$2 million, five-year pouring rights deal between Pepsi and Cleveland Hopkins, of which AMI earns 40 percent, Jersey said.

AMI declined to provide revenue figures, but said its airport contracts have increased from five to 10 in the past year, thanks to a joint venture with the airport advertising division of Clear Channel.

The Indianapolis Airport Authority is considering whether to use some of AMI's services for its new \$1.1 billion airport set to open Oct. 28, said Jerry Wise, the authority's director of new airport business development. While marketing income represents a small portion of the airport's revenue stream, Wise said AMI's services could help them enhance the passenger experience.

"AMI has done some pretty innovative things out there and we are talking to them about several initiatives," Wise said.

Pauline Armbrust, CEO of Armbrust Aviation Group, a Florida consulting firm that publishes the trade journal **Airport Revenue News**, said airports need to find new revenue sources.

"Traditionally it's come from the airlines, but they've found that airlines have been cyclical," Armbrust said. "They now have to look more like commercial business people and use their facilities to generate more revenue."

As that trend continues, AMI believes airports are likely to follow the path of sports arenas in adopting naming rights, Jersey said.

AMI already secured naming rights deals for parking structures at the Cleveland and Boston airports, but Jersey said the next evolution could be corporate sponsorship of airports.

"Someday you're going to fly into Nike International Terminal One at **Portland International Airport**," Jersey said. "I can see it coming. I just hope it's us doing it."

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