

Investigation into the marketing and product effectiveness of the advertising medium Minicards

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In January 2001 V.o.f. launched a new advertising medium: Minicards.

Many users have stated the following: *'Minicards are a very good idea, handy and pretty'*.

Today Minicards are available in 180 hotels in Amsterdam and in 10 different locations. Per year over 2.7 million hotel residents and more than 1 million people in other locations are reached.

Minicards Vof was anxious to get to know to what extent the target group makes use of the Minicards and to what degree users are satisfied with its supply and practicality. So, actually, what exactly is the marketing effectiveness for the advertisers and what is the product effectiveness of the Minicard to the users. This article summarises the results of the investigation into the effectiveness.

The investigation

During a period of 7 weeks the investigation was carried out by a student of the School of Economics (Hogeschool voor Economische Studies – HES) in Amsterdam. As a method used for collecting data questionnaires were used. In this way the user profile can be defined correctly. To achieve a representative investigation a sample selection of respondents was fixed at 250. To get the right picture of the users of the Minicards, the inquiries were taken orally among the residents of 18 hotels in Amsterdam. The selected 18 hotels are a cross section of the hotels where Minicards are available.

Target

The target of the investigation is to get an insight in the use of the product Minicards. To find this out, the twenty questions of the questionnaire were aimed at the following three aspects:

- User profile
- The Use of the Minicard product
- Assessment of the Minicards product

The results

User profile

The figure underneath shows that most respondents come from Great Britain. The respondents' average age is 35.5 years and on average they stay 3.09 nights in the hotel in question in Amsterdam.

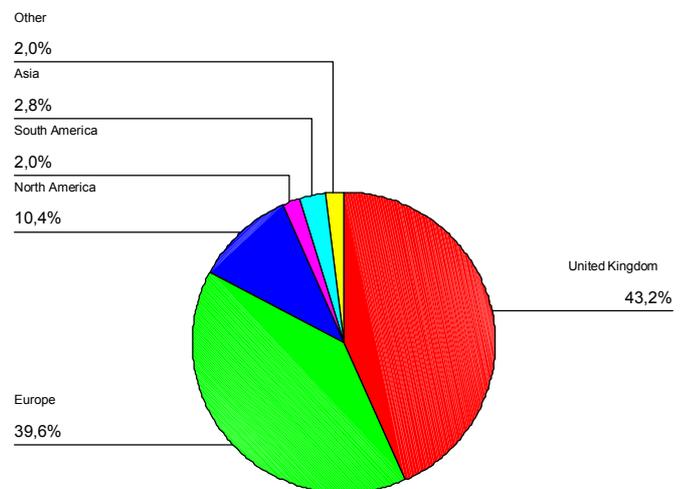


Figure 1 Percentages of the number of respondents per continent

The use

From the investigation it appears that 73.2% of the respondents saw the Minicards in the hotel.

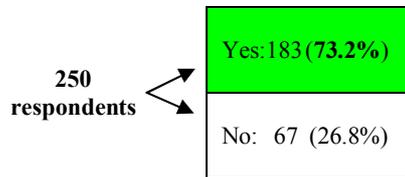


Figure 2
The number of respondents that saw the Minicards

Out of the 183 people who saw the Minicards nearly 60% took one or more of the Minicards along. On average they took 5.05 cards along.

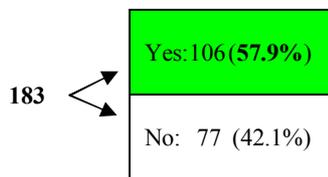


Figure 3
The number of respondents that took one or more Minicards along

Out of the 106 respondents who took one or more Minicards, 80.2% indeed visit one or more attractions. Due to the Minicards one quarter of the respondents visited an attraction other than preliminary planned.

The greater part of the Minicards contains a reduction of the advertiser. One third of the people that visited a museum, shop or restaurant, handed in their Minicard. Two third of the people kept the Minicards with them.

Each Minicard contains the advertiser's website. 41.5% of the respondents indicated to visit one or more websites once at home again. Nearly 70% of the respondents who took one or more Minicards along intend not to discard the cards, but instead to take them home. They considered the cards a nice souvenir or said they would hand the cards down to friends or relatives.

Assessment of the product

Almost all respondents were satisfied with the information on the Minicards and 84% of the respondents thought the map on the cards clear.

Figure 4 shows that the Minicards are the most used advertising medium after travel guides in hotels where they are available.

Information source	Number of times mentioned	% of 250
Travel Guides	110	44.0
Minicards	85	34.0
Internet at home	78	31.2
Leaflets in hotel	70	28.0
Other	68	27.2
Oral information of receptionist	47	18.8
Tourist Information Office	19	7.6
Hotel book in room	17	6.8
Magazines in hotelroom	13	5.2
Internet in Amsterdam	7	2.8
Total	514	100.0

Figure 4
Used information sources

Conclusion

From the investigation it appears that Minicards clearly gained a place as a source of information for tourists. The product is often used and there are positive reactions to the information on the Minicards. Also, the users are content with its practicality; the cards are small in size, but nevertheless, a Minicard contains all the information necessary to visit an attraction.

The foregoing shows that the marketing effectiveness of the Minicards is good. Minicards is a favourable concept for advertisers to promote their product or service. Firstly, because many tourists are reached through Minicards. Secondly, the product is often used. The product effectiveness is also good. The cards are user-friendly and meet the user's needs.