

The Little Airport That Could



**This is the story of the invention of a new brand image
and the advertising campaign that continued to evolve with the brand.**

Case study for the Akron-Canton Airport



Situation

In 2002, after years of using "Lowest Average Fare in Ohio" in their retail-focused advertising, the Akron-Canton Airport (CAK) asked the team of Dave Derby and Randy DeMuesy to create an entire brand position and campaign for the airport.

In effect, we were positioning CAK against the mighty Hopkins International Airport.

And while 'cheap flights' was an effective message, the airport ultimately had no control over the product—prices and destinations could, and often did, change.

We needed a brand position that would be ownable in the long run.

Akron-Canton Airport

The Facts

Cleveland Hopkins is a big airport with a far walk from the parking area, long lines at check-in, and crowded concourse complete with all the noise and confusion. Travelers already know this and, more importantly, have *lived* this—it's an unpleasant experience implanted on their minds.

Meanwhile, CAK has nearby parking right outside the terminal, shorter lines, less crowds and an easier-to-get-through terminal. Even if a traveler has never been to CAK, they can readily *believe* this, because they already know CAK is a smaller airport, with less people using it (and therefore, it only makes sense that the parking would be closer, and the crowds would be lesser).

The Insight

Flying is stressful to people. But, thanks to the ease of use, flying is less stressful at CAK.

Thanks to the shorter lines, smaller crowds and simple terminal, CAK could offer a better travel experience. And together with low fares, it's just a better way to go.

Akron-Canton Airport

New brand position

Price + Experience = A better way to go

Rational attributes + Emotional connection = Your proprietary brand positioning



AKRON-CANTON
AIRPORT

a better way to go.®

Akron-Canton Airport

The Launch

Our radio campaign broke first, supported by billboard and magazine ads—each emphasized the brand 'experience' aspect. Meanwhile, small space newspaper ads kept delivering price/destination retail messages.

Outdoor

**Save time. Save money.
Save your sanity.**


**AKRON-CANTON
AIRPORT**
a better way to go.

**Suffering from
congestion?**


**AKRON-CANTON
AIRPORT**
a better way to go.™

www.akroncantonairport.com

These billboards were strategically located right outside Hopkins Airport.

Akron-Canton Airport

Magazine Ads



**What a long strange trip it's been.
And you haven't even pulled away from the gate yet.**

Next time, fly out of the Akron-Canton Airport. With easy, accessible, nearby parking. Less congestion at the terminal entrance. Shorter lines at check-in. A simpler terminal to navigate through. A bit more sense of calm. Hey, you didn't think more people were flying through Akron-Canton just because we offer the lowest average fare in Ohio, did you?



AKRON-CANTON AIRPORT
a better way to go.
800 434 2711 • www.akroncantonairport.com



**All you do during a flight is sit.
So why do you always end up feeling so tired?**

Next time you have a convention in the Cleveland area, fly into the Akron-Canton Airport. With a shorter terminal to get through. Less crowds and confusion at baggage claim. A bit more sense of calm. And just a pleasant shuttle ride away from your hotel, where you'll arrive more refreshed and ready to network. Hey, you didn't think more people were flying through Akron-Canton just because we offer the lowest average fare in Ohio, did you?



AKRON-CANTON AIRPORT
a better way to go.
800 434 2711 • www.akroncantonairport.com
Air-Tex Airways • Delta • Northwest • United • US Airways • Jet • Spirit • Enterprise • Hertz



**On your next business trip,
will you be going non-stop?**

Will you be waiting to the terminal from the far-off parking garage, and then, after losing time at that long line at check-in, rushing through the congested concourse as you try to find your gate? Or, instead, will you be able to take a breath and focus on your upcoming meeting, thanks to the faster parking, shorter lines, and simpler, easier-to-get-through terminal at the Akron-Canton Airport. Where, by the way, you can find great deals on non-stop flights to New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Hey, you didn't think more people were flying through Akron-Canton just because we offer the lowest average fare in Ohio, did you?



AKRON-CANTON AIRPORT
a better way to go.
Air-Tex Airways • Delta • Northwest • United • US Airways
800 434 2711 • www.akroncantonairport.com

These ads ran in the Northeast Ohio regional addition of the MNI Publications - Newsweek, Business Week and Time.

Akron-Canton Airport

Results

Passenger levels rose 27% to a new record during 2002, hitting almost 900,000. It got even better the following year. For the first time in its history, the airport hit the one million passenger mark—**finishing 2003 with a total of 1,164,755 passengers**, surpassing the previous year's record by 30%.

The region's other airport is beckoning

MARR ROLLENHAGEN
Plain Dealer Reporter

*Save time.
Save money.
Save your sanity.
Akron-Canton Airport: a better way to go.*

The words on the billboard that went up this month across the street from Cleveland Hopkins International Airport poke city officials like a pebble in a shoe.

"They've got an airport down there?" Hopkins Commissioner Fred Szabo asked sarcastically in an interview last week.

They do. And while Hopkins struggles to rebound from the drastic drop in air travel that followed Sept. 11, Akron-Canton Regional Airport is successfully casting for customers outside Hopkins' front door.

The terrorist attacks were only a temporary setback for the little airport south of Akron, which has recovered far more quickly than Hopkins, filling seats on new flights offered by AirTran and Delta airlines.

And what better place to make a pitch to travelers than in front of an airport used by thousands every day? More than 13 times as many travelers use Hopkins as use Akron-Canton.

"That's a great spot to speak to them," said Fred Krum, aviation director for Akron-Canton.

Despite the billboard's location — and an advertising campaign on Travelocity.com that flashes an Akron-Canton ad when you type in Cleveland as your starting point — Krum doesn't look at it as competing with Hopkins Airport.

"Hopkins is a huge, valuable asset," Krum said. "We want to both grow. I realize that they're not growing now, but they will."

He said Akron-Canton supported Cleveland's effort to get a direct flight to London and to expand by adding runways.

"A thriving Hopkins helps us," Krum said.

Krum said Akron-Canton and other secondary airports with budget airlines have rebounded from the Sept. 11 attacks more quickly than large airports because they offer a combination of shorter lines and sometimes cheaper fares.

Taking off
The number of travelers using Akron-Canton Regional Airport has been climbing since December, while Cleveland Hopkins International Airport struggles to return to pre-Sept. 11 levels.

Change in passenger levels

Percentage change from same month in previous year

Month	Akron-Canton Regional Airport	Cleveland Hopkins International Airport
SEPT.	-32%	8%
OCT.	-22%	-21%
NOV.	-19%	-19%
DEC.	3%	-18%
JAN.	7%	-13%
FEB.	12%	-14%
MARCH	14%	-14%

SEE FLIGHTS | A7

SOURCE: The airports

THE PLAIN DEALER

Akron-Canton Airport

Keep the momentum going

With new passenger records being set every month, our client wanted to continue the momentum with new TV spots that would deliver our powerful and proven brand message on television.

Our "Travelers Take a Beating" campaign actually put the viewer in the middle of the action, allowing them to live vicariously through our 'talent' who is stuck flying through Hopkins—sparking painful memories of how it sometimes feels to fly through 'that big airport.'



Concourse

VO: Remember how it felt the last time you flew out of that big airport? So, next time, why not fly out of Akron-Canton instead? With nearby parking, shorter lines, less crowds and confusion. The Akron-Canton Airport. A better way to go. **TAG:** It's also a better way to save. With low fares to Tampa aboard AirTran Airways.



Remote Parking

VO: Once you drive to the airport, shouldn't you be at the airport? Well, you'd think so. So, next time, fly out of Akron-Canton instead. With shorter lines, less congestion, and closer parking right outside the terminal. The Akron-Canton Airport. A better way to go. **TAG:** It's also a better way to save. With low fares to Tampa aboard AirTran Airways.



Walkway

VO: Remember what it was like the last time you flew out of that big airport? So, maybe this time, you try the Akron-Canton Airport. With closer parking right outside the terminal, shorter lines and less congestion. The Akron-Canton Airport. A better way to go. **TAG:** It's also a better way to save. With low fares to Tampa aboard AirTran Airways.

These :30 and :15 second spots ran on network and cable stations in Northeast Ohio - TV3, TV5, TV19 and Time Warner cable.

Akron-Canton Airport

Punch Dummy was a hit

The TV spots help garner ink in the newspapers, articles in business pubs, and **another record setting year**—in 2004, CAK handled 1,358,000 passengers, surpassing the previous year's record by more than 16%.



This animated web banner appeared on the web sites of TV3, TV5 and TV19.

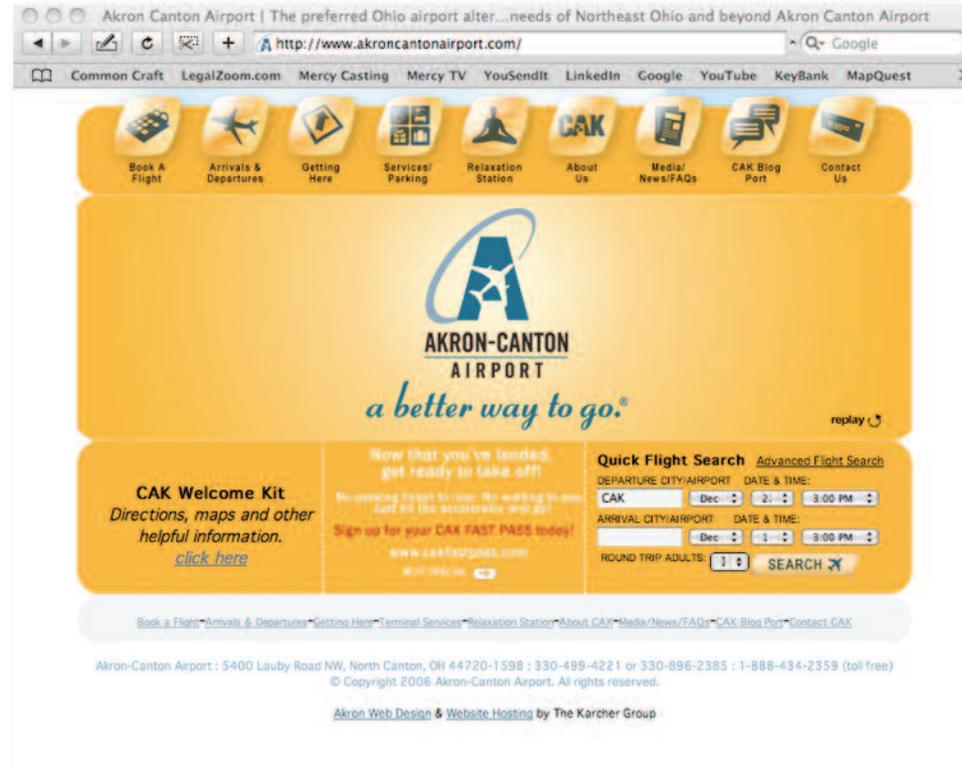
Akron-Canton Airport

Passenger records continue to take off

In 2005, another record was set when nearly 1.44 million passengers traveled through the airport, a 5.6% increase over the year before.

New website launches

The website was totally redesigned to better reflect the look and feel of our brand position and complement our messages of ease and comfort. A booking engine was added to begin capturing more revenue and consumer contact information for future use.



The addition of "Relaxation Station" gives travelers an oasis with helpful relaxation tips, music and Q&A.



This convenient booking engine right on the home page is just one more way CAK makes it easier for travelers.

Akron-Canton Airport

Evolving Punch Dummy

Our first round of TV spots successfully conveyed the idea that flying through a big airport could really beat you up and tire you out. Now, we wanted to continue the story and evolve the message to remind people how a bad airport experience like that could effect the *rest* of your trip—you arrive at your important business meeting fatigued or you get to your vacation destination all tense and unable to relax.

Of course, if you had flown through the more calm CAK airport aboard the spacious and comfortable AirTran or Frontier jets, well, you would have arrived at your destination more refreshed and relaxed . . .



Massage

VO: You know how it can be when you fly out of that big airport on vacation. Those long lines! The crowds and confusion! It can get you so uptight, it takes a day or two just to calm down. So next time, fly out of the Akron-Canton Airport. A better way to go. Visit our website and learn about all the ways we can help your next vacation get off to a more relaxing start.

Meeting

VO: You know how it can be when you fly out of that big airport on your business trip. Those long lines, the crowds and confusion can get you so dazed . . . it just takes the wind right out of you. So next time, fly out of the Akron-Canton Airport. A better way to go. Visit our website to find out how we can help you get to your next meeting more refreshed and ready to go.

Bad Airplane

VO: When you fly out of that big airport, you don't always do it on a big jet. So next time you head west, head to Akron-Canton. Where Frontier Airlines offers plenty of room aboard their big, comfy Airbus jets. The Akron-Canton Airport. A better way to go. Visit our website to find even more reasons Frontier is a better way to fly.

These :30 and :15 second spots run on network and cable stations in Northeast Ohio - TV3, TV5, TV19 and Time Warner cable.

Akron-Canton Airport

Dummy does it again

In 2006, Akron-Canton Airport **broke its all time passenger record for the fifth consecutive year**. For the year, 1,438,304 total passengers used CAK, a .3% increase compared to 2005.

The right place at the right time

To remind people who are searching for flights out of Hopkins that they might find a lower fare at CAK, we began running a banner ad that would pop up on the travel site right next to the fares from Cleveland.

Meanwhile, out-of-towners looking for flights into Hopkins also received their own special pop-up message, letting them know there was *another* airport they could use when flying into the Cleveland area.

After five consecutive record-breaking years, we finished 2007 with 1,391,836 travelers. Over those years, we had attracted new travelers from the Cleveland area, who were now routinely checking flights out of CAK.



Out-bound traveler web banner:
Appeared on travel sites - Travelocity, Cheap Tickets and Orbitz.



In-bound traveler web banner:
Appeared on travel sites - Travelocity, Cheap Tickets and Orbitz.

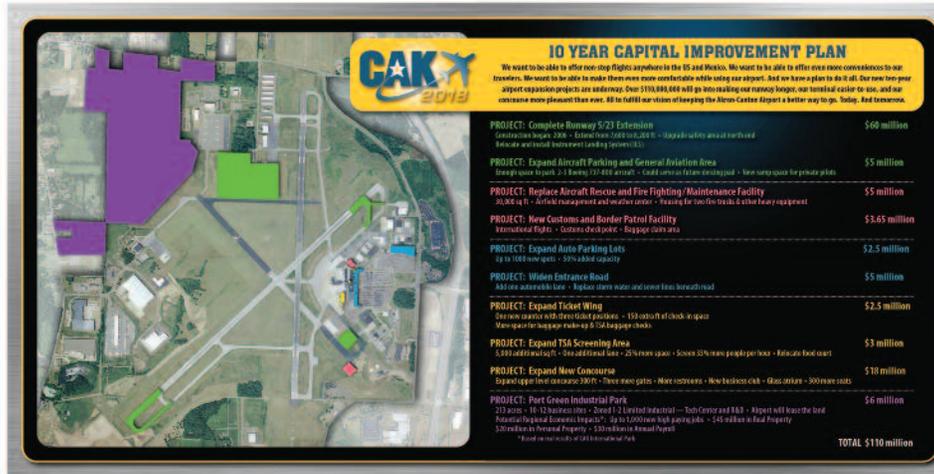
Akron-Canton Airport

A brand position built for the long haul

In early 2008, when the airport announced their ambitious new capital improvement plan, CAK 2018, it was just continuing evidence of how the Akron-Canton Airport strives to fulfill their brand promise of offering travelers 'a better way to go'.



This half hour video was designed to compliment and assist the CAK leadership team while presenting the CAK 2018 to the Cleveland Society of Engineers and the press.



This brochure captured the essence of the program and was distributed at the presentation as well as future events.

Akron-Canton Airport

And the beat goes on

The year 2008 saw gas prices skyrocketing, the stock market plummeting, the housing market imploding . . .

But even with the economy in a tailspin, CAK began gaining more altitude with new record-setting passenger levels: July was the airport's **best month ever** with 149,000 passengers, August was second best ever with 146,000 travelers, and it was the busiest September in history with 121,500 folks flying out of their 'other' airport. Getting people in the Cleveland and surrounding regions to change the way they thought about the Akron-Canton Airport from "some little podunk airfield down south" to "my other airport" was a long-term goal. It feels good to get there. But we consider this achievement just one leg of our continuing journey to keep the Akron-Canton Airport flying high!

Clear skies greet 'other' airport

Akron-Canton doing steady business

LAURA JOHNSTON
Plain Dealer Reporter

GREEN — While the economy rocks and fuel prices rocket, passenger traffic at Akron-Canton Airport rose 6 percent compared to last year.

The airport, which has 35 daily departures and 10 non-stop destinations, had its best months ever in July and August. It has also kept its supply of available airplane seats steady.

Across the country, airlines have been cutting capacity, raising fares and making other changes to their businesses to deal with fuel costs.

"For whatever reason, we're kind of immune to bumps in the market," said Kristie Van Aken, the airport's senior vice

far this year.

"The challenges in the national economy and the growing costs of air travel related to jet fuel costs have somewhat dulled passenger demand," Director Ricky Smith said. "It has been a tough time recently for many of the nation's airlines and airports."

Besides, Mayo said, it's tough to compare Akron-Canton to Hopkins, which handles 267 daily flights to 74 destinations.

"It's like comparing apples to grapes," she said. "They're so much smaller."

Obviously.

But its size makes Akron-Canton nimble, said Rick McQueen, longtime assistant director who became president and chief executive officer Wednesday

Ready to take **your brand** higher and farther than it's ever been before?

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Brand Building

- Strategic Positioning
- Brand Development
- Taglines and Slogans
- Product Naming
- Tactical planning

Advertising/Marketing

- Print ads
- TV
- Radio
- Billboard
- Point of Purchase
- Direct Mail
- Inserts
- Store banners
- Brochures
- Pamphlets
- PR Releases
- Articles
- Incentive programs
- Sales Videos
- Instructional Videos
- Tradeshow Booths
- Testimonials
- Sales Letters
- Sales Kits
- Sales Folders

Web Manuevers

- Websites
- Banner ads
- Landing pages
- Intercepts
- Videos
- Blog Bolstering

Freelance Writing

- Annual Reports
- Newsletters
- Sales meetings
- Presentations
- Speeches
- Internal Communications
- Testimonials
- Articles
- Proposals
- Booklets