



# Brand Strategy and Ideas for Lufthansa Airlines

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By Geeta Sundaram

## Brand Strategy and Ideas for Lufthansa Airlines

### Background:

- Lufthansa, Germany's flag-carrier, has been on expansion mode like many other full-service airlines and has also [reported](#) a good set of corporate earnings in 2023
- In recent years, it has acquired several other airlines in Europe and now calls itself [Lufthansa Group](#)
- These mergers and acquisitions would have certainly boosted the airlines' connections and network within Europe as well as across the Atlantic, which would be their biggest markets
- The latest such acquisition after Swissair, Brussels Airlines, Austrian Airlines and Eurowings is ITA (formerly Alitalia), Italy's beleaguered flag-carrier in a joint venture with the Italian government that was signed this year according to [media reports](#)
- Frankfurt which is Lufthansa's base is also Europe's most important airlines hub and that too would benefit Lufthansa airlines
- The airline flies business and leisure travellers but I think business travellers (even if they fly economy or premium economy class) would be the bigger clientele for Lufthansa
- I say this because Germany is not considered an important tourism destination as a country, while it is an important business and investment destination
- In fact, this reflects one of the main problems with the airline that it has not done enough to build its home country's image, which flag-carrier airlines are meant to do

In this strategy and ideas document, I try and address that issue by working out a new brand strategy for Lufthansa Airlines, as well as brand communication ideas that help to position Lufthansa distinctively from other airlines operating in the same large markets.

### Competition

Home market (Germany and Europe)

- All major flag-carriers operating in Europe
- Low-cost carriers such as Ryanair, Easyjet, Air Berlin, Vueling and others

Transatlantic market (Europe, UK and North America)

- All major flag-carrier airlines such as British Airways, KLM, Air France and its own group airlines such as Swissair, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, etc.
- American carriers such as American Airlines, United Airlines and Delta Airlines

#### Rest of the world

- All American and European legacy airlines
- Middle-eastern airlines such as Qatar, Emirates and Etihad
- Singapore Airlines
- Cathay Pacific
- Qantas Airways

I haven't mentioned Deutsche Bahn and Europe's excellent rail network, but many business people and executives in Germany and Europe travel by train quite often and Lufthansa needs to keep that in mind for its home market.

#### Target Audience

- People over 35 years of age – both men and women – mostly working professionals who travel by air frequently
- Their work trips are mostly centred around Europe and US in North America
- Travellers from the rest of the world who care about airline efficiency and punctuality, especially while transiting through Frankfurt
- Travel to and from Germany on business
- Not always German-speaking, but many in Europe would understand a little of the language and speak it as well
- Love to travel within Europe and elsewhere on holiday as well but never considered Germany a tourism or holiday destination
- Don't have any specific opinion about Germany, except that it is a rich, industrialised country and an important economy in Europe

From the above, we can see that our core target audience is the frequent business traveller in Germany, Europe as well as across the Atlantic who must now also start considering Lufthansa for leisure travel and holidays.

#### Brand objective

To build and strengthen the Lufthansa brand in the core and main markets of the West

#### Brand strategy

Lufthansa's strategy to strengthen its position in the main and core markets ought to be to position itself distinctively relative to competition and most importantly by building an image for Germany and by projecting its soft power and numerous travel attractions, both business and leisure.

- In Europe and Transatlantic sectors, Lufthansa ought to create preference for the Lufthansa brand in a market share fight through a distinctive offering
- In the rest of the world, Lufthansa ought to engage in a market share fight as well as grow the market for air travel to Germany and Europe

Both prongs of the strategy ought to leverage Germany's soft power and cultural heritage. An advantage that Lufthansa has is that its group airlines are from neighbouring German-speaking countries and in that sense, there is already cultural affinity between them. ITA or what was Alitalia would be different, though, but I think it is possible to attract those customers as well to Lufthansa on visits to Northern Europe and elsewhere.

One of the challenges the airline could face in the future is how to avoid competing with group airlines since it is, after all, a market share fight. Differentiating between Lufthansa and Swissair, in my opinion, would be absolutely necessary.

In a nutshell, Lufthansa's strategy should be to reveal the other side of the intellectual and engineering prowess of Germany and let Lufthansa fly the world into the country and through it.

### **Brand positioning**

To fly Lufthansa is to be on an imagineering flight.

### **Brand promise**

Lufthansa gives you the headroom and space to breathe fresh air into your life.

### **Tone and manner**

- Germany reaching out to the world
- Businesslike and pleasant

### **Creative Idea**

To invite customers to flights of imagineering aboard Lufthansa by exploring the various facets of the idea of *luft* in German.

*Luft* (air in German) + *hansa* (a band of people in German) = Lufthansa.

Hansa would even be understood as swan in India, though Lufthansa's symbol is a crane. I discovered this through the internet and Lufthansa's own website and I hope I am on the right track thus far.

We relaunch Lufthansa with brand communication that conveys the new brand positioning and strategy of Lufthansa adequately across television, print and digital media as well as through communication disciplines such as direct marketing and PR.

In the relaunch TV advert, we celebrate the best of Germany in industry and culture, through the idea of *luft*. While in the print campaign, we elaborate a little more on the various facets of *luft* and of Germany that are worth exploring through Lufthansa.

#### **Lufthansa Relaunch TV advert:**

Film opens on a young woman getting out of bed and opening her room windows for fresh air. Soft morning sunshine streams in along with a pleasant breeze.

(Music is a faster, contemporised version of JS Bach's Air on G String, which picks up tempo toward the end of the film when we have quick cuts of German iconic brands and landmarks)

We dissolve to the outdoors, where winds rustling through trees also send autumn's leaves on the ground into whirls in the air.

(Female voice over comes on)

Fog and mist clear out, giving us a magnificent view of mountains and then we see the river Rhine flowing below.

Dissolve to a group of friends enjoying a meal at a castle rooftop restaurant, the Rhine valley still below us in the distance.

We then dissolve to a carousel ride at Oktoberfest, the dizzying feel of exhilaration.

Dissolve to Riesling wine being poured into glasses at a business luncheon.

Dissolve to a live music concert at The Berlin Philharmonic.

German luxury cars parked for a special rally event.

Racing cars whizzing past at Nurburgring.

Dissolve to a couple driving down an autobahn. The woman has her window down so she can feel the wind in her hair.

(Music gathers tempo)

Quick cuts of the rooftops of Brandenburg Gate and Pergamon Museum in Berlin as well as the Museum Island in Munich, shot in a circular pan fashion, revealing plenty of sky.

Quick cuts of close ups of Hugo Boss shopping bags, fragrances, as well as luxury porcelain dinner ware from Rosenthal and Villeroy & Boch.

We realise that we are now on board a Lufthansa flight. The fine porcelain is set out on meal trays and Lufthansa flight attendants serve guests their meals.

We look out of one of the aircraft windows near the wing and see the wing-tip glisten golden yellow against white, sunlit dreamy clouds.

**Super: Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering.**

**FVO:**

**Few words are so expressive as to show us facets of what we consider mundane, but are in fact, life itself.**

**The air we breathe, we fly in**

**Air we clear out of our stuffy rooms**

**To let in a breath of, well, fresh air.**

**Air that is atmosphere, that is space.**

**Air that is in fact an idea, a flight of imagineering.**

**(pause)**

**Time to breathe fresh *luft* into Lufthansa.**

**Come, fly flights of imagineering with us.**

### **Lufthansa Relaunch Print Campaign**

In the print campaign which ought to run in mainline international dailies as well as business and travel magazines, we explore the different dimensions of *luft* and of Germany and German culture in ways that convey the new positioning of Lufthansa.

**Print advert #1:**

**Headline: A breath of fresh *luft* to your ideas.**

**Subhead: With Goethe for inspiration.**

**Copy:**

Just one of the many uses of the German portmanteau word, *luft*. A breath of fresh air. Little wonder we at Lufthansa are inspired to find ways to make your journeys by air a little more pleasant. A little more refreshing. A little more memorable.

As Goethe once wrote in a poem called Longing:

What tells me to roam?

What drags me and lures me

From chamber and home?

How round the cliffs gather

The clouds high in the air!

I fain would go thither!

I fain would be there!

It speaks of one's need to travel, of wanderlust, of just needing to get away sometimes, and also of meeting people.

At Lufthansa, we have made every effort to make your flights and travel to Germany and beyond, a time to think of ideas and making them reality. That's what the land of Goethe, Bach and Beethoven is best known for.

So, in addition to smooth and efficient journeys and our legendary punctuality, you can now expect comfort, luxury and more headspace if you like, on board Lufthansa flights.

As part of Europe's largest airline group, Lufthansa now offers you so many connections and options, when flying to or through the continent. And how easy they are too, through our main Frankfurt hub.

Fly with us on your next trip to Germany, Europe and beyond. Give your ideas a breath of fresh *luft* like never before.

**Sign off: Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering**

**Print advert #2:**

**Headline:** May you compose a new *Luft* on G force.

**Subhead:** Inspired by JS Bach.

**Copy:**

Yet another enchanting aspect of air, or *luft* as we say it in German. Something that can inspire music, as in JS Bach's famous composition, *Air on G String*. At Lufthansa, we are inspired to find ways to make your journeys by air as pleasant, relaxing and luxurious as can be.

When it comes to mood, tone, and communication of one's sensibilities, there is no finer music composer than Johann Sebastian Bach. He didn't just write the grand Brandenburg Concertos. He wrote dozens of little preludes, fugues and pieces that were meant to understand and fully appreciate the tone and tenor of music itself.

Including the famous Well-tempered Clavier. It is all meant to bring music and the musician on the same wavelength.

At Lufthansa, we try and make your flights and travel to Germany and beyond, a time to think of ideas and making them reality. That's what the land of Goethe, Bach and Beethoven is best known for.

So, in addition to smooth and efficient journeys and our legendary punctuality, you can now expect comfort, luxury and more headspace if you like, on board Lufthansa flights.

As part of Europe's largest airline group, Lufthansa now offers you so many connections and options, when flying to or through the continent. And how easy they are too, through our main Frankfurt hub.

Fly with us on your next trip to Germany, Europe and beyond. Make your journey through *luft*, a time for great compositions.

**Sign off:** Lufthansa

**Flights of imagineering**

**Print advert #3:**

**Headline:** Give shape to your thoughts, up in the *luft*.

**Subhead:** With Schiller for company.



**Copy:**

Up in the air - or luft, as we Germans say - is joy itself, when you're soaring above the heavens. Think of Friedrich von Schiller's poem, *Ode to Joy* that Beethoven set to music in his Symphony No. 9. It is now the EU's anthem as well. At Lufthansa we are inspired in so many ways to make your journeys by air more pleasant and more luxurious.

As Schiller wrote in Ode to Joy:

Joy, thou beauteous godly lightning.

Daughter of Elysium,

Fire-drunken we are entering

Heavenly, thy holy home!

Thy enchantments bind together,

What did custom stern divide,

Every man becomes a brother,

Where thy gentle wings abide.

It captures the one-ness of humanity, of people coming together under the great, big skies.

At Lufthansa, we have made every effort to make your flights and travel to Germany and beyond, a time to think of ideas and making them reality. That's what the land of Schiller, Goethe and Beethoven is best known for.

So, in addition to smooth and efficient journeys and our legendary punctuality, you can now expect comfort, luxury and more headspace if you like, on board Lufthansa flights.

As part of Europe's largest airline group, Lufthansa now offers you so many connections and options, when flying to or through the continent. And how easy they are too, through our main Frankfurt hub.

Fly with us on your next trip to Germany, Europe and beyond. Discover joy, up in the *luft*.

**Sign off: Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering**

**Print advert 4:**

**Headline:** Meetings that reduce the *luft* between minds.

**Subhead:** Let Haydn and Handel set the mood.

**Copy:**

Yet another surprising aspect of the German portmanteau word, *luft*. Air, to mean space sometimes. When it comes to meetings, whether business or leisure, *luft* between minds must always be narrowed. That's why we at Lufthansa are inspired to make your journeys by air more pleasant and refreshing each time.

In the tradition set by greats such as Joseph Haydn and Friedrich Handel, who between them set standards for the symphony and for chamber music, the importance of bringing people together to make music can never be overstated. We try to do the same in the skies, believing that flying millions of people across the world is every bit an artistic performance.

At Lufthansa, we have made every effort to make your flights and travel to Germany and beyond, a time to think of ideas and making them reality. That's what the land of Haydn, Heine and Handel is best known for.

So, in addition to smooth and efficient journeys and our legendary punctuality, you can now expect comfort, luxury and more headspace if you like, on board Lufthansa flights.

As part of Europe's largest airline group, Lufthansa now offers you so many connections and options, when flying to or through the continent. And how easy they are too, through our main Frankfurt hub.

Fly with us on your next trip to Germany, Europe and beyond. And reduce the *luft* between you and your friends and business associates.

**Sign off:** Lufthansa

**Flights of imagineering**

**Print advert #5:**

**Headline:** When you need to *luften* your mind and life.

**Subhead:** There's art, Oktoberfest and car racing.

The German word for air, *luft*, also turns into a useful verb when you need it. As in *luften*, which means to clear out the stuffy and let fresh air in. That's what travel is meant for, right? And that's why we at Lufthansa are inspired to make your journeys by air more pleasant and refreshing each time.

We'll fly to the land of luxury German cars and the autobahn. Not to mention the Nurburgring. There's fine wine from the Moselle valley and dining at castle roof-top restaurants in the Rhine valley. Beer and carousel rides at the Oktoberfest and the best of contemporary art at Munich and Berlin. You'll be so immersed in all of this, that you'll want to come up for air, sorry, *luft*.

At Lufthansa, we have made every effort to make your flights and travel to Germany and beyond, a time to think of ideas and making them reality. That's what the land of art, ideas and engineering is best known for.

So, in addition to smooth and efficient journeys and our legendary punctuality, you can now expect comfort, luxury and more headspace if you like, on board Lufthansa flights.

As part of Europe's largest airline group, Lufthansa now offers you so many connections and options, when flying to or through the continent. And how easy they are too, through our main Frankfurt hub.

Fly with us on your next trip to Germany, Europe and beyond. And *luften* your life as we all need to, every now and then.

**Sign-off: Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering**

**Print advert #6:**

**Headline: The perfect *luft* to appreciate the fine arts.**

**Subhead: A schloss, a garten and Beethoven sonatas will do just fine.**

**Copy:**

In Germany, *luft* isn't just air. It is also atmosphere. And can anything be more important to travel, to meeting people and exploring cultures than the right atmosphere? That's what inspires us at Lufthansa to make your journeys by air more pleasant and refreshing each time.

With a rich historical past and a great romantic tradition in poetry, literature and art, Germany is where you can indulge your taste for the fine arts. Visit

any of the historical palaces or *schlosser*, walk and picnic in their *gartens*, attend a Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra concert, and feast on antiquities at the Pergamon.

At Lufthansa, we have made every effort to make your flights and travel to Germany and beyond, a time to think of ideas and making them reality. That's what the land of Goethe, Rilke and Beethoven is best known for.

So, in addition to smooth and efficient journeys and our legendary punctuality, you can now expect comfort, luxury and more headspace if you like, on board Lufthansa flights.

As part of Europe's largest airline group, Lufthansa now offers you so many connections and options, when flying to or through the continent. And how easy they are too, through our main Frankfurt hub.

Fly with us on your next trip to Germany, Europe and beyond. And discover the right *luft* in which to indulge your senses.

#### **Sign-off: Lufthansa**

#### **Flights of imagineering**

#### **Follow-up phase II of the Lufthansa campaign**

Around a year after the Lufthansa relaunch campaign has been aired on TV and published in the print media, and the brand positioning of flights of imagineering as well as the idea of *luft* is well-established amongst our target audience, we ought to move forward to the second phase of the campaign.

In this follow-up second phase, we take the idea into people's lives. Not only do we want to make *luft* part of the world's vocabulary, we wish to endear Germany to the world by gradually introducing other German words – that are actually ideas – into conversations in English.

The follow-up campaign comprises three TV adverts that expand on the significance of *luft* in our lives.

#### **Phase II TV advert #1:**

Film opens on a woman executive leaving her office building and stepping into her car and being driven home by a chauffeur.

The same evening, we see her at dinner with her husband. The setting is a dining room in the home of an affluent couple, with the table set for two.

**Husband: Mmm... what's for dinner, darling? Smells wonderful, already!**

Wife helps herself to one of the dishes prepared for the evening, but doesn't bother to answer. She merely looks up at him, as he sits down at the table opposite her.

A butler – as if he takes the awkward silence as a cue - walks into frame to pour water into their glasses. We can see glasses of wine already at the table.

**Husband (with a slight clearing of his throat): How was your day?**

Wife takes a sip of wine and begins her dinner.

Silence. Only clinking of cutlery and crockery can be heard.

Dissolve to flashback of earlier that day when the lady was at the office.

A man who appears to be her superior or boss swings by her office cabin and compliments her profusely.

**Boss: Wow, you look great today! Guess what, you're also the best person to take on this challenging assignment.**

The woman just looks up from her computer and gives the boss a similar look as she just did at the dinner table. Except that she peers above her glasses, with that you can't be serious look.

**Boss (clearing his throat): Too busy, are you?**

Dissolve back to the present. The woman is about to turn in for the night and is brushing her hair in front of her dressing table. She looks at herself and an FVO comes on, voicing her thoughts:

**FVO: Sometimes, we need to open the windows of our lives and let fresh air in.**

Dissolve to another day at the office. We see Lufthansa air tickets on the lady's office desk. Camera tilts up to reveal the woman grabbing her coat/jacket and wheeling her suitcase out of her cabin.

Who do we meet in the corridor, but the boss who looks surprised?!

**Boss: Business trip?**

**Lady: Nope. Just *luftening* my life!**

She looks pleased as punch as she strides out of the office main door and into the elevator.

Dissolve to skies and clouds.

Lufthansa logo fades in along with the strapline.

**Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering**

### **Phase II TV advert #2:**

Film opens on a young couple in a park. They're seated on a bench and enjoying each other's company, while gazing out at the rest of the world.

This is followed by a montage of similar scenes, of young people enjoying themselves and basking in moments of togetherness.

We see them inside cinema halls, at cafés, strolling on riverfronts, gazing at the sunset, etc.

These shots are interspersed with bad news of hate and violence all around us. Newspaper headlines about mass shootings, TV news of the war in Ukraine, etc. Even bad economic news and high joblessness.

A young lady is watching TV news after dinner at home, with her parents. The TV screen blurs somewhat, as an FVO comes on with thoughts going through the young lady's mind.

**FVO: Sometimes we need to leave the world of hate and war behind, even if only for a holiday.**

Dissolve to her and her boyfriend taking their luggage out of a taxi at the airport. As they enter the terminal, we see Lufthansa check-in counters in the distance.

**Boyfriend (leaning towards the lady): Your fragrance is in the *luft*!**

**The lady grins and replies: You're sure it isn't lieb in the *luft*?! (German for love in the air)!**

Dissolve to skies and clouds. Lufthansa logo and strapline appear on screen.

**Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering**

### **Phase II TV advert #3:**

Film opens on a group of three or four executives walking purposefully and briskly into their boss's room. Boss looks up from his computer. There are already a few people with him in his cabin.

**Executives: They're here!**

**Boss: What, already?**

**Alright, let's go.**

Cut to business delegation inside a large conference room. The two teams take their seats on opposite sides of the long table.

In fact, the way this scene is shot exaggerates the long table, and with it, the forbidding nature of the discussion.

The way the two negotiating teams look at each other – both tense and filled with anticipation – they resemble rugby sides staring each other down.

**As team leader 1 speaks, an interpreter translates: We are glad to have made significant progress at our meeting.**

**Team leader 2 speaks and the interpreter translates: We are glad to have met, but we have a long way to go before we reach agreement.**

Quick cuts of expressions of some of the faces around the table, which indicate surprise at such divergent views being expressed.

We close in on one lady at the table, while an FVO comes on.

**FVO: The more we meet and discuss, the more we can create consensus.**

Dissolve to business delegations sharing a glass of Riesling wine at a reception in the evening. People standing around in groups and talking.

**One of the gents raises his glass and says: Until our next meeting!**

**The same lady we saw earlier smiles and says: When we shall reduce the *luft* between our minds.**

Many there seem to agree.

Dissolve to skies and clouds. Lufthansa logo and strapline appear on screen.

**Lufthansa**

**Flights of imagineering**

## Direct marketing ideas

- **Frequent flier programme:**

A frequent flier programme is the best way for an airline to build and grow its customer base and also to be able to communicate with them one-to-one. This should certainly form the core of Lufthansa's direct marketing exercise.

From reading Lufthansa's website and checking on their frequent flier programme, I learnt that the Lufthansa frequent flier programme is called [Miles and More](#). It is said to be Europe's largest frequent flier programme, which is not surprising since the airline group is now Europe's largest.

That said, I read something about 'status' miles being introduced and I would advise against rewarding fliers on the basis of class of travel or ticket price, when it ought to be on the basis of miles flown. Now that Lufthansa is an airline group, I would recommend a common frequent flier programme across all group airlines.

However, if Lufthansa wishes to reward travellers on the basis of class of travel, then they would need to have three frequent flier programmes (first class, business class and economy) common to all group airlines. The costs of managing three frequent flier programmes can be cumbersome and might not justify the spends. Besides, there will often be occasions when travellers switch their class of travel for certain journeys, and that might create problems in earning reward points and redeeming them.

I would also urge Lufthansa to consider a better branding for the frequent flier programme that is more specific to the airline instead of the generic Miles and More branding. Club Hansa, for example, might be a good option.

- **Corporate accounts:**

In addition to individual travellers, Lufthansa ought to attract customers from the corporate world who travel frequently. They ought to build a separate database of companies and offer them attractive fares based on minimum journeys committed in a year, across the various classes of travel.

The corporate account ought to be treated as a distinct customer segment and must be addressed based on companies' need to manage employees' travel and travel expenses. What's more, employees who travel on the corporate account must be allowed to earn and redeem reward points on an individual basis.



- **Holiday packages:**

Since this entire Lufthansa relaunch is about expanding the airline's customer base to include more leisure travellers and simultaneously building Germany's image as a travel destination, I would recommend that Lufthansa create holiday packages that are not merely centred on destinations, but around travellers' interests.

For example, it would be a good idea to market the Moselle valley and its wines and vineyards to wine aficionados, castle tours to those interested in history and heritage, luxury cars and racing to auto enthusiasts, classical music cities and concerts to music lovers and museum and art tours to those who appreciate art.

Using direct marketing to share these holiday packages with customers and also making it easy for them to use reward points towards holidays would help strengthen Lufthansa's relationship with its fliers.

## **PR ideas**

I recommend that Lufthansa also use public relations to reach out to specific traveller segments and expand the airline's appeal in building the image of Germany.

- **Exhibitions and fairs:**

Germany is well-known for a wide range of important international industry-specific fairs and exhibitions which attract considerable participation from around the world.

I would recommend that Lufthansa associate itself with a few of these best-known industry exhibitions and promote them.

Lufthansa ought to also tie up with major art and culture events such as the Documenta art exhibition and the Berlin Film Festival.

- **Industry promotion:**

On the corporate front as well, Lufthansa ought to team up with Germany's leading industry body, BDI, and promote Germany as a business destination. They can do this by associating with BDI's conferences and events as well as encouraging greater use of corporate accounts on Lufthansa.

## Use of digital media

Since much of airline bookings are done online these days, airlines have no choice but to be present in the digital space.

I would recommend that Lufthansa use social media such as Twitter and Instagram mostly as PR channels of communication to share news and updates about the airline. Only for economy and premium economy, Lufthansa can consider advertising on these platforms.

Separately, I would urge Lufthansa Group to consider being present on Twitter and Instagram mainly to:

- Reach out to target groups through PR activities such as news updates and corporate news
- Promote the sense of an airline group with shared advantages of flying its group airlines.

It's time for Lufthansa to chart a new course for itself and for Germany. May the airline fly high with flights of imagineering!

*This brand strategy document for Lufthansa Airlines and the thoughts and ideas it contains have been conceptualized and written by Geeta Sundaram, advertising professional and blogger at [www.peripateticperch.com](http://www.peripateticperch.com) who can be reached at [geetasundaram08@gmail.com](mailto:geetasundaram08@gmail.com) and via <https://www.linkedin.com/in/geeta-sundaram-aka-wise-owl>*