



The WestJet Channel Takes Off on Rogers Cable

Description

By Cameron Conway

Earlier this month, **WestJet Airlines** (TSX:WJA) launched its own “ambient” television channel on **Rogers** (TSX: RCI.B, NYSE:RCI). WestJet’s channel 206 is available to customers in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and is designed to entice potential customers with pictures of warm sunny beaches, spotlighting locations such as Grand Cayman, Bermuda, and St. Martin-St. Maarten, just as the cold grip of winter grabs ahold of the Great White North.

The evolution of the fireplace channel

WestJet seems to be following in the footsteps of a **Swiss Chalet** marketing campaign from 2011-2012, which showed roasting chickens on a 24/7 loop to lure people into its stores. In the same fashion, WestJet is hoping that images of warmer landscapes could lure people out of the cold and onto the company’s aircrafts.

If 24 hours of Caribbean destinations isn’t your thing, the channel is also slated to show “behind the scenes” footage of WestJets “ramp” activities such as loading and unloading planes, pushing planes to taxing positions, and the general activities of its ground crews — activities that certain viewers may find interesting. From my own personal experience, the novelty of staring at the underside of a WestJet 737 didn’t last very long ... although viewers won’t have to enjoy the same view at 6 a.m. in -40C like I did.

24-hour commercial

WestJet is no doubt hoping that this 13-week experiment turns into actual sales, or at the very least greater interest in the WestJet brand. It’s been successful thus far — boasting 34 consecutive profitable quarters and in its most recent quarter, it reported a year-on-year increase of nearly 300,000 passengers. But it’s eager for more growth — it has a stated mission of becoming “one of the five most successful airlines in the world.”

As I’ve written about here at Fool.ca repeatedly (see [here](#) and [here](#)), companies are having to try harder — and be more creative — to market their services and attract the attention of potential customers. Simple 30-second television commercials or display ads in national newspapers are no

longer a sure thing.

If WestJet's 13-week gamble is successful, it could mark another shift in the marketing world. If it fails — well, at least its downside is protected, as it'll only be charged for the amount of viewers the channel gets.

WestJet shareholders should welcome this as a novel idea worth an experiment. (Selling an entire channel for advertising is also a novel experiment for Rogers!) I'll be watching with curiosity to see if this works.

And hey, even if we can't afford to actually fly to a Caribbean beach on a WestJet plane, at least we're now able to watch it on TV.

CATEGORY

1. Investing

TICKERS GLOBAL

1. NYSE:RCI (Rogers Communications Inc.)
2. TSX:RCI.B (Rogers Communications Inc.)

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