

FlySafair's R5 Sale: What a day it was!

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22 May 2019

On 7 May in South Africa, on the eve of 2019 general elections, while the rest of the world joined The Duke and Duchess of Sussex in welcoming the royal baby to the world, the low-cost airline, FlySafair, held its annual R5 Sale.



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The sale gives consumers the opportunity to buy flight tickets to/from any destination in South Africa (as the airline only runs domestic flights). This means that a trip that could traditionally have cost a person up to R2k (approximate prices of competitor airlines) in one direction, could cost a consumer R10 return!

With only an initial 45,000 tickets on offer and over 30 million South African adults who could have been vying for them – it was always going to be about trying to beat the odds – which realistically, were stacked against the vast majority of consumers.

Virtual waiting room

The day started off with *optimism* and *excitement*, waiting for the website to go live. People accessed the airline's website – fingers boldly typing on their keyboards, confident that they would be first to get the tickets.

This *confidence* quickly turned to *disbelief* as some consumers couldn't access the site (as one of the servers had an issue, which the team quickly sorted out). Disbelief was replaced with *relief*, as the refresh button was frantically pressed, to reveal the brand's bright pink 'waiting room'.

The airline developed a virtual waiting room where all consumers were automatically directed to, and every five minutes, a 'random selection' of consumers were allowed to access the actual website, in order to make their purchases.

Relief didn't last long, because many spent the entire day waiting to be randomly selected. The five-minute timer on the landing page quickly turned relief to Frustration, frustration to Anger, anger to Desperation, and desperation propelled consumers to the doorstep of Hope.

More tickets added

Ahh, hope! The most powerful (and deceptive) of emotions! Hope has a way of overlooking all fact and reality. Hope can fool you. Hope can have you logging onto the website from multiple devices, her little voice telling you, so sweetly and gently, that you stand a chance. Yet, with each five-minute interval, more and more South Africans crossed that delicate line from excitement to near-madness!

Calls were made furiously to friends and family, comparing levels of hope, frustration and anger. Some even vowed to 'log-off' to their friends, but secretly didn't and were online when, at around lunchtime, the airline added more tickets to the initial offer.

This, in what can only have been called a sign from the heavens, re-ignited every emotion at greater intensities, and the resolve of everyone who had yet to buy these coveted tickets was renewed!

But, as with all good things, this too came to an end, and for millions around the country, hope died. Her time-of-death was called at shortly before 3pm on Tuesday, 7 May 2019, when the last 1% of tickets were sold out. WHAT. A. DAY!

Everything to do with feelings

There is a part of me that feels very sad that I didn't get any tickets, yet the truth is, it wasn't really about the tickets. This airline has the cheapest flights in any case - so their 30%-off sale that is still running remains a bargain offering.

No. This had everything to do with feelings because feelings are at the core of every consumer decision. We feel our way through purchases because we enjoy that endorphin rush after we've bought ourselves something, we know someone else would want. We are, by the way, mere mortals. (This is the story I have chosen to tell myself as a mechanism of comfort).

Well done, FlySafair! I loved every moment of that day! This was undoubtedly the most fun (as a consumer) I have had in a while. I think those who managed to get tickets should do some YouTube tutorials for next year's sale. I would definitely subscribe to your channel. You could even show us how to exercise our fingers, and how to be 'strategic' about how we press the 'refresh' button.

While I wasn't one of the lucky ones, I am inspired to find more online 'consumery' things to get involved in.

Any suggestions, anyone?

ABOUT KHUTHALANI KHUMALO

- Khuthalani is a communications strategist, voice over artist, freelancer, proof reader, self-proclaimed CANVA-guru.
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