

Case Study

Airport Restaurant Week Campaign

Organization: Chicago Department of Aviation

Role: Web Author

Year: 2018

An integrated campaign blending web, social, and experiential content to engage 18,000+ travelers in two weeks.

Case Study: Airport Restaurant Week Campaign

GOAL

Engage travelers at O'Hare and Midway airports during Chicago Restaurant Week by showcasing nearly 60 chef demos, exclusive specials, discounts, and in-store tastings—positioning the airports as gateways to Chicago's culinary scene.

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

Targeted frequent business travelers and leisure passengers interested in unique dining experiences. Content was segmented by platform; Instagram focused on younger leisure travelers, while Facebook Live connected with families and broader audiences.

STRATEGY

Position O'Hare and Midway not just as travel hubs, but as destinations offering a taste of Chicago's food culture. By aligning with citywide Chicago Restaurant Week, the campaign enhanced the passenger experience and reinforced the airports' brand as customer-focused and culturally connected.

EXECUTION

- Launched a 2-week integrated campaign across Microsoft SharePoint CMS landing pages, social media, email, and press releases.
- Expanded visibility with airport signage, print and digital ads, video promotions, and in-airport activations.
- Partnered with airport restaurants and vendors for special menus, chef demos, discounts, and tasting events.
- Introduced live cooking demonstrations in terminals to connect digital promotions with on-the-ground engagement.
- Leveraged Facebook Live for real-time engagement and Instagram/Twitter for event promotion before, during, and after.



Airport Restaurant Week Graphic



FREE Mini Tote Bag
with an "ARW Combo Meal / Deal" purchase

During Airport Restaurant Week, every purchased Combo Meal/Deal includes a FREE ARW mini Tote. Available at participating locations while quantities last.

America's Dog

AD&B Burger Meal: \$16.99
Louisville Dog Meal: \$14.99
TERMINAL 1 NEAR GATE C17

Argo Tea

Chocolate Lovers: Medium Chocolate Mint Beverage, Double Chocolate Muffin & Chocolate Chip Cookie for \$8.95. Reg Price: \$11.00
TERMINAL 3 NEAR GATE E2
TERMINAL 3 NEAR GATE K1 & T3 MAIN HALL

Auntie Anne's

2 Hot Dogs for \$6.99
TERMINAL 1 NEAR GATE C18
TERMINAL 3 NEAR GATE E4

Berghoff Cafe

Corned Beef on Rye with small Fountain Beverage Combo at a special price of \$11 (before tax). Cheese, sauerkraut and other toppings are an extra charge.
TERMINAL 1 NEAR GATE C25

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Airport Restaurant Week Website Screenshot



Sarah's Candies owner Sarah Levy and Chocolater Alexia making passengers chocolate treats for ORD passengers.



MDW passenger enjoying Goose Island's food demonstration during Airport Restaurant Week.

Aspiring student chefs from Chicago's own Washburne Culinary Institute participated in live cooking demos at both O'Hare and Midway.

Passengers who traveled through Chicago's airports January 26 through February 8 got to sample a taste of Chicago's rich and diverse culinary scene when the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) hosted its award-winning Airport Restaurant Week (ARW) at O'Hare and Midway. The fourth annual event, which coincides with the citywide Chicago Restaurant Week, featured nearly 60 cooking demonstrations in the terminals as well as specials and in-store samplings.

Local chefs and entrepreneurs including Vosges Haut-Chocolat founder Katrina Markoff, James Beard Award-Winning Chef Takashi Yagihashi, Big Shoulders Coffee founder Tim Coonan, Cafe L'Appetito owner Tony Spatara, and BIG & little's co-owners Gary "BIG" Strauss and Tony "little" D'Alessandro, were among several local chefs who showcased their skills and shared their culinary expertise with passengers at daily cooking demos in the airport.

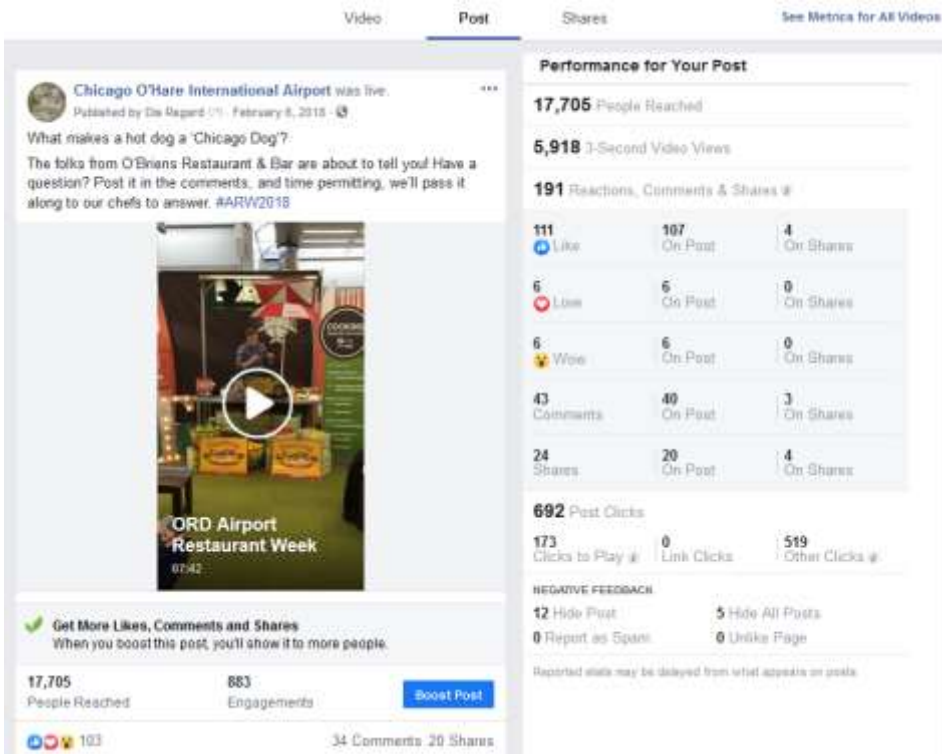
Airport Restaurant Week also gave Midway travelers a sneak peek at some of the new local favorites coming to the airport as part of the new and improved dining and shopping options planned for the first concessions upgrade in nearly two decades. These included BIG & little's, DeColores, Home Run Inn Pizza, and the return of Harry Caray's 7th Inning Stretch.

Airport Restaurant Week received a first place award for Excellence in Airport Marketing, Communications, and Customer Service from Airports Council International - North America (ACI-NA) in 2016.

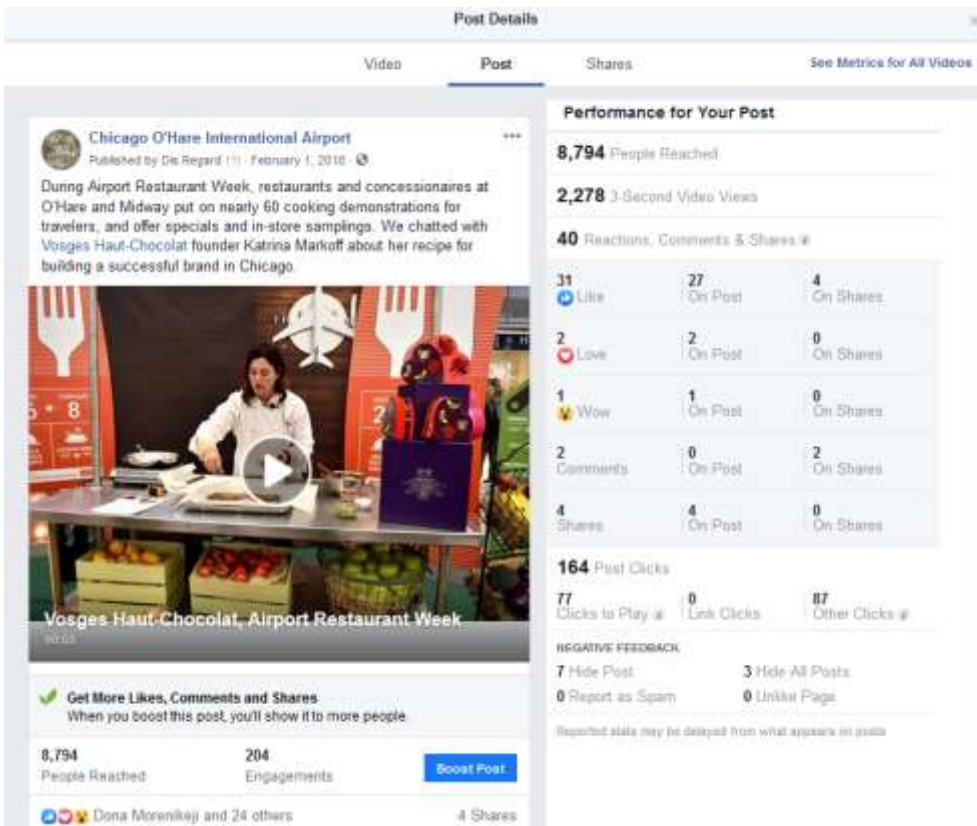
The next big foodie event at O'Hare airport is "Channel Your Inner Chef", a unique, multi-phase, live cooking competition hosted by [HMSHost](http://HMSHost.com) in partnership with the CDA. The event will take place March 20, 2018 at O'Hare. Visit www.channelyourinnerchef.com for more information.

Collaboration & Leadership

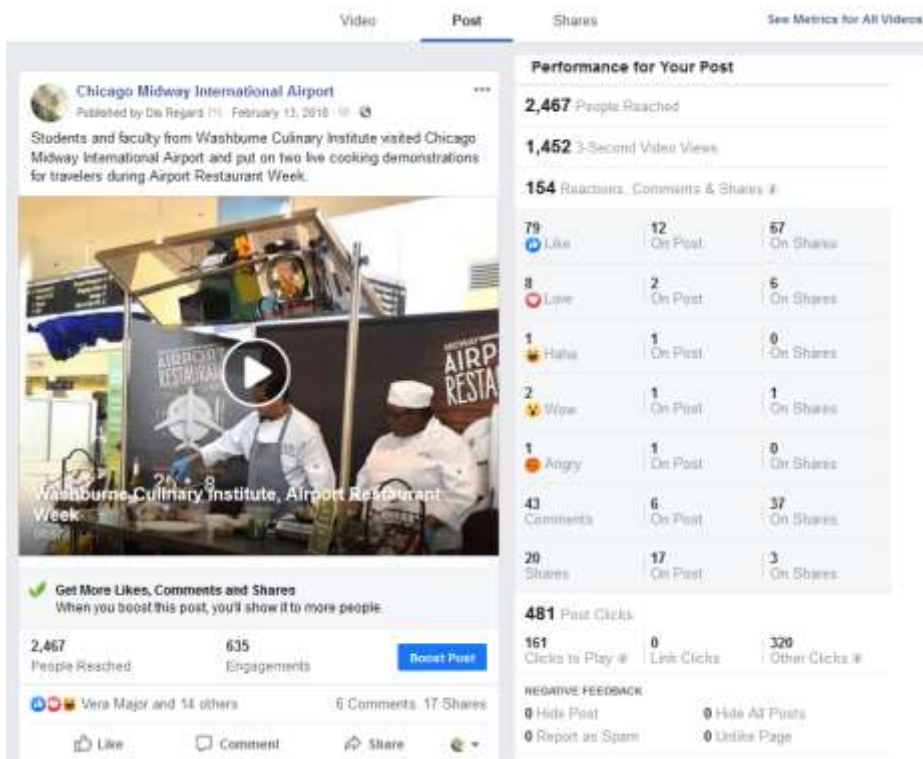
Coordinated efforts with marketing, restaurant vendors, and airport operations teams to align messaging and event logistics. Led content approvals, vendor coordination, and campaign rollout with five cross-functional partners.



Airport Restaurant Week Facebook Post



Airport Restaurant Week Facebook Post



Airport Restaurant Week Facebook Post

RESULTS & ROI

- Reached 18,000+ passengers in just 2 weeks.
- Boosted participating restaurant sales during campaign week (estimated 12% increase in transactions).
- 30% increase in passenger awareness of dining options based on survey data.
- Strong passenger feedback made the event an annual tradition with expanded vendor participation.
- Delivered these results within a modest budget by prioritizing high-ROI digital channels and vendor co-marketing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Facebook Live outperformed recorded video for engagement.
- Instagram & Twitter worked best for time-sensitive event promotion.
- Visual content boosted impressions; lack of images reduced reach.
- Future campaigns could expand with interactive features like Twitter polls.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This campaign demonstrated how integrated content strategy—spanning digital, social, and experiential marketing—can elevate passenger engagement and brand perception while tying airport travel to Chicago’s cultural identity.

Key Wins: 18,000+ passengers engaged | Annualized event | Social best practices established