

MOXIE



SMILE-HIGH CLUB

NO FEAR OF FLYING FOR MEMBERS OF FLIGHT CLUB

THEY GO ABOUT THEIR OWN MATTER. HANDS SHUFFLING THROUGH PERSONAL BELONGINGS, SEARCHING FOR BOARDING PASSES. EYES GLUED EXCLUSIVELY ON THE TERMINAL GATES AHEAD OF THEM. WAITING IN LINE AT MIDWAY'S AIRPORT SECURITY CHECKPOINT, PASSENGERS DON'T MIND JOE MURPHY. BUT HE WANTS THEM TO.

The freelance graphic designer and web developer is here to promote his fledgling project Flight Club, a growing online matchmaking community striving to make the skies a friendlier place for air travelers. His website, Flight-Club.org, serves as a virtual meeting place for travelers wishing to engage with fellow flyers on flights they've already booked, or to fix up flights together to shared destinations. The company slogan is "We put the lay in layover."

Standing underneath the "Welcome to Chicago Midway Airport" sign, the 26-year-old entrepreneur hands out gum-stick-sized promo stickers to passersby. "I want these people to wonder what Flight Club is, I want Flight Club to spark enough curiosity to make them go find out," he says.

12:29pm: "Excuse me, I'd like to invite you to Flight Club." "Flight Club, it's very convenient for air travelers."

"You mean, *Flight Club*?" asks a confused man. "Like Brad Pitt?"

"No, *Flight Club*. It's a community website for air travelers," explains Murphy. Soon, says Murphy, he will be seeking an investor ("a wingman"), but for now he alone provides all the content, design, programming and marketing for the site.

12:35pm: Murphy carefully considers his prospects. No one in the company of children. No one underage. No one who looks married. "It sucks when you go up to someone, and look down at the hand and see a wedding band," he says. Murphy approaches a pack of collegiate dudes. They hear his idea ("Oh, like the Mile High Club!") and nod approvingly.

12:47pm: The lines lengthen. The wait is excruciating. Murphy gets as tense as the passengers, and lets most of them slip. He shakes his head. "I should have gotten them," he says.

12:51pm: The crowd dissipates. Murphy looks more hopeful. A flock of pretty Continental Airline flight attendants head his way. He slips stickers to two of the flight attendants. "Thank you, Flight Club!" chirps one of the women in return. Murphy's all grins: these are his target red-carpet members.

1:19pm: What began as a barroom conversation between Murphy and a friend more than two years ago is today almost 500 members large. A decent contingent live in Chicago, with most of the members in the United States, but Murphy intends to take Flight Club global. He answers an incoming call on his cell phone. Just as he finishes the call, a nun walks past. "Oh damn, I can't believe I missed my chance!" he lets out. (*Holiday Dmitri*)