

MARKETING

AIR NEW ZEALAND



Air New Zealand

For the national carrier of a small nation at the bottom of the world, Air New Zealand certainly punches above its weight. It has achieved this by focusing on its customers and creating a successful and universally respected brand.

“The essence of the Air New Zealand brand is to be liberated from the ordinary,” chief marketing and customer officer Mike Tod tells FlightGlobal.

“For us, that means that everything we do has to be ‘unordinary’, and that means that we are trying to make travel better, easier and more enjoyable for our customers.”

Its novel safety videos have become viral sensations across social media, featuring celebrities such as Richard Simmons and Bear Grylls.

A recent marketing campaign stars Pete the Kiwi (pictured above) showing off some of New Zealand’s main attractions and the carrier’s product.

Indeed, the Star Alliance carrier has brought a number of product innovations to the market, such as

its SkyCouch economy seat that folds up to a mini-bed, and its Airband, which helps to track unaccompanied minors. It also has a strong focus on service, which is an advantage that Tod says is hard for competitors to replicate.

“While products can be homogenous across the industry, we challenge ourselves to deliver innovation. We have a proud track record of that, and our service and our people can’t be mimicked,” notes Tod.

That creativity was recognised by the awards judges. “They are the most innovative in terms of onboard and systematic support to the consumer – they are just absolutely outstanding,” one judge says.

Complementing the strong focus on product is a targeted series of campaigns around its brand, which has elevated it in key markets such as Australia, the USA and increasingly Asia.

Tod states: “We’re a small airline at the bottom of the world, we’ve had to do things differently to get attention in the global markets in which we operate and to

draw interest in our products and our services, and I think we do an outstanding job of that.”

Over the years, that has seen it partner with the film studio behind *The Hobbit* to gain strong brand exposure in North America. Closer to home, it has a strong partnership with the national rugby team, the All Blacks.

“We’re quite surgical when it comes to the branded partnerships; they have to do the right job for us, which is deliver strong brand health outcomes and strong revenue outcomes,” explains Tod.

Those partnerships and strong focus on brand and product have seen Air New Zealand thrive in what could be viewed as a small, tough market with a number of formidable competitors.

As another judge puts it: “I like the fact that they are so isolated and so far from everyone else – to be able to compete against the big carriers, I think that makes it even more the underdog. It’s great that the little guy does well. You need to recognise those stories.”

Ellis Taylor



Air New Zealand

Brand strength is a key focus

“We’ve had to do things differently to get attention in the global markets”

MIKE TOD

Chief marketing and customer officer, Air New Zealand

PAST WINNERS

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