

BRITISH AIRWAYS SLIPS DOWN THE BUSINESS SUPERBRANDS



Google on top for second year running. British Airways slips down the branding league. Virgin Atlantic is the strongest direct tourism brand.

Anybody involved in any type of marketing job will tell you the importance of branding. Branding is, in many cases, more important than the product itself as consumers often go for what they believe to be tried and trusted.

Let's face it: if the average customer were to walk into a supermarket and see Coca-Cola and an unknown brand of cola, there is little doubt as to what the average customer would choose. Most analysts even suggest that price is not as important as branding.

In a recent survey, **Business Superbrands 2009** compiled by The Centre for Brand Analysis, the Internet giant **Google** was found to be the world's leading brand for the second year running. This is hardly surprising considering its reliability, new maps and translations. What about the tourism sector in terms of hugely famous brands?

Virgin Atlantic continued to enhance its reputation by coming top out of all the big tourism brands. Overall it moved up from 28th place in 2008 to 25th place. Great surprises came on the other side of the Atlantic, where, along with the BBC, **British Airways** has slipped from 8th position in previous year to 36th position. Even in times of disaster, as British Airways is suffering, people still stick to this brand in some way or another.

The disaster for BA has mainly come about due to the opening of terminal 5 at Heathrow airport. The company was mostly blamed for this event. Terminal 5 has become known for baggage going missing, flights being cancelled and check-in staff not turning up at all. BA's reputation, because of the terminal, has nose-dived. However, due to years of relatively successful marketing, BA still has a presence on the market, which customers trust. The damage from terminal 5 is expected to be temporary.

The highest rating airline brands (overall ranking in brackets):

1. VIRGIN ATLANTIC (25)
2. BRITISH AIRWAYS (36)
3. EMIRATES (68)
4. SINGAPORE AIRLINES (78)
5. EASYJET (308)
6. QATAR AIRWAYS (318)
7. BMI (413)
8. SWISS (430)
9. FLYBE (454)

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