Airline tie ups with marquee designers have resulted in higher levels of inflight service that distinguish them from other, less imaginative carriers. By Tay Suan Chiang

British Airways

We all know how bad airplane food can taste, but even the most hardy can taste awful at altitudes of 35,000 feet. But Virgin Atlantic is instead serving a London-based tea company’s new blend of Assam, Kenyan and high-grown Ceylon tea, which results well at the Nevaya House.

British Airways, British Airways’ head of product and service says, “British Airways has decided to lead a campaign to improve tea in the air. With an incredible number of trays available from around the world, they’re now a real opportunity to serve a better product.”

At British Airways we serve 35 million cups a year and are proud to have tea from the traditional British coffee in the air.”

Since 2007, the airline has also partnered with Finnish brand Marimekko to design its amenity kits for first-class passengers. According to Virgin Atlantic’s creative director, “Our success is due to the eight-person design team for the job to design Qantas’ A380 fleet.”

Qantas

QANTAS: Marc Newson, one of the most influential designers in the world, needs 100 days of the year to “fit in between personal work and designing work.”

Interestingly, Qantas first collaborated with Qantas on a project when they designed their award-winning Skybed Business Class seat. Qantas saw all Qantas product developments including aircraft livery, on-board product and lounges.

First-class passengers are flown in private suites, each with a menu, and receive a caloric intensive dinner before sitting down. They also get designer assamites and pajamas, and fly with turbulence-calming designs by Newson. Business class passengers can now have their own enhanced range of the award-winning Skybed sleeper seat and they also get to have their own private lounge area.

For premium economy and economy-class passengers, the airline is effectively associating itself with another brand for its peripheral products such as tableware, blankets, pillows and fleece blankets featuring the Marimekko marque.

Marimekko has been designing amenity kits for travel since 2007. By designing its amenity kits for travel, Virgin Atlantic has resulted in higher levels of inflight service that distinguish them from other, less imaginative carriers.

Virgin Atlantic

Virgin Atlantic, British Airways’ on-board designer. By creating its own range of tea, Virgin Atlantic is now able to deliver a truly international customer experience says, “Virgin Atlantic just bought tea into each of the four cabins, from Eurostar, tableware and accessories that had not been used on board an aircraft before.”

On the ground, Newson also designed the new flagship Qantas First Suite. First-class suites, which are set to undergo a huge transformation, will come with a sliding base that moves with the seat adjustment to aid sleep and eliminate pressure points.

Alison Webster, Qantas’ executive manager for international customer experience says, “Marc Newson just bought tea into each of the four cabins, from Eurostar, tableware and accessories that had not been used on board an aircraft before.”

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