

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Southwest's Participation with NBC's 'On Brand with Jimmy Fallon'

Our story starts where most good stories begin ... with an opportunity.

In the fall of 2024, Southwest Airlines had the chance to be a featured company on a new unscripted reality program—On Brand with Jimmy Fallon. The premise of the show is that contestants compete to create innovative marketing campaigns for real brands.

"We saw this as an opportunity to partner with someone with incredible star power at a time of evolution for Southwest Airlines," said Tracy Armstrong, Senior Manager Brand Communications & Identity for Southwest. "We've always admired how Jimmy has continuously found new ways to evolve and entertain, which inspired us at Southwest to create a more enjoyable, modern cabin experience with more choice for our Customers."

Bringing It All Together

Once Southwest officially joined the roster of brands included on the show, Southwest's Marketing Team sprang into action.

"The first step was to narrow down which product we wanted the contestants to focus on," explained Danielle Pappas, Southwest's Campaign Project Manager. "We had so many fantastic options to choose from, including [Getaways by Southwest](#), our new in-house packaged vacations product, and the [Companion Pass](#), our one-of-a-kind frequent flyer benefit. In the end, we settled on having the On Brand Agency focus on our new [Extra Legroom seats](#)."

Once the product was determined, Southwest provided the agency with a brief that outlined the Southwest Brand and explained the attributes of our seating options. Additionally, it was decided that the winning idea would be prominently displayed, wrapped around a Southwest 737.







With the details worked out, the agency shared the brief with the contestants, who then went off to work their magic.

“In the meantime, our Marketing Team was busy coordinating with our wonderful partners in Southwest’s Tech Ops Department and Network Operations Control to secure the physical assets that were needed for filming—including routing a plane to a private hangar at New York Stewart International Airport,” said Danielle. “We also worked closely with the managers of the private hangar to keep public speculation to a minimum since Stewart isn’t an airport we serve,” Tracy added.







Cameras Rolling

In April 2025, the filming of Southwest's episode began at the On Brand Agency with each contestant presenting their campaigns promoting Southwest's Extra Leg Room seats to the judges.









“Based on the presentations, Whitney narrowed the field to the three options that best represented the Southwest Brand,” Tracy explained. “The three contestants whose campaigns were chosen formed teams with the remaining contestants who helped bring the concepts to life.”

And when the hangar door opened, the winner was revealed as Mahiri Takai. “I just loved the superhero energy from Mahiri’s design,” said Whitney. “Our hope is that when Customers engage with our brand, they get a little something more and this was the spark of joy we were looking for. Working with Mahiri, Jimmy, Boz and the full Team at NBCUniversal was the real prize for our Team at Southwest. From our Crew to yours, thank you!!”

Congratulations, Mahiri!





