JetBlue Celebrates Christmas Early With Holiday Sale

Christmas is coming early at JetBlue, as the airline has announced a fire sale in a bid to drum up business as it heads into the fall.

Announced earlier today, the Be an Early Holiday-er flash promotion is discounting flights and hotel packages booked today through Sept. 30 for trips taken during the holiday season. The sale is also the first piece of JetBlue's new brand platform, "We've got a plane for that."

"Even if you're not the kind that hands out candy canes to trick or treaters," says a narrator over shots of travelers surprised at the ring of jingle bells and faux snow, "a little extra joy right now could go a long way."

During the summer, weekend holidays were the lone bright spot for the travel industry. Heading into fall and winter, the typical holiday getaways and family visits are expected to be stifled by the pandemic.

And right now, any bookings are good bookings as JetBlue saw revenue fall 90% year over year in the second quarter. The airline has since responded by unveiling new routes to Florida and Los Angeles aimed at "immediately generating cash and capturing traffic," the brand said in the announcement.

JetBlue won't be airing any television commercials to promote the sale. Instead, the campaign will run on the brand's owned channels and email with paid support.

For the few travelers passing through New York's JFK International Airport, the brand's home terminal has been

turned into a proverbial winter wonderland complete with a Christmas tree, menorah and an army of nutcrackers. It’s one of the rare examples of airline marketing during the pandemic.

“Right now there’s a whole lot of nobody saying nothing. They’re trying to say something positive,” said Bryan Del Monte, president of the marketing consulting group Aviation Agency. “The idea is good enough to put real media weight behind it, but maybe they don’t have the money for that.”

The discount—$50 off a flight and $300 off a hotel and flight package taken between mid-November and January—will see the airline generate some interest in an otherwise depressed environment as flights have never looked cheaper during the holiday season.

“I think we’ve seen more cheap flights over Christmas in 2020 than we have for the past five years combined,” Scott Keyes, founder of the newsletter Scott’s Cheap Flights, told Adweek last week. “I would not expect that to outlive the pandemic.”

Earlier this week, JetBlue followed United in announcing a partnership between the airline and a Covid-19 testing program. While United is testing at the airport, at the cost of $250, JetBlue is working with a third party healthcare provider to send at-home Covid tests for $143. Both airlines are sticking passengers with the bill, but an increase in rapid testing could be a major shift for the industry if prices fall as demand returns.

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