



Connie Birdsall:

An airline that has given us a whole new lexicon, from “Howdy” to “Happy jetting,” JetBlue brings humanity to the air. A clothing company that created a culture around outdoor adventure while embedding sustainability into every fiber of their business. Patagonia is a green and socially responsible pioneer in every sense of the word. Both of these companies share an important trait. They challenged convention with an unrelenting commitment to their core values and stood out aggressively among a competitive field with smart and stylish design.

As Debbie has said probably more eloquently than I can tonight, as we, our committee, began working on this year’s awards, the financial institutions were collapsing around us and there was really a sense, I think, of fear and corporate distrust that permeated the daily news. In that chaos, both JetBlue and Patagonia stood out as beacons of hope. Because they have so carefully kept their pulse on what is real and what is good. Their sense of responsibility truly captured the spirit of the AIGA Corporate Leaders Award this year. The award recognizes the critical role that innovative companies like JetBlue and Patagonia play in bringing design thinking and experience to life for millions of people. Both companies have not only sustained a commitment to design, but even better, they have made their hard work of bringing their vision, their mission, and their core values to life look smart, fun and easy.

We want to commend all the companies that we reviewed and thank them for their contributions to our field. And I also really want to thank the committee, the 2009 Corporate Leadership committee, so maybe if you could just wave your hand when I call out your names? Susan Avarde, managing director of global branding at Citi, thank you. David Butler, who is not with us tonight who is vice president of Coca-Cola or, sorry, design at Coca-Cola Company. Maybe he will be someday president. Gael Towey, chief creative officer of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, thank you very much. And Brad Weed, director of user experience from Windows and Windows Live at Microsoft. Sincerely, we thank you for your time, your insight, and your passion for our cause here. Thank you.

[Applause]

[Music]

[Applause]

David Rockwell:

I’m thrilled to be here to present JetBlue with the Corporate Leadership Award and to help celebrate their fabulousness. And it’s a great-looking room, I’ve got to say. A group of graphic designers is much better looking than a group of architects in this room. Well turned out.

JetBlue’s an amazing group, and they care deeply about design. In fact, those of us who know JetBlue know it’s part of their DNA. Only ten years old, they’ve managed to elevate design

and embrace it, not just for its own sake, but I think they use design to enhance every little part of the air travel experience. They're the unqualified leader in stylish, affordable air travel. And who would have thought an airline could satisfy our deep and newfound need for spending less while enjoying more? But JetBlue does it.

Yes, they're frugal and indulgent at the same time. They defy the annoying and anonymous impression of air travel. When faced with the daunting task of building a new home next to the incredibly iconic Saarinen TWA building, they succeeded, with all due respect, not by competing with that building but by creating a series of small, intuitive, smart experiences, big moments of joy in their new terminal, and they created a building that everyone loves to pass through, to be a part of. It's easy, it's smart, and, in fact, I think JetBlue defies the current drift in air travel as grim, frustrating, inconvenient, and bombastic. And that sense of design and design intelligence is carried through every part of their flight experience. Can anyone say DIRECTV and coffee with a little plastic cup that doesn't spill?

As a brand, they thrive on thinking outside the box, pushing beyond conventional limits, and they do it all while being surprisingly smart, nice, stylish, and witty. I have the honor of working closely with several members of the team, and I can tell you JetBlue is the rare client. They have a total commitment to crafting design in a way that is efficient, humanizing, and, to me, inspiring.

Thank you to Richard Smyth, Dave Barger, Robin Hayes, Fiona Morrison, Todd Burke, T. J. McCormick, and so many other JetBluers for your unique and powerful vision. We congratulate you and can't wait to see what's next, and as you once said to me, happy jetting. Please welcome Robin Hayes, chief commercial officer for JetBlue.

[Applause]

Robin Hayes:

Thank you very much. Everyone having a good evening? Good. David, thank you very much. Thank you. Any free tickets come with this? No, okay, we'll work on those. Thank you very much David and AIGA for this very prestigious recognition. I'd also give a shout-out for Patagonia who are up here soon for their leadership in design as well. All of us at JetBlue are big fans.

For JetBlue in particular, this award means so much and it actually means as much to us as our five consecutive J.D. Power and Associates Awards for customer service. When we were founded ten years ago, we set out to prove that low-cost air travel — sorry, this is so exciting — that low-cost air travel could be stylish and fun. You know, it wasn't about just breaking the mold and doing things differently for the sake of doing things differently, it was about creating a completely new space in the industry. And we would like very much on design to communicate that difference.

First of all, to our customers in everything from iconic tail-fin patterns, some of which you saw today. And can you keep a secret? Okay, well, we've got some new ones coming up soon. Some check-in kiosks. I've never seen a check-in kiosk look so good as they did in that clip there. But, you know, small differences like a check-in kiosk that says, "Howdy," instead of "Insert card here," and also for both of our crew members and our customers, a brand-new terminal at JFK Terminal 5. But I hope some of you based here in New York or traveling through New York have had a chance to experience it. Good design serves the overall mission — thank you. Good design serves the overall mission. At JetBlue our mission is to bring humanity back to air travel.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't thank a few of the crew members at JetBlue who bring this design to life everyday in what they do. First of all, to T. J. McCormick — McCormick. Stand up, T. J., where are you?

[Applause]

I've got to say I shouldn't say this in front of this group and T. J., but he saves us a fortune in external agency fees. But he's responsible for graphically interpreting our vision and our brand. And you know, everything that we do that is nice, smart, fresh and stylish and witty. A lot of that all goes back to T. J. It's rarely that you find someone as talented as T. J., so thank you, T. J. Great job.

[Applause]

I'd also like to recognize Fiona Morrison, our director of brand. Fiona's passion for what JetBlue stands for is only matched by her work ethic. And as an Englishman, even though Fiona's Australian, we forgive her for that, although I would point out for any other cricket fans in the room we did win the Ashes this summer. But as anyone else in the room knows, great design depends on great vision and outsize expectations, and Fiona inspires all of us day in and day out to reach a little higher, dig a little deeper, and find new aspirations for our collective professional energy. So, Fiona, thank you. Great job.

[Applause]

So, in closing, I'd like to thank the AIGA for their leadership in establishing the design as a key component of our business success. Through your efforts, design professionals everywhere find their seat at the table is already set. We do not have to fight for a ticket to entry. The companies that understand the power of good design win the marketplace and that profession, therefore, benefits as long as you keep reminding people of its immense value.

Thank you very much again, and most importantly, thank you on behalf of 12,000 JetBlue crew members who come to work every day to serve, to dig a little deeper, to try a little

harder, and be a little bit different to uphold our values, our integrity, and most importantly, our commitment to design and customer satisfaction. Thank you very much indeed.

[Applause]