

Emirates, Turkish among most valuable airline brands of 2026

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Dhaka: Delta Air Lines has retained its position as the world's most valuable airline brand, according to the Airlines 50 2026 report released by Brand Finance, a UK-based brand valuation consultancy. Meanwhile, Emirates and Turkish Airlines have recorded significant brand value growth in the ranking.

The report found that the combined brand value of the world's top 50 airlines rose 11% year-on-year to USD147 billion, reflecting sustained international travel demand and strategic investments in premium offerings, even as geopolitical tensions in the Middle East created operational uncertainties.

Delta's brand value grew 25% to USD 18.6 billion. The airline's high on-time performance and commitment to service excellence have continued to reinforce customer loyalty across domestic and international markets.

United Airlines held second place with a brand value of USD 13.1 billion, up 7% year-on-year. Strategic investments in in-flight technology, loyalty programs, and premium offerings have strengthened its ability to attract and retain high-value passengers.

Emirates climbed to third with a brand value of USD 10.6 billion, up 27% from 2025, remaining the most valuable airline brand outside North America. Strong demand for long-haul routes and high-performing premium cabins drove record half-year profits in 2025.

Vietjet emerged as the fastest-growing airline brand, with its brand value soaring 117% to USD 906 million. The Vietnamese carrier's rapid rise was driven by international expansion into markets including Australia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Russia, alongside strong load factors of 86% and diversified ancillary revenues accounting for 41% of total income.

Turkish Airlines recorded a brand value increase of 27% to USD 2.9 billion, reaching its highest-ever valuation and outperforming its European peers in growth.

Japan's ANA was named the world's strongest airline brand, earning a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 90.2 out of 100 and an AAA+ rating, overtaking Southwest Airlines. ANA's performance reflects international expansion, operational excellence, and strong passenger demand. The carrier also added new routes, including Haneda-Milan, Stockholm, and Istanbul.

Southwest Airlines slipped to second in brand strength with a BSI score of 89.1 out of 100 and an AAA rating. The slight dip was attributed to pricing policy changes, including ending its "bags fly free" policy and introducing basic economy options.

Japan Airlines (JAL) ranked third in brand strength with a BSI score of 89.1 out of 100 and an AAA rating, supported by expanded international services and initiatives such as JAL MaaS, which links air and rail travel.

Saudi Arabia's Saudia also recorded notable progress, with its brand strength rating upgraded to AA- in 2026. Over the past five years, the airline has achieved a compound brand value growth rate of 21%, outperforming the sector average of 15%.

