

Budget airline to drop tiger icon in relaunch

Carrier's rebranding exercise to build greater affinity with customers

By **KARAMJIT KAUR**
AVIATION CORRESPONDENT

LOW-COST carrier Tiger Airways is giving up its orange and black stripes – but not its roar.

The airline will keep its name but drop the pouncing tiger icon from its aircraft body and other marketing materials as part of a major rebranding exercise.

A Tiger spokesman declined to

comment when contacted but The Straits Times understands that a big-bang relaunch is planned in the coming weeks.

It is not clear if the change will include a new look for cabin crew, who now don yellow and black uniforms with striped scarves.

Tiger is working with Singapore-based advertising firm The Secret Little Agency, which it appointed in January, on a new

brand strategy. At the time, the airline said a renewed brand identity would allow it to build greater affinity with its customers and deliver an experience they will appreciate.

Tiger Airways, which started operating a decade ago as a point-to-point no-frills budget carrier, changed its flight path last August when Mr Koay Peng Yen took over as the group chief executive

officer. For example, the airline now works with partner carriers like Singapore Airlines (SIA)-owned Scoot and offers baggage transfers for passengers with connecting flights.

Before Mr Koay joined, passengers had to check out and check in again to catch their second flight.

Industry observers said a new brand strategy would help Tiger project a fresh, modern image.



The airline will keep its name but drop the pouncing tiger icon in a relaunch in coming weeks. PHOTO: TIGER AIRWAYS

dropping the tiger visual, as they apparently plan to do, might be one attractive compromise.”

But it should be accompanied with other visuals and copy that perhaps do not emphasise just cheap fares, but also certain aspects of service including great destinations and bundled tour packages with good-quality hotel partners.

Tiger Airways, which is about one-third owned by SIA and has its headquarters in the Republic, also has stakes in Indonesia's Mandala Airlines and South East Asian Airlines in the Philippines.

Tiger recently sold 60 per cent of Tiger Airways Australia to Virgin Australia, as part of a strategy to boost its business Down Under.

Associate professor of marketing Prem Shamdasani from the National University of Singapore said: “My sense is that dropping the tiger icon won't make much of a difference to consumers.”

Airlines, unlike consumer brands like Nike or Apple, typically communicate through their names and service proposition, rather than their logos, he said.

He added: “If you think of Cathay Pacific or Emirates, for example, the logos do not come to mind. Even for SIA, it is not the yellow bird that people remember, but the SIA Girl.”

✉ karam@sph.com.sg