

United Airlines names Sesame Street's "Oscar the Grouch" as first Chief Trash Officer



Oscar the Grouch in his c-suite office at United Airlines

[United Airlines](#) named Sesame Street's Oscar the Grouch as its first "Chief Trash Officer." The announcement is a part of the airline's new, consumer education campaign — designed to promote the expected benefit of using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) more broadly.

The new campaign - which features Oscar in more than 30 pieces of original video, digital, social and out-of-home content - follows the iconic character's journey from job listing to c-suite office starring alongside real United employees.

In a March 2 press release, United Chief Communications Officer Josh Earnest said, "United has invested in more sustainable aviation fuel production than any airline in the world, by far. Every airline burns jet fuel to run their business, but no airline will solve climate change on its own. So United has enlisted Oscar to help us educate the travelling public of all ages about SAF and rally them to the cause of fighting climate change. From banana peels to fryer grease, Oscar is uniquely qualified to help us explain why trash could be the treasure that fuels the jets of the future."

SAF is an alternative to conventional jet fuel that, on a lifecycle basis, reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with air travel compared to conventional jet fuel alone. SAF is being made from used cooking oil and agricultural waste, and, in the future, could be made from other feedstocks including household trash or forest waste. To date, United has invested in the future production of over three billion gallons of SAF — the most of any airline in the world.

Passengers can take action too — in a first among U.S. airlines, United now shows an estimate of each flight's carbon footprint on a per economy seat passenger basis on its app and website, and travellers have the option to contribute to supplement United's investment in the UAV Sustainable Flight Fund, a first-of-its-kind investment vehicle designed to support start-ups focused on decarbonizing air travel by accelerating the research, production and technologies associated with SAF.

People can now follow Oscar's journey as he stars in videos alongside real United employees. The integrated campaign includes interactive social-first elements, colourful spreads in Hemispheres magazine and a unique film series, all of which were created to simplify a complicated topic in an approachable and entertaining way. Creative highlights include:

- **Film Series:** Across multiple videos, United highlights Oscar's work in his new role, such as a "BINtro" film showcasing his first day on the job. The film is part of a series that focuses on the importance of SAF. In an additional 90-second film, United Captain Tomica Adams breaks down how things like waste can help fuel air travel.
- **Out of Home:** United's out-of-home content introduces the airline's new hire in a larger-than-life format. The playful imagery features Oscar in aviation settings – from tarmac to onboard. The photos will pique people's interest in how trash could one day help us fly toward a lower carbon future.
- **Digital/Social:** Providing surround sound to the campaign, storytelling continues on social channels with bite-size edutainment videos, engaging Instagram Story features, emoji-filled Twitter threads and more to raise awareness of the SAF nitty-gritty. The social campaign will live on owned and paid social and digital channels.

As a part of the collaboration, United Airlines is supporting Sesame Workshop through a donation to the nonprofit educational organization's Welcome Sesame initiative. Sesame Workshop will also be included in United Airlines' Miles on a Mission, where travellers will be able to donate miles to help support its global mission to help children grow smarter, stronger and kinder.

"This campaign provided a special opportunity to showcase an iconic Sesame Street character, Oscar the Grouch, celebrating what he loves best — trash," said Jennifer Ahearn, VP, Global Strategic Partnerships & Themed Entertainment, Sesame Workshop. "The amazing collaboration helps United Airlines explain in simpler terms the technology of turning trash into fuel in a fun and engaging manner."

United aims to be 100 percent green by reducing its GHG emissions by 100 percent by 2050, without relying on traditional carbon offsets. In addition to the UAV Sustainable Flight Fund, United has launched a SAF purchasing program called the Eco-Skies Alliance and established a venture fund — United Airlines Ventures — to identify and invest in companies and technologies that can decarbonize air travel. These strategic investments include carbon capture, hydrogen-electric engines, electric regional aircraft and air taxis.