Brand Doctor

Brand Check-up

Spirit Airlines

As of September 30, 2025

Status: Bleeding

Spirit's no-frills brand stopped earning enough, and a late move upmarket could not close the gap before cash ran short and a second bankruptcy followed.

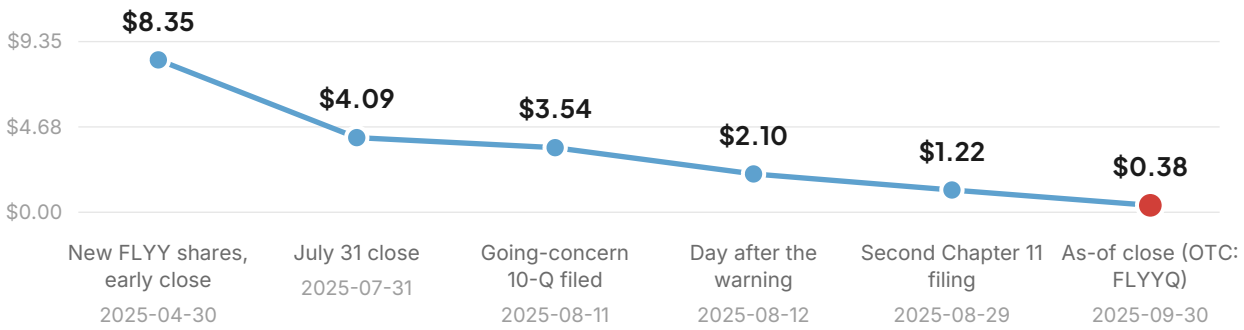
About this check-up

Brand Doctor reviews well-known brands the way we review a client's marketing: symptoms, diagnosis, treatment. This check-up uses public information available on September 30, 2025. It is brand and marketing analysis, not investment advice. Sources are listed at the end.

Vital signs

Share price

USD, at the dates shown [2, 4, 9, 1, 11]



Share price

$0.38

Close of the new shares (FLYYQ, OTC market), September 30, 2025, during the second Chapter 11; the old SAVE shares were cancelled in March 2025 [1]

Change since April 2025

Down about 95%

New shares only: from $8.35 on April 30, 2025; they began trading on NYSE American as FLYY on April 29 and are the only shares on the chart [2, 4]

Old SAVE shares

Down 97%

Old share class, not on the chart: fall from late 2018 to November 2024, per AP; cancelled when Spirit emerged on March 12, 2025 [8, 4]

Revenue, 2024

$4.91 billion

Total operating revenues, down 8.4% from 2023; net loss of $1.23 billion [3]

Revenue, Q2 2025

$1.02 billion

Down from $1.28 billion a year earlier (about 20%); net loss of $245.8 million [4, 9]

November capacity

Cut about 25%

Plan announced in September 2025, with exits from 11 markets on October 2 [10]

Timeline

2024-01	Judge William Young blocks JetBlue's $3.8 billion purchase of Spirit (January 16) [3, 5, 6]
2024-03	Spirit and JetBlue end the merger; JetBlue pays Spirit $69 million (March 4) [3, 6]
2024-07	Spirit announces Go Big, Go Comfy, Go Savvy and Go options with no change or cancel fees (July 30) [7]
2024-08	The new travel options go on sale (August 16) [7]
2024-11	First Chapter 11 filing; NYSE suspends trading in SAVE shares (November 18) [3, 8]
2025-03	Spirit emerges from Chapter 11 and its old common stock is cancelled (March 12) [4]
2025-04	New shares begin trading on NYSE American as FLYY (April 29) [4]
2025-08	Quarterly filing warns of substantial doubt about continuing as a going concern (August 11) [4, 9]
2025-08	Second Chapter 11 filing (August 29) [11, 12]
2025-09	Spirit plans a capacity cut of about 25% in November and exits from 11 markets on October 2 [10]

Symptoms

- Two Chapter 11 filings in just over nine months (November 2024 and August 2025)
- Revenue down 8.4% in 2024 and about 20% year over year in the second quarter of 2025
- A going-concern warning in the August 2025 quarterly filing
- New shares down about 95% from April 30 to September 30, 2025
- A planned capacity cut of about 25% in November, pilot furloughs and exits from 11 markets

Diagnosis

1 A brand that was only a price

Spirit sold a low base fare and charged extra for items such as carry-on bags and sodas that other airlines often include. By November 2024 the AP reported that Spirit's traditional no-frills end of the market had stagnated while the premium end surged. Spirit's 2024 revenue fell 8.4% on lower traffic and a 5.1% drop in average yield. [8, 3]

2 Two years waiting for a buyer

Spirit announced a merger with Frontier in early 2022, and JetBlue outbid Frontier with a $3.8 billion deal. A federal judge blocked that deal on January 16, 2024, and the companies ended it on March 4, 2024, with a $69 million payment to Spirit. Spirit announced its transformation plan only in July 2024. [6, 5, 3]

3 A late, unproven move upmarket

In July 2024 Spirit announced bundles with a Big Front Seat, a guaranteed blocked middle seat and no change or cancel fees, and by 2025 its filings referred to a Premium Economy travel option. The company described a shift toward becoming a value carrier. Revenue still fell to $1.02 billion in the second quarter of 2025 from $1.28 billion a year earlier. [7, 3, 4, 9]

4 A financial fix without a brand fix

The first restructuring converted $795 million of debt into stock and brought in a $350 million equity investment. CEO Dave Davis said it was "targeted exclusively on reducing Spirit's funded debt and raising equity capital." Within months the company warned of substantial doubt about its future and filed again on August 29, 2025. [8, 11, 4, 12]

Prognosis

As of September 30, 2025, Spirit is still flying, under court protection for the second time in less than a year, and customers can still use tickets, credits and loyalty points. The plan is a smaller airline: about 25% less capacity in November, exits from 11 markets and pilot furloughs. A smaller network can lower costs, but it does not give travellers a clearer reason to book. Watch whether Spirit settles on one promise and holds it, whether bundled and premium options lift revenue, and whether bookings hold while its future is uncertain.

Treatment

- Choose one promise for the restructured airline, either the lowest total trip cost or better value for a modest premium, and state it the same way in every channel.
- Show the full price of a typical trip, with bags and a seat, at the first quote so the low-fare promise survives checkout.
- Focus the smaller network's marketing on the routes and cities where Spirit has the strongest repeat demand.
- Keep telling customers, plainly and often, that tickets, credits and loyalty points remain valid during the restructuring, as Spirit did on filing day.

Lessons for growing companies

Price is a position, not a brand

If the lowest price is your only reason to exist, a rival's discount or a rise in costs can take it away quickly. Give customers at least one more reason to choose you.

Keep building while a deal is pending

A pending sale can freeze decisions about your own offer. Plan as if the deal will fail, because the cost of waiting falls on you if it does.

Reposition before you have to

Changing what a name means takes years of consistent proof. Start while you still have the cash and time to show customers the change is real.

Sources

1 Spirit Aviation Holdings (FLYYQ) historical prices, Aug. 25 to Sept. 30, 2025. Yahoo Finance, 2025-09-30. https://finance.yahoo.com/quote/FLYYQ/history/?period1=1755993600&period2=1759276800

2 Spirit Aviation Holdings (FLYY/FLYYQ) historical prices, April to August 2025. Yahoo Finance, 2025-08-25. https://finance.yahoo.com/quote/FLYYQ/history/?period1=1740787200&period2=1756166400

3 Spirit Airlines, Inc. Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (EDGAR), 2025-03-03. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1498710/000149871025000008/save-20241231.htm

4 Spirit Aviation Holdings, Inc. Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2025. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (EDGAR), 2025-08-11. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1498710/000149871025000037/save-20250630.htm

5 U.S. judge blocks JetBlue's acquisition of Spirit, saying deal would hurt consumers. NPR (via Alabama Public Radio), 2024-01-17. https://www.apr.org/business-education/2024-01-17/u-s-judge-blocks-jetblues-acquisition-of-spirit-saying-deal-would-hurt-consumers

6 JetBlue, Spirit ending $3.8B deal to combine after court ruling blocked their merger. Associated Press (via WDIV ClickOnDetroit), 2024-03-04. https://www.clickondetroit.com/business/2024/03/04/jetblue-spirit-ending-38b-deal-to-combine-after-court-ruling-blocked-their-merger/

7 Go Big or Go Comfy: Spirit Airlines to Offer Unmatched Value with New Travel Options and Transformed Guest Experience. Spirit Airlines via PR Newswire (GuruFocus), 2024-07-30. https://sgp.gurufocus.com/news/2485662/go-big-or-go-comfy-spirit-airlines-to-offer-unmatched-value-with-new-travel-options-and-transformed-guest-experience

8 Spirit Airlines files for bankruptcy as financial losses pile up and debt payments loom. Associated Press (via WDIV ClickOnDetroit), 2024-11-18. https://www.clickondetroit.com/business/2024/11/18/spirit-airlines-files-for-bankruptcy-as-financial-losses-pile-up-and-debt-payments-loom/

9 Spirit Warns of 'Substantial Doubt' Over Continued Operations. AirlineGeeks, 2025-08-12. https://airlinegeeks.com/2025/08/12/spirit-warns-of-substantial-doubt-over-continued-operations/

10 Spirit Airlines to cut capacity by 25% starting this fall, hints at layoffs. CBS News, 2025-09-18. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/spirit-airlines-cut-capacity-by-25-percent-november/

11 Spirit Airlines files for bankruptcy for 2nd time in less than a year. ABC News (Good Morning America), 2025-08-29. https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/news/story/spirit-airlines-files-bankruptcy-again-125110617

12 Spirit Airlines files for bankruptcy for 2nd time in less than a year. Associated Press (via OPB), 2025-08-30. https://www.opb.org/article/2025/08/30/spirit-airlines-files-for-bankruptcy-again/

About Brand Doctor

Brand Doctor is a marketing strategy consultancy founded by Cliff K. F. Lin. He has spent 17 years in marketing and managed more than $30 million in spend for SaaS, tech and lead-generation companies.

A Brand Check-up applies the method we use with clients to a well-known brand: the symptoms you can see from outside, the root causes behind them, and the treatment we would prescribe. For your own company, we look at six areas (positioning, messaging, customer journey, channel mix, budget and spend, and measurement) and rank what to fix first.

$30M+	135+	8×	17
In marketing spend managed	Campaigns treated	Growth achieved	Years in marketing

Find out where your marketing is bleeding.

Brand Doctor runs the same check-up on your marketing. Book a free diagnosis at brandmd.ca/contact.

Book your free diagnosis