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aviationbusinessnews.com

VOLUME 14 • ISSUE 06 • DECEMBER 2025

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SPINNING AROUND THE ISSUE

There have been lots of buzzwords floating around the world of PR for as long as there have been magazines to pick up on them. For the most part, the job of an editor is to keep these terms out of their publication, but I hope you'll forgive me for including a whole article on the subject of 'Experiential Marketing' (which you can read on p36).

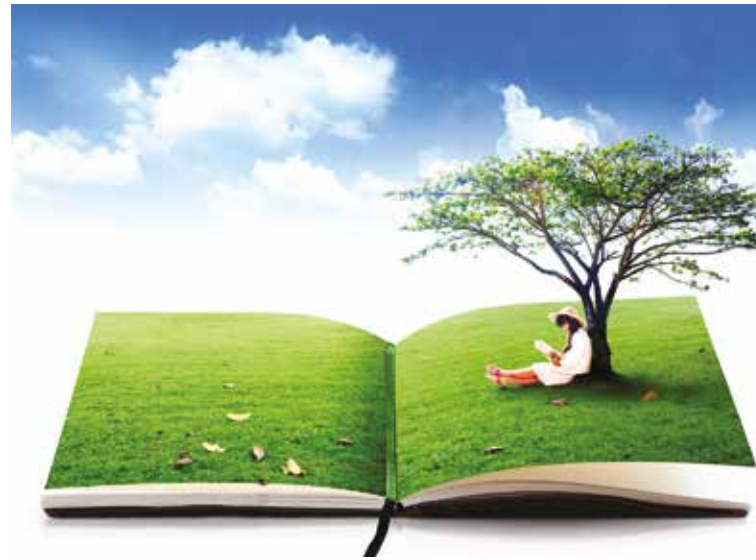
Now, the basis of experiential marketing, according to the article's author, is to adapt how a customer thinks and feels about a product or service and this is done by the way in which it is presented to them, and the 'nudges' they get as they use it.

This sounds like the usual nonsense spouted by marketers, but my interest was piqued when I read the article and saw that it was talking about how you present an intangible subject, such as sustainability, to your passengers without them thinking you are trying to lecture or hoodwink them.

It's a valid point. For the most part, airline customers are deeply cynical about the role of things like offset schemes and they saw the 'carbon calculators' that used to be provided by airlines as the twaddle that they were.

I guess the problem is: When is the amount of information given too much?

As I noted at the recent Aviation Carbon event, CO₂ emissions from planes are not the only problem. There's also the warming effect of contrails and



▲ Can marketing really change a passenger's views?

How do you present sustainability to your passengers without lecturing them?

that of transport to and from the airport, as well as of the airport itself. There's also the impact of the inflight services, where food waste, including unserved meals, must be destroyed in the same way as toxic waste...

I could go on. Anyhow, to the experiential marketers I say: good luck with spinning all of that.

Greg Whitaker

Greg Whitaker

Editor

greg.whitaker@aviationbusinessnews.com

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Editor

Greg Whitaker

greg.whitaker@aviationbusinessnews.com

Contributors

Bernie Baldwin, Margaux Bang

Art Director

Phil Couzens

Graphic Designer

Alan Bingle

Sub Editor

Heather Ford

Production Manager

Barnaby Moore

barnaby.moore@aviationbusinessnews.com

Publisher

Toby Walton

toby.walton@aviationbusinessnews.com

Group Commercial Manager

David Hirsh

david.hirsh@aviationbusinessnews.com

Business Development Manager

Robert Gouge

robert.gouge@aviationbusinessnews.com

Chief Operating Officer

Lee Hayhurst

lee.hayhurst@aviationbusinessnews.com

CEO

Chris Pitchford

For subscriptions & enquiries:

Barnaby Moore

barnaby.moore@aviationbusinessnews.com

All enquiries

+44 (0) 20 8444 2554

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PUBLISHED BY

Real.
RESPONSE MEDIA

Unit 4, Cally Yard, 445 Caledonian
Road, London N7 9BG



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NEWS FROM ACROSS THE INDUSTRY



Cabin

RECARO EXPANDS PRODUCTION AND TESTING FACILITIES

Recaro is to increase the size of its German seat-testing facility by 60% in 2026 as part of a series of measures put in place by the company as it expands its aircraft seating business.

The announcements come off the back of a predicted set of good results, with the company saying it expects a double digit growth in revenues in FY 2025 compared with FY 2024.

Other initiatives include hiring around 200 additional employees worldwide, while seat production capacity at its plant in Poland is being expanded to include a new production line and office space.

To further meet customer demand, a customer service presence will be established in the first quarter of 2026 in Delhi, India. The company has also been advancing technologies and capabilities

within its business class segment to include training of operations and customer service teams to meet the predicted higher volume output over the coming years.

“The global aircraft seating team has been dedicatedly going the extra mile and jointly achieved a great success by reaching the 2024 revenue in October of this year,” said Dr Mark Hiller, CEO of Recaro Aircraft Seating. “Recaro is experiencing double-digit growth and continues to invest in the space2grow initiative with its expansion activities at all sites.”

**“
The aircraft seating team reached the 2024 revenue by October this year**



IFE

Starlink to be rolled out on flydubai

> Dubai-based carrier flydubai has signed an agreement with SpaceX to introduce Starlink across its 737 fleet. The service will deliver high-speed, low-latency broadband internet. Under the agreement, installation for 100 aircraft will be rolled out in 2026.

Ghaith Al Ghaith, chief executive officer at flydubai, said: “Reliable connectivity has become essential and our partnership with Starlink allows us to meet the evolving expectations of today’s travellers. As we continue to expand our fleet and network, innovation remains at the heart of our strategy.”

The partnership will enable the carrier to offer connectivity across more than 100 destinations.

With Starlink on board, flydubai joins a growing number of global carriers adopting next-generation inflight Wi-Fi, a differentiator both leisure and business travellers look for when choosing an airline.



Cabin

DIEHL'S DUBAI WORKSHOP TO SUPPORT EMIRATE'S A380

Diehl Aviation and Emirates have signed an agreement to support the next phase of the Emirates A380 retrofit programme.

To support Emirates and other regional customers even more efficiently, Diehl Aviation has expanded its presence in the Middle East with a new EASA Part 21G-approved workshop in the Dubai Airport Freezone, opened in early 2025. This setup enables local production, rework and delivery of cabin components, offering shorter lead times and increased flexibility for ongoing programmes such as the A380 retrofit.

The Dubai facility will also be directly involved in selected work packages of the next phase of the A380 retrofit programme, providing on-site expertise with local manufacturing, assembling and logistical support.

"Being awarded the next phase of the Emirates A380 retrofit is a strong vote of confidence and an important milestone for Diehl Aviation," said Harald Mehring, chief customer officer at Diehl Aviation.

"With our dedicated team and our new setup in the Dubai Airport Freezone, we are ideally positioned to support Emirates locally."



BRIEFS

- Air Cambodia plans to retrofit ATR's currently under development 'X-Space Table' (pictured) in 2027 across its fleet of three turboprops.

- Cabin interior manufacturer Jamco Corporation is to acquire galley equipment company Iacobucci HF Aerospace S.p.A. (IHFA). The deal has been funded by private investment fund Bain Capital, which also owns Jamco.

- Ryanair is to close its Prime member offering from November 28, following an eight-month trial period. The airline said that the scheme "cost more money than it generated".

- Milan Bergamo Airport has opened a new and expanded security area as well as an enlarged duty free area. The airport is also introducing new gates and other improvements ahead of the 2026 summer season.

- Satcoms provider Gogo Aviation must pay the administrators of former rival SmartSky \$22.7m for infringing 5G technology patents, a court in Delaware has ruled.

- Low-cost carrier easyJet has reported a better-than-expected FY operating profit, due to demand for the airline's package holidays.

Acquisitions

COMAC BUYS INTO LAO AIRLINES

The Laos government has sold 49% of flag-carrier Lao Airlines to Chinese aircraft manufacturer COMAC.

This partnership aims to reform state-owned enterprises, improve efficiency, and address financial losses.

A newspaper report in the *Laotian Times* claimed that the manufacturer initially wanted a controlling share of the business, but the Laos government

negotiated to retain overall control. COMAC is reported to be drafting a business improvement plan, which will be submitted to the government for approval.

Earlier in 2025, Lao Airlines, along with Indonesia's TransNusa was the first carrier outside of mainland China to operate the C909 90 seat regional jet which it owns four of, alongside four A320s and seven ATR turboprops.

The background of the advertisement features a dark, textured surface. In the upper left, a large, black, finned power distribution unit (PDU) is shown. A blue, glowing, wavy line originates from a cable connected to this unit and extends across the middle of the frame, passing behind three smaller, black, rectangular power distribution units (PDUs) that are arranged in a diagonal line from the middle left towards the bottom right. Each of these smaller PDUs has a USB-A port and a USB-C port on its front face, both of which are illuminated with a blue light. The IFPL GROUP logo is positioned at the top center of the image.

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€6M

Ryanair has axed a loyalty scheme that gave €6m discounts against only €4m revenue

\$217M

Korean Air has acquired a \$217m stake in WestJet. Korean CEO Walter Cho has joined WestJet's board

25,000

A new space operations company formed by Airbus, Leonardo and Thales will employ 25,000 staff

**Connectivity****ETIHAD TO ROLL-OUT VIASAT AMARA IFC FLEET-WIDE**

Etihad Airways will deploy Viasat's latest IFC, Viasat Amara, across its entire fleet. The expansion, announced by the Abu Dhabi-based airline and Viasat Inc, builds on existing successful collaborations.

Onboard Etihad aircraft, Viasat will power high-speed connectivity that enables guests to access streaming subscriptions on personal devices and to view Live TV on the aircraft seatback IFE screens. The expanded agreement will comprise both widebody and narrowbody aircraft, including Etihad's recently introduced A321LR fleet.

All of these aircraft will be equipped with Viasat Amara, enabling connectivity via global Ka-band satellites. Etihad's new Airbus A321LR fleet, which began commercial service

in August 2025, and deliveries of the new A350 fleet from April 2025, are factory-installed with Viasat's connectivity system. The Airbus fleet joins the new Boeing 787 Dreamliners, which have also been factory-installed with Viasat equipment.

"Airlines today have a choice: they can opt for a simple connection, or they can invest in a platform that allows for scalability and brand ownership," said Meherwan Polad, chief commercial officer, Viasat Aviation.

“The expanded agreement will include the recently introduced A321LR fleet

**Accessibility****Airchair triples production capacity**

Onboard wheelchair manufacturer, Airchair, has opened a new, larger manufacturing facility, situated between Gatwick and Heathrow near Woking in Surrey.

This expansion will allow Airchair to scale up production to meet the increasing demand for onboard wheelchairs.

A new single-flow smart manufacturing process has also been introduced to boost efficiency and allow for agile design adaptations.

The facility offers three times the production capacity compared with the current site and the owner says that expansion will bring new employment opportunities.

Sarah McOnie of Airchair said, "We are absolutely thrilled to have moved into our new, enlarged production facility.

"This is a significant milestone for the company, which launched in 2007 with an aisle chair designed and built by former aircraft engineer Brian Richards."

KEY TO THE KINGDOM

Arved von zur Muehlen, CCO at Saudia has big plans for modernising the national flag-carrier

When Saudia Airlines was named Skytrax's Most Improved Airline, it marked a turning point for the 80-year-old carrier. Previously known for poor timekeeping and an approach to dealing with passengers that probably wouldn't be described as customer-centric, the airline now boasts the Skytrax accolade, along with a Five-Star Airline award from APEX and a Business Traveller Award for best flight attendants providing top-notch customer service.

Behind the accolades lays a sweeping transformation that is changing the face of many of Saudi Arabia's existing businesses. 'Vision 2030' is an ambitious national transformation plan launched in 2016 under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with



“
We ask for a lot of feedback from our guests throughout the whole journey
”

ARVED VON ZUR MUEHLEN

CCO at Saudia

Joining the airline four years ago, having previously worked at Qatar, Lufthansa and WestJet, he was no stranger to ringing the changes where needed.

Change of rank

One of the areas where change was most definitely needed was punctuality. “We ask for a lot of feedback from our guests throughout the whole journey. One question that kept coming up was ‘Why are you not punctual? What’s the reason for it?’ So, we analysed the problem to understand it and then fix it,” von zur Muehlen explains.

“We singled out punctuality as an area to improve and our aim was to become the most punctual airline in the world. We missed that target last year, but we were the second most punctual airline worldwide,” he says.

“Going from a low rank to second in the world is a clear proof point that when you bring everybody together with technology, people, processes and accountability, you can really change an airline.”

Von zur Muehlen is under no illusions that focusing on timekeeping alone is going to be enough to change Saudia's fortunes. “As with many projects you need to evolve all of that, at the same time,” he says. “You cannot just focus on one thing, ignoring the others.”

He explains that areas of transformation can be defined as one of four pillars, namely “people, process, technology and the product you have”. Before tackling something you want to change, “first you need to measure it”.

To this end, several methods of measuring performance were put in place, with NPS (net promoter score)

the goal of turning the Kingdom from a place very few would want to visit, or even transit through, into becoming a destination in itself.

“We see ourselves as the wings of Vision 2030,” says chief commercial officer of Saudia Arved von zur Muehlen, adding that the cabin of a Saudia aircraft is likely to be the first taste of modern Saudi Arabia for many passengers. “As any guest enters our planes, it’s like handing over the business card of the country.”

Von zur Muehlen has been tasked with driving the changes needed to turn Saudia from an also-ran legacy carrier into a modern, full-service airline.





“When you bring everybody together with technology, people, processes and accountability, you can really change an airline”

chief among these. “Every ‘touch point’ is NPS driven and it’s transparent,” explains von zur Muehlen.

Other aspects that came out of the surveys were seating and in-flight connectivity. To this end, Saudia signed a large contract with cabin supplier Collins Aerospace, which includes refits across the carrier’s A330s and B777s with business and economy class seats being updated to a more modern experience. The deal also includes seats for Saudia’s upcoming B787 order, the first of which will be delivered in early 2026.

The airline has 116 new planes on order and all will have a business class, with suites on the widebodies and lie-flat seats on the narrowbodies. Updating the entire fleet to match the new order is a ‘heavy investment’ according to the CCO, but a necessary one in order to provide consistency across the fleet.

Sustainability

Running an expanding airline and accounting for sustainability might seem to be mutually exclusive, but von zur Muehlen makes the point that the aircraft in the new fleet are “dramatically” more efficient than their predecessors, plus the airline has reduced weight on board and employed people to look at SAF use.

Nonetheless, “it is a hot topic”, says von zur Muehlen. “We are part of a lot of working groups in the Kingdom that are very concerned about it and looking for other solutions.”

Embracing technology and AI

Looking ahead, von zur Muehlen sees technology as both an opportunity and a challenge. Legacy IT systems remain a constraint, but AI and automation

are opening new doors. In a humorous anecdote, he recalls a recent incident where Saudia’s chatbot conversed with a customer’s chatbot about a booking – “both were very polite”, he laughs.

For Saudia, agility and use-case-driven adoption of technology will be key to staying ahead in an industry that is evolving at breakneck speed.

The big picture

“Aviation is fascinating – it connects people and brings the world together,” von zur Muehlen reflects. With Vision 2030 as its compass, Saudia is not just transforming an airline; it’s redefining the travel experience for a new era. ●

1. The refurbished Saudia lounge at London Heathrow
2. Modern business class interior in Saudia’s premium suite

AFRICA'S GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

Captain **Ahmed Adel** has returned to the top job at Egyptair after a five-year absence. With him, he brings an ambitious strategy for modernisation

Like most global carriers, national flag carrier and state-owned Egyptair suffered through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite efforts to stabilise and pivot towards cargo operations and repatriation flights, the airline took an EGP 30bn loss in 2022. As the business struggled to recover, service quality declined, leading to the airline dropping out of Skytrax's Top 100 Airlines and Top 10 Arab Airlines lists.

However, new hope has been instilled with the return of captain Ahmed Adel. Originally a pilot with Egyptair, he rose through the ranks to become variously chairman of flight training, director of flight operations and chief exec of Egyptair Express before eventually becoming CEO of Egyptair in 2018, a position he remained in until just before the pandemic took hold.



“You are close to your people that you work with, which is, I think, very important, especially for the leadership style that I adopt”



CPT. AHMED ADEL
CEO Egyptair

Having been reinstated in February 2025, Adel introduced a five year, five-point plan to turn the airline's fortunes around. This included modernising the fleet with a renewed focus on forming strategic partnerships with lessors and technology providers, as well as putting a renewed focus on digital transformation.

Hands-on approach

Given his background, it is perhaps no surprise that Adel's management style is to focus on the aircraft crews using a hands-on management approach.

“Having the vantage point of a pilot in the company, I can always jump in once or twice every couple of months and see all the operations close by,” he explains. “You are close to your people that you work with, which is, I think, very important, especially for the leadership style that I adopt.”

Adel is still proudly an airline pilot and is qualified to fly the Airbus A350-900, of which Egyptair has 16 on order. While he won't be drawn on the finer points of the transformation plan, he's happy to explain that one of the goals is to provide a more consistent cabin experience for passengers.

New aircraft joining the fleet include 18 Boeing 737 MAX jets and 16 Airbus A350-900 widebodies, with an option for a further six, all of which will have Egyptair's signature interior style, with the flight attendants are dressed in smart blue uniforms which underwent a redesign a few years ago courtesy of fashion designer Marie Louis.

In addition, a refit programme for the existing aircraft has been announced, with new cabins coming to 19 737-800s NGs. “We're refurbishing the whole interior on these, as well as an extra two A330-200s, which we are turning into a similar product like the 350s that we're getting,” confirms Adel. “From a passenger's vantage point, they're going to see a whole new modernised fleet within the next two years.”

On the point of delivering a consistent product, Adel is keen to wind down the number of wet-leased aircraft in the fleet and increase the number on long-term agreements featuring the airline's signature interiors. To realise





2

“From a passenger’s vantage point, they’re going to see a whole new modernised fleet within the next two years”

this, an existing collaboration with lessor AerCap was reinforced at a meeting in Cairo in May 2025 to ensure the airline has a supply of B777-700 aircraft as the fleet expands.

Old alliance

Another factor motivating product consistency is Egyptair’s membership of Star Alliance, which it joined in 2008, something Adel is proud of. Benefits for passengers include lounge access, loyalty programmes and codeshare agreements that allow passengers to book multi-leg journeys across partner airlines, while the airline has benefited from additional traffic as well as the prestige of being a

part of the same alliance as giant global carriers such as Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines and United Airlines.

Adel has served on the board of Star Alliance for many years and is proud to point out that EgyptAir is the only member based in the Middle East/North Africa region.

“We’ve been very happy with the alliance. Star Alliance is the biggest alliance in the world,” Adel explains. “It has been very helpful to us, and we’ve been happy to be part of it.”

On the subject of sustainable aviation fuel, Adel is clear that transitioning is not easy for any airline. “The challenge with the SAF initiative and all the

regulations is that you want to align, but it’s not clear exactly how you can do so,” he says, highlighting the lack of a global, joined-up strategy to ensure supply and uptake of the fuel.

“Governments all over the world need to align because, at the moment, some of them use the carrot approach, while the European Union is using more of a regulatory approach. So, it needs to come together so we can move forward and start finding the viable solution.” Adel concludes. ●

1. Cabin crew members model the recently redesigned uniform

2. Egyptair has 16 A350-900s on order

DUBAI

2 - 3
FEBRUARY



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2025 Testimonials

"I spent the last two days in Dublin representing Aegean Airlines at the PAM Europe 2025 conference. It was inspiring to hear operators share insights from their predictive maintenance journeys - some well underway, others just beginning. One thing is clear: predictive maintenance will soon be an industry standard."

Emmanouil Nanos, Reliability and Maintenance Programme Engineer, Aegean Airlines



"Thank you to the PAM Europe team for fostering a collaborative environment and insightful exchanges on the digital transformation of our sector. These discussions and case studies highlight just how crucial innovation and teamwork are to advancing predictive technologies in aviation."

Mike Roemer, Director, Digital Fleet Management, United Airlines

"This year's discussions offered a sharp, practical look at the real predictive maintenance journey - not from theory, but directly from the experiences of operators like Ryanair, easyJet, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Vueling Airlines, Aer Lingus, British Airways and Condor Flugdienst GmbH."

Amanjot Singh Bhambra, Aircraft Systems Specialist, Wizzair UK



A NEW ERA OF PASSENGER COMMUNICATIONS

Nicholas Key, chief executive of 15below, explains how AI can help low cost and regional airlines create efficiencies and more connected passenger journeys

Air travel presents one of the most complex communication environments of any industry.

Passengers navigate multiple touchpoints – from booking platforms and airline apps to airport announcements and baggage claim notices – often with little consistency in messaging or guidance.

This fragmentation creates confusion, frustration and operational inefficiencies that particularly impact low-cost carriers (LCCs) and regional airlines operating with lean resources.

This is where artificial intelligence (AI) can have a real impact. New developments in AI are offering airlines ways to maintain passenger relationships throughout the travel experience.

Strategic consolidations within the industry, such as the recent partnership between 15below and Airport AI, are creating integrated communications solutions that bridge gaps between service providers.



“
New developments in AI are offering airlines ways to maintain passenger relationships
”

NICHOLAS KEY

Chief Executive of 15below

are designed to address individual passenger circumstances.

We see AI-powered communication systems solving this challenge by creating unified platforms that draw information from multiple sources and distilling it into a consistent message delivered through a conversational interface.

These systems can integrate real-time data from airlines and airports as well as third-party sources like weather and ancillary services to provide passengers with comprehensive updates that reflect their specific journey requirements.

For example, a passenger can start asking questions from the airline or airport website a few days before the flight to get information about their flight status or parking services at their departure terminal.

From this interaction, the passenger can then opt-in to receive real-time operational updates on WhatsApp or through SMS, which would naturally include flight updates but also additional planning information such as transportation help, expected waiting times, and more.

Accelerating automation

From the airline's perspective, it's important to note that those updates can be disseminated without a manual process. Large language models have dramatically increased the variety of interactions that can be automated, enabling LCCs to communicate more efficiently without sacrificing quality.

Unlike traditional chatbots that rely on rigid decision trees and scripted responses, modern AI systems can understand context, interpret complex queries and provide nuanced answers that feel natural.

Connected journey

Communication between airports and airlines is one of the widest gaps and the field is long overdue for improvement.

Passengers often find themselves caught between different information systems, unsure whether to rely on airline notifications, airport announcements, or third-party travel applications. This confusion intensifies during disruptions, when accurate information becomes essential.

Air travel lacks a single, trusted source for consistent customer communication across every channel and touchpoint.

Traditional communication methods rely on one-way broadcasting, such as mass emails or public departure boards and announcements, none of which





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2

“Modern AI systems can monitor passenger journeys in real-time, identifying potential issues before they become problems”

When gaps in passenger understanding arise, airlines that step in proactively to take responsibility for their customers’ experience fare better than those that remain passive.

We know from experience that airlines ultimately bear the consequences if passengers don’t have the information they need or if something goes wrong. Modern AI systems can monitor passenger journeys in real-time, identifying potential issues before they become problems and automatically providing relevant information or assistance.

This proactive approach helps prevent minor inconveniences from escalating into major customer service issues.

Reducing staff strain

By preventing that escalation, conversational AI improves customer service while reducing the strain on

airline staff – a key advantage for regional airlines and LCCs operating with thin margins.

Traditional customer service approaches require airlines to maintain large ground staff teams, at great cost, to handle routine enquiries, flight updates and basic problem resolution.

A self-service model for support enables passengers to get the answers they need quickly. In fact, according to Airport AI’s data (and its current +88.9 Net Promoter Score), passenger satisfaction with AI interactions often exceeds that of human support, especially for quick, routine questions such as gate information, boarding times or baggage enquiries, where passengers need accurate answers.

This reduces labour and operational costs and frees up teams to concentrate on complex issues that genuinely require human intervention, such as handling

1. Traditional communication methods like departure boards don’t address individual passenger circumstances
2. AI systems can achieve greater personalisation in passenger interactions

major disruptions, managing special assistance requirements, or resolving unique passenger circumstances. The result is better service for passengers and more engaging work for employees.

AI-powered communications do more than reduce customer service enquiries. Two-way, real-time communication tailored to individual booking details, travel history, preferences and current circumstances can also create positive passenger experiences.

These systems can capture real-time insights through live conversations, replacing assumptions with actual passenger input.

With the right technology partner, LCCs can create more connected passenger journeys, develop cost-saving efficiencies and achieve greater personalisation in passenger interactions, all with a fraction of the resources necessary to implement these strategies in-house.

The key lies in selecting AI solutions that integrate seamlessly with existing airline systems while providing flexibility to adapt to changing passenger expectations and requirements. Airlines need partners who understand both the technical complexities of aviation operations and the nuanced demands of customer communication.

Success requires ongoing attention to data quality, system integration and continuous improvement based on passenger feedback and performance.

We believe that airlines that choose to invest in these capabilities will meet, and indeed exceed, passenger expectations while maintaining the all-important efficiency that is central to the LCC operating model.

In our opinion, that’s a win-win. ●



TRAINING FOR EVERY SCENARIO

Cabin safety is more than a regulatory tickbox. **Raquel Moar**, senior cabin safety instructor at CAE, shares how modern training is redefining preparedness for cabin crew worldwide

► **What are the key components of effective cabin safety training today, and how have they evolved over the past decade?**

Preparing for human factors and competency-based training are the key components of effective training. Effective cabin safety training today focuses on including human factors in all training scenarios. The psychological resilience of cabin crew and proper passenger behaviour management are vital to successfully dealing with an emergency on board. In recent times, training has evolved from purely procedural training to competency-based training, which emphasises soft skills in sessions that

are more practical than theoretical, preparing crew members for more realistic situations.

► **How does CAE incorporate real-world scenarios into its training programmes to prepare cabin crew for emergencies?**

CAE is fortunate to have passenger cabin mock-ups that allow for the simulation of realistic scenarios such as fires on board, decompressions, ditching and evacuations. The instructor can also include faults, handicaps and barriers so that students can practise and test their ability to adapt to the thousands of risky situations they may encounter.

These realistic scenario exercises are included in all cabin crew training at CAE, from the initial course when students start from zero, to annual refresher training, including training for senior cabin crew members.

► **How do you train cabin crew to manage high-stress situations, such as medical emergencies or unruly passengers?**

Being familiar with as wide a range of difficult and dangerous situations as possible is important to be able to manage them effectively, as it helps humans keep stress levels low when faced with a situation that is no longer new to them. That is why

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“TRAINEES LEARN NOT ONLY WHAT THE RULES SAY, BUT ALSO HOW TO ACT WHEN THE SITUATION DOESN'T FIT THE MANUAL”

we take advantage of all the practical sessions to expose students to stressful situations using role-playing exercises combined with physical and environmental stressors such as smoke, low visibility or noise in the cabin mockups.

► **What role does technology, such as VR or simulation, play in enhancing cabin safety instruction?**

VR and simulation enable immersive experiences for rare but critical events, such as emergency evacuations or smoke-filled cabins, without physical risk. The simulation-based training provides realistic tactile and visual feedback, improving confidence to the trainee.

► **How do you balance regulatory compliance with practical, situational training for cabin crew?**

Regulatory compliance lays the foundation, but competency-based training frameworks ensure that crew can apply the rules in real-world contexts. CAE integrates ICAO and EASA regulations with scenario-

based exercises, so trainees learn not only what the rules say, but also how to act when the situation doesn't fit the manual.

► **What are the most common misconceptions about cabin safety among new trainees or the public?**

In my opinion, I think the most common misconception is that cabin crew are mainly there for passenger comfort. Of course, comfort and the commercial aspect are important, but they are not our main task, even though this is what is most visible to the general public. Behind every friendly welcome and service on board, there is extensive training for cabin crew to deal with any emergency situation that could endanger passengers. Another common misconception is that emergencies are rare, so training is not essential. This leads passengers to disregard the crew's safety instructions. Emergencies are rare but, when they do occur, the actions of the crew and the behaviour of the passengers determine the outcome in terms of survival. ●

1: The CAE simulator 2: Getting familiar with an evacuation slide 3: Real aircraft are used to create the training rigs

SITUATIONAL TRAINING

Certain psychological and behavioural skills are required by flight attendants in an emergency situation. Raquel Moar explains that situational awareness, decision-making, communication and teamwork, and stress management are emphasised during the training. These are as follows:

- **Situational awareness:** for early risk recognition, and to be able to respond quickly and effectively to any emergency that may arise.
- **Decision-making:** for good and effective decision-making by applying procedures in highly dynamic and changing conditions.
- **Communication and teamwork:** to coordinate effectively with flight crew and other cabin crew, especially in emergency situations
- **Stress management:** so that students can improve their resilience by managing their stress in critical situations



For more information on CAE training, please visit: cae.com/civil-aviation



3

REDCABIN CONFERENCE & AWARDS

The annual European RedCabin Aircraft Cabin Innovation Summit took place in Dublin in December. **Lee Hayhurst** was there to listen to the debate

Increasing diversity in the workforce is seeing cabin interior design become more inventive and innovative, and helping to push the message of sustainability.

That was the view of a panel of leading women in the sector who spoke at the Dublin RedCabin event about their experiences of establishing themselves in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

Oksana Hannak, head of customer experience and journey design at Lufthansa, said it is not widely recognised that diverse teams help develop cultures that drive businesses forward.

"When I started 20 years ago, the worker layer was very female but the management layer was very male. Now it's a completely different world we are living in. We're not there yet, but we're on track," she said.

The panel agreed that while some airlines are driving sustainability, this is a topic that is

more likely to be pushed by an industry that has more women in it. Catherine Barber, CMF design specialist at JPA Design, said: "Certain airlines are really championing this, like Cathay Pacific.

"We put certain choices in front of them, but it's quite easy for them to be rejected in the RFD process or at certification. Now we do not see the driver coming from passengers, instead it's coming more from airlines and when they do [embrace it] it's amazing how much can be achieved."

Innovation

An ageing demographic globally is making accessibility in aircraft interiors design more important than ever, the Innovation Summit heard.

Jack Kavanagh heads up the AeroFix project which is developing systems for wheelchair users so that they can travel onboard without ever having to leave their personal mobility assisted device. He explained: "Aviation is currently the final frontier for travel in a dignified way for those with reduced mobility."

Playtime

Elsewhere at the conference, the subject of 'Playground' was discussed. Unlike a literal schoolyard, this Playground is virtual and is a type of digital twin simulator that represents an aircraft cabin, where designers can experiment without real-world consequences.

Developed by Sekisui Kydex, DeepBlue Studios and Elevate Aircraft Seating, the Playground is so realistic it negates the need to create mock-ups to properly visualise cabin furniture in situ. DeepBlue founder Anthony Harcup explained, "This has the potential to unlock creativity of new designers because they can't do anything wrong and they have a whole new set of tools." ●





“AVIATION IS THE FINAL FRONTIER FOR TRAVEL IN A DIGNIFIED WAY FOR THOSE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY”



REDCABIN TRINITY AWARDS WINNERS

The winners of the 2025 RedCabin Trinity Awards were announced at the event. Judges were drawn from some of aviation's leading operators including ANA, Virgin Atlantic, Riyadh Air, Qantas, and summit hosts, Avolon.

Monica Wick, founder and chief executive of RedCabin, said: "It has been another year of incredible entries for the awards, with so many companies offering sizeable jumps in innovation, and ideas that have the potential to truly revolutionise sectors of our industry."

THE 2025 REDCABIN TRINITY AWARDS WINNERS:

Passenger Experience Concept
Volarex by Sky-Tiles – SkyPaxxx Interior Repairs, in collaboration with DeepBlue Studios

Cabin Service Concept
Opera Essential business class seat – Stelia Aerospace

Sustainability Concept
Waste Carbon to Aircraft Cabin – Bringing Circularity to Aircraft Textiles – Boeing, Elevate Aircraft Seating, Botany Weaving and LanzaTech

Cabin MRO Concept
Monova PE – Studio ID, in collaboration with Trendworks, Botany Weaving Mill and Sabeti Wain Aerospace

Collaboration Excellence
Aria – JPA Design and Cathay Pacific

Newcomer/Startup
3mesh – Muller Textiles

Lifetime Achievement
Sven Achilles



SATELLITE SHOWDOWN

The satellite communications industry is seeing technological advances and significant new players. **Bernie Baldwin** hears how the industry is accepting and reacting to the changes



▲ Starlink aerial mounted on an ATR 72-600

There was a time when a new company coming into a market with new technology would be labelled “the new kid on the block”. Modern parlance, however, adds an air of wonder by ascribing the term ‘disruptor’ to the new entrant.

In the field of inflight connectivity – which itself, not too long ago, was thought of as disruptive – two new entrants with reputations for unsettling other industries are in the early stages of making their mark. From Amazon comes Amazon Leo (originally Project Kuiper), while SpaceX is offering Starlink. And whether one likes or loathes the parent companies, their investments and developments in satellite broadband technologies are certainly attracting attention.

Amazon Leo, for example, has garnered a major contract with JetBlue Airways, which will be the first airline to use the provider’s advanced low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite broadband network. The carrier is no stranger to innovation, having launched LiveTV on its aircraft back in 2000, before becoming the first and still only major US airline to offer free, high-speed Wi-Fi throughout its fleet when it launched Fly-Fi in 2013.

It is on that Fly-Fi product that JetBlue will start to introduce Amazon Leo technology in 2027. “This planned rollout would mark the next evolution of Fly-Fi and inflight connectivity, with the aim of keeping customers streaming, scrolling and sharing with ease from gate to gate and always for free,” the airline declared when announcing the deal.

According to JetBlue, “Amazon Leo will deliver high-speed, low-latency internet to customers and communities around the world. The system is built around a constellation of thousands of satellites in low Earth orbit – connected to each other by high-speed optical links that will create a mesh network in space – and linked to a global network of antennas, fibre and internet connection points on the ground. Amazon has deployed more than 100 satellites to date, and is continuing to increase its production, processing and launch rates ahead of an initial service rollout.”

Quiet connectivity

Unfortunately, apart from its deal with JetBlue and the even more recent rebranding, Amazon is not sharing additional details on its aviation technology and services at this time.

Similarly, SpaceX is coy about its Starlink product, currently declining to comment. However, some of those who have signed up to use the network are more forthcoming. Two, in particular, exemplify the range of operator that can benefit from the system, namely ATR and Virgin Atlantic Airways.

Discussing the key attributes of Starlink which led the company to make it an option on new ATR aircraft, Laurent Dulon, head of upgrade and engineering services at ATR, reports that the initiative originated from a direct request by Air New Zealand, which approached the airframer to integrate the Starlink solution on its ATR aircraft. “This reflected a clear market demand for reliable, high-speed connectivity on regional flights. Passengers expect continuity of service when transferring from larger aircraft to ATRs, and Wi-Fi is now considered essential,” Dulon notes.

“Air New Zealand funded the development costs for the ATR 72-600 installation, and the first aircraft equipped has been flying with passengers, generating excellent feedback. The project began in early 2023 and received EASA certification for the ATR 72-600 in December 2024, becoming the first

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▲ Viasat 3F1 at the Boeing satellite factory

regional aircraft manufacturer to do so for this connectivity solution. For the smaller family member, the ATR 42-600, development started in May 2025, with certification targeted for February 2026,” Dulon adds.

“Since that initial request, interest has grown significantly, and we are now being approached by multiple operators seeking similar solutions. While alternative systems such as Gogo were evaluated, Starlink stood out for its performance and reliability,” the ATR VP confirms.

According to a company spokesperson, Virgin Atlantic believes that “by leveraging the world’s most advanced satellite constellation in low Earth orbit, Starlink offers high-speed, low-latency internet access around the world, including the most isolated areas. This makes for a reliable, fast and secure user experience”.

Point of difference

ATR’s Dulon explains how he sees Starlink differentiating itself from other systems, in particular Amazon Leo. “High-speed connectivity like the one from Starlink combines simplicity of installation with minimal to non-existent interaction with existing aircraft systems, while delivering very high-speed internet. This makes it a robust and practical solution for regional aircraft,” he declares. “Amazon Leo is still a very recent entrant and does not

yet offer the same level of maturity or proven operational experience.”

Alongside the new satellite products, support will be needed by customer airlines, both technically and in terms of packaged programmes, to ensure maximum availability. Dulon reports that ATR aims to deliver a comprehensive, packaged offer and is currently in discussions with the supplier to define this. “Our Design Organisation Approval partner PMV Engineering ensures certification and technical support. From a technical standpoint, the solution is already flying on ATR prototypes and has been extensively used during our own flight tests,” he remarks.

In the area of support, Virgin Atlantic’s spokesperson notes that the company is still finalising the details of the partnership, but “installation across the airline’s entire fleet of Airbus A330neos, A350s and Boeing 787s will begin in Q3 2026 and be completed by the end of 2027”.

Established players

While the two disruptors aim to make headway in the market, established players are not resting on their laurels. Viasat, for example, has new elements of its system ready to launch and the company’s aviation president, Don Buchman, is eager to discuss them along with the key beneficial attributes of the overall system which he believes

potential customers will not find on the Amazon or Starlink systems, nor those of other competitors.

“Viasat’s strength in aviation lies in a holistic, future-looking approach to connectivity, at the heart of which sits out a robust multi-orbit strategy,” Buchman begins. “The ability to integrate GEO, HEO and LEO satellites – our owned space assets and those of our partners – is a critical differentiator for us, enabling unparalleled resilience, coverage and dynamic adaptation to demand.

“Looking ahead, the upcoming Viasat Aera, an electronically steered antenna, will enable simultaneous, dual-beam connections across these multiple orbits, pulling the best capabilities to serve the end-user application in use, regardless of orbit,” he adds.

“Beyond the technology, in both commercial and business aviation, we place a huge emphasis on Quality of Experience (QoE) and reliability. We’re dedicated to delivering consistent, dependable performance for streaming and other high-demand activities, all supported by smart network optimisation.

“We’ve developed flexible business models and a comprehensive suite of digital products and services, such as Viasat Ads. These go beyond just ‘fast and free Wi-Fi’ to genuinely help airlines drive customer satisfaction, build loyalty and achieve profitable growth through tailored offerings



1. ATR system setup 2. JetBlue A321neo fitted with Amazon Leo aerial

and our global ‘white-glove’ support,” Buchman emphasises.

The new entrants make much of their ability to provide consistent global coverage to airlines. According to Viasat, achieving such coverage is paramount for commercial airlines. “It’s something we’ve designed our network around from the ground up, built on a multi-orbit architecture,” says Buchman.

“Essentially, we combine the extensive, reliable coverage of our GEO satellites, including the incredible capacity of the ViaSat-3 constellation, with the expanding capabilities of satellites other orbits as demand dictates. These GEO satellites, for instance, provide broad, consistent beams that serve as the backbone for high-bandwidth applications over long-haul routes. This is then complemented by the extra layer of density – for example, of a LEO constellation – resulting in simultaneous, optimised high-capacity connections through the multi-orbit approach.

“We’re also actively expanding our owned satellite fleet,” Buchman reports,

while claiming, “ViaSat-3 F1 is already enhancing connectivity at incredible rates and the newly launched ViaSat-3 F2 is set to unlock an additional capacity over the Americas. ViaSat-3 F3 will launch shortly and provide an incredible amount of capacity to Asia. Alongside these, GX10A and B are bringing crucial Arctic coverage. Importantly, we strategically incorporate capacity from multiple GSO and NGSO operators, creating a highly integrated and resilient global network.”

Unsurprisingly, Viasat has further developments ongoing, including software upgrades and AI-driven network management, all of which will increase both coverage and capacity. “Our Viasat Amara solution truly embodies this approach, delivering high-capacity, high-quality service with truly global coverage, engineered to scale and support rapid multi-network, multi-orbit evolution,” Buchman explains. “In business aviation, we have a similar multi-orbit approach that is meticulously catered to the needs and demands of that market.”

‘White glove’ service

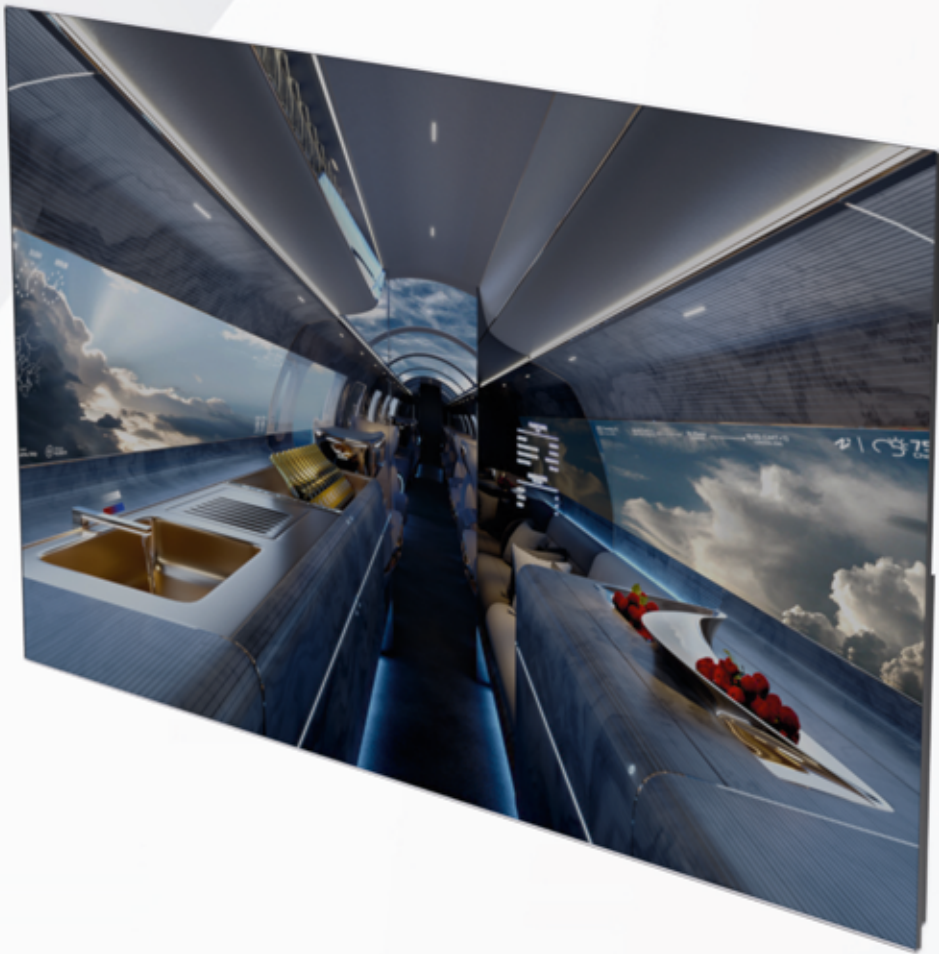
Recognising that inflight connectivity is a vital component of Viasat’s airline partners’ passenger experience, operational efficiency and revenue streams, Buchman stresses the company’s commitment to being a reliable partner. “To achieve this, we offer 24/7/365 global ‘white-glove’ technical support from our dedicated experts,” he confirms.

“By embedding advanced AI and machine learning into our network management, we are able to monitor global usage and track demand trends continuously, which in turn keeps us perpetually on the front foot, able to optimise the network proactively and dynamically direct satellite capacity to where it is needed most,” Buchman elaborates. “Perhaps even more importantly, it also enables us to predict and mitigate potential issues before they impact service, ensuring faultless reliability. We also facilitate seamless coverage enhancements through over-the-air software upgrades because we know how important it is to minimise downtime for our airline partners.”

The need to keep the customer happy with consistent service is something all those involved in providing satellite broadband connectivity to passengers will appreciate. Airline customers will take the support offerings as well as the core technologies into account as they select from the growing choice available. ●

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Wash with care

“ Bang and the dirt is gone!” It’s an iconic catchphrase for a popular household cleaning brand within the Reckitt Benckiser product family. As a disclaimer, the company advises consumers to “always read the label and product information before use”.

It’s sage advice that applies to airlines too when approaching their interior cleaning programmes, as adhering to recommended cleaning protocols is essential to safeguarding both safety compliance and material longevity.

This was a brutal lesson learned by Finnair recently, which discovered that bang, not only was the dirt gone, but the fire retardancy of its seat covers on some of its A321 fleet was also compromised.

In a press statement issued in late October, Finnair confirmed it was replacing approximately 1,700 seat covers across eight aircraft which were temporarily taken out of service. The action led to the cancellation of approximately 70 flights affecting the travel plans of some 11,000 passengers.

Acknowledging the situation, the airline said it had suspended operations of the aircraft after having been informed by the manufacturer of the original seat covers that the impact of washing on the

fire protection of the seat covers “had not been verified in the required manner”.

Washing is a standard cleaning method for aircraft seats and Pekka Korhonen, SVP Technical Operations at Finnair attested the practice is used across the rest of Finnair’s fleet.

The statement went on to say that “the affected seat covers were manufactured by a long-standing Finnair partner, based on specifications provided by the original seat manufacturer. The covers have been washed in accordance with the information received from the original seat manufacturer”.

In response, Korhonen stated, “We are deeply sorry for the inconvenience and disruption this has caused to our customers. The safe operation of our

flights is the foundation of everything we do. Once we received information that the impact of washing on the fire protection of the seat covers had not been verified in the required manner, it was clear that the aircraft had to remain on the ground until the issue was resolved.”

New seat covers, sourced from multiple suppliers, were subsequently installed allowing the aircraft to return to service by the end of October.

Prescribed directions

To help others avoid falling foul of manufacturer’s instructions, Luzius Rickenbacher, EVP aviation interiors at Lantal, says the company supports airlines with clear, validated cleaning and maintenance guidelines



- 1:** Care must be taken when choosing cleaning products
2: A Lantel team member testing flame retardancy properties



designed to preserve both the appearance and performance of their various cabin interior textiles.

The guidelines, he states, are based on extensive laboratory testing that confirms which detergents, disinfectants and mechanical actions can be safely applied without compromising flame retardancy, colour stability, or of the structural integrity.

“We provide airlines with material-specific cleaning instructions that cover recommended cleaning agents proven not to degrade flame-retardant properties, colorfastness or durability; procedures for routine and deep cleaning, including correct application methods, dwell times and drying requirements; and maintenance

intervals that help operators keep cabin interiors looking fresh while maximising material longevity.”

Essence is Gen Phoenix’s latest aviation product. Nicola Rapley, director of marketing and aviation sales explains that Essence has an anti-microbial solution built in that effectively reduces the growth of microbes to 99.9% and is maintained for the lifetime of the fabric.

“We’ve also tested the material with over 100 industry recognised cleaning products to support airlines with a simple and low maintenance cleaning routine,” she says. “Following our simple cleaning guidelines and using the approved products ensures cabin interiors look and feel their best. This, together with the durability of Essence, means less downtime, no need for deep cleans and lower total cost of ownership.”

Rapley says that Gen Phoenix has multiple case studies of customers using its materials for years with virtually zero signs of wear, including Jet2 who have flown with the company’s aviation materials since 2007.



Burning questions

Ensuring that aircraft cabin materials meet flammability requirements is a critical safety and certification task. Aviation regulators such as EASA and the FAA mandate compliance with stringent flammability standards (EASA CS 25.853 and FAA 14 CFR 25.853) and their associated test methods in Appendix F.

Relevant tests for seat covers include the horizontal burn test where materials are exposed to a flame for 15 seconds while observations are made on burn length, flaming drips and flame time. The

“IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE AIRCRAFT HAD TO REMAIN ON THE GROUND UNTIL THE ISSUE WAS RESOLVED”



1: Finnair was forced to cancel around 70 flights
2: Caution is urged when cleaning with abrasive solutions

2

“THERE IS THE RISK ASSOCIATED WITH OVER-CLEANING ON FABRIC”

other is the vertical burn test, also known as the vertical Bunsen burner test. Here, seat cover materials are exposed to a flame for 12 seconds and observed for burn characteristics.

The vertical burn requirement is met separately for cushions and covers, but the fire blocking requirement needs to be met with the cushion and cover together during the certification test. This is why it is important to determine the effect on original fire blocking certification when changing dress covers or cushions.

The pass or fail criteria for materials tested to these requirements for flame resistance of crew and passenger compartments are that the fabrics shall be self-extinguishing and that the average burn length should not exceed 20cm. The average flame time should not exceed 15 seconds from the removal of the test flame and any flaming droplets should not continue to flame for more than an average of 5 seconds after falling.

At Lantal, flame retardancy is a core requirement built into its textiles from the very beginning, a fact heavily promoted by the company.

“All of our aircraft interior materials are engineered using inherently flame-retardant fibres or specially formulated treatments that comply with the strictest global aviation safety standards,” says Rickenbacher.

To ensure these properties are consistently achieved and maintained, Lantal operates an Airbus-approved and National Aerospace and Defence Contractors Accreditation Programme (NADCAP)-certified laboratory, which is fully integrated into the Swiss company's development and production processes. “This gives us the unique ability to validate safety performance in-house at every stage, from raw material inspection to final product approval.

“But our commitment does not stop at delivery. Because aircraft interiors are exposed to intensive use and frequent cleaning, we systematically conduct post-treatment and life-cycle testing. This includes repeated washing cycles, abrasion and durability tests, and re-verification of flammability performance to ensure that safety characteristics remain stable throughout the entire operational life of the product.”

For Rickenbacher, flame resistance at Lantal is more than just a compliance requirement: “We design, test and continuously validate our textiles to ensure long-term safety, reliability and peace of mind for operators and passengers alike.”

At Gen Phoenix, Rapley says its transport seating materials are all developed specifically to meet the relevant industry standards and certifications. “Essence, our latest aviation product, has an advanced FR system inherently built within the fibre construction and is certified to FAR 25.853.

“We have an in-house quality lab with capability to run rigorous tests on every material batch to ensure product integrity is maintained across all performance criteria, and our aviation materials are independently tested and verified for flammability by an industry recognised external testing house.”

Fabric seat covers are typically washed every two years; however there is risk and cost associated with over-cleaning, especially on fabric. As Finnair found to its expense, there is the operational risk of invalidating burn certifications with water-based cleaning processes. ●



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Jetting ahead

Inga Douglas shares how agility and operational independence are shaping GetJet Airlines' strategy for long-term resilience



“By bringing maintenance in-house, we’re gaining full control over our technical operations”



INGA DOUGLAS

chief executive, GetJet Airlines

► **You’ve recently taken on the CEO role at GetJet Airlines – what was the biggest personal or professional motivation behind this move?**

I have always admired the breadth of the aviation industry. It brings so many opportunities to grow and transform professionally while staying within the industry and continuing to apply the expertise I’ve gained. I have decided to pursue this path – while having an aviation industry experience, I’m thrilled to get to know an airline business from the front seat. I’m sure this journey will be nothing but exciting.

► **Coming from a strong commercial background at Magnetic Group, how are you planning to translate that experience into leading an airline?**

During the steep growth of an organisation there are plenty of projects that require strong leadership combined with a commercial mindset, like growing product portfolios, or global expansion enabled through establishment of local presence, or M&A followed by a management change process.

From day one at GetJet Airlines, I have been diving deep into all the areas that help me get to know the organisation, as well as sharing the first insights for further development. The aim is to keep building an agile yet resilient organisation focused on meeting customer demand for fast, reliable support, while at the same time maintaining a commercial approach towards the management of our assets.

► **How do you envision GetJet Airlines’ competitive position evolving within the next three to five years?**

I see GetJet Airlines strengthening its position as one of the most agile and



1

reliable ACMI operators in Europe. Even today, our ability to mobilise a crewed aircraft within just 1.5 hours of request confirmation sets us apart in terms of flexibility, especially in an environment where operational disruptions can have significant ripple effects.

Looking ahead, strategic investments – especially in the new MRO facility at Vilnius Airport – will boost our agility. Bringing maintenance in-house increases our independence, cuts downtime and improves reliability for our partners.

► **What processes at GetJet Airlines do you think are ripe for transformation?**

In today’s fast-evolving landscape, transformation is a constant. As an agile organisation, we’re advancing automation and standardisation efforts.

With so many tools available, selecting the right one for smooth implementation takes time. Our main goal is to ensure flexibility, reliability and readiness for our customers. That’s why we carefully prioritise transformation efforts without letting the process overshadow the purpose.



2

► **The new MRO facility represents a significant investment. Why now – and what makes Vilnius the right location?**

The timing of this investment is no coincidence – it's a strategic response to a rapidly shifting global aviation landscape. The MRO sector is currently experiencing significant capacity constraints, leading to limited availability of slots across the region. Recent studies show that turnaround times for certain engine types have increased by more than 150% compared to pre-pandemic levels.

At the same time, the global commercial fleet is expected to grow by nearly 30% over the next decade. With more aircraft in the sky and fewer resources available to maintain them efficiently, now is the moment to invest in long-term independence.

Vilnius is the natural choice for this project. It's our home base. The city offers a highly skilled talent pool, proximity to key European airports, and a supportive environment for sustainable, long-term growth.

► **How does this MRO expansion position GetJet Airlines amid the current global shortage in maintenance capacity?**

At GetJet Airlines, we've built our reputation on being the 'Task Force of Aviation', ready to jump into action whenever needed, and that's exactly what this MRO expansion helps us do even better. By bringing maintenance in-house with our new facility at Vilnius International Airport, we're increasing independence. That means we're not reliant on external providers who are dealing with the same shortages as the rest of the industry.

► **Given your board role at CAVIA, what are the biggest regulatory or economic headwinds you believe Lithuanian or regional airlines need to prepare for?**

Being a truly global industry, aviation is also heavily influenced by geopolitical changes. Within the EU, we are clearly seeing stricter regulations related to security and restricted access to special status territories, such as airports, coming into force.

While the idea itself carries protective intentions and offers a clear and simple process, it also brings a lot of constraints and unnecessary costs to companies operating at airside, as the aviation industry is anything but simple.

The process is complex, involving both local and EU-level issues. It's crucial to

address it on all fronts and find solutions that reflect airport operational demands while strengthening – rather than compromising – security.

The aviation industry contributes 4.5% of all GDP in EU countries (2023) and, needless to say, a strong economy is one of the key pillars of a safe and secure environment in the region.

Landside initiatives are welcome, as they limit the number of affected parties, but the core challenge remains.

As an example, we invite the EU regulatory body to revisit the decision to eliminate the temporary access option (for non-emergency situations) and to initiate a discussion about an aligned background check process across EU member states – a step that could potentially lead to mutual recognition of completed background clearances, similar to how driving licences or university diplomas are recognised across the EU.

1. GetJet Airlines' short-term lease offers the flexibility to book an aircraft with crew, maintenance and insurance for periods ranging from several hours to a few days

2. GetJet Airlines has a fleet of Boeing 737-NGs, Airbus A320s and A321s



▲ GetJet Airlines can mobilise a crewed aircraft within just 1.5 hours of request confirmation

“ The aim is to keep building an agile yet resilient organisation focused on meeting customer demand ”

► Do you see GetJet Airlines' MRO investment influencing the broader Lithuanian aviation ecosystem?

Absolutely. Lithuania is fast emerging as a regional hub for aviation, and this MRO investment is a clear signal of that momentum. While Kaunas has already established a strong reputation in MRO services, GetJet Airlines' expansion at Vilnius International Airport marks a significant step forward for the entire national ecosystem.

By investing in high-value technical infrastructure, we're not only enhancing our own operational resilience but also contributing to Lithuania's role as a destination for advanced aviation services. This development opens doors to new partnerships, international collaborations and, importantly, creates career opportunities for top-tier technical talent in the region.

We're proud to be committed to Lithuania's future as a strong contributor in aviation innovation and excellence.

► With airlines holding on to older aircraft longer, how do you see this affecting maintenance strategies or fleet decisions at GetJet Airlines?

The shortage of aircraft keeps older fleets in operation, which overall increases the duration of maintenance. Longer and heavier checks, as well as supply chain issues along the way, are directly affecting slot availability on the market. This is where we see a huge advantage in having base maintenance capability within the group (performed by Airhub Aviation at SQQ Airport).

Adding the VNO location for our maintenance needs brings reassurance to our flexibility and reliability focus, executing the strategy to be available to support our customers at short notice.

GetJet Airlines has growth plans in place; however, today, expansion is very carefully assessed, and every new asset coming into our fleet requires a strong business case that considers not only potential opportunities but also risks.

I can confidently share that our fleet is growing, and each asset has a strong ROI plan behind it. At GetJet Airlines, the meaning of 'asset' goes beyond the traditional understanding of an aircraft as just a capacity for flying. Our group is known for maximising an asset's value by enabling a portfolio of in-house capabilities while assuring high-standard performance for our customers.

► What keeps you inspired and energised in what is, at times, a highly pressured and complex industry?

The last few years have taught the world that anything, including sitting at home, might be highly pressured. On a more serious note, I can only refer to the passion we all share for working in aviation. I love the pace and variety of opportunities within each challenging situation, which I enjoy solving with highly competent and experienced colleagues.

Aviation offers endless learning for those open to it. Continuous training builds the confidence to handle high-pressure, complex situations with calmness and clarity – from inside the fast-moving system, not as an outsider.

► How do you plan to empower your team, especially amid such a transformative phase for the company?

I have always admired the passion that people in aviation have, and the GetJet Airlines team have shown me an extraordinary level of it. Their dedication to preparing for the busy summer season and attention to detail – from operations to the onboard experience – makes me incredibly proud to lead this team.

The organisation already has great initiatives in place. More are coming soon, which are all aimed at achieving our goal of being a preferred employer. At the same time, we are moving forward with projects aimed at reducing non-value-added (NVA) work and bringing in more automation, freeing up resources to support sustainable growth. ●

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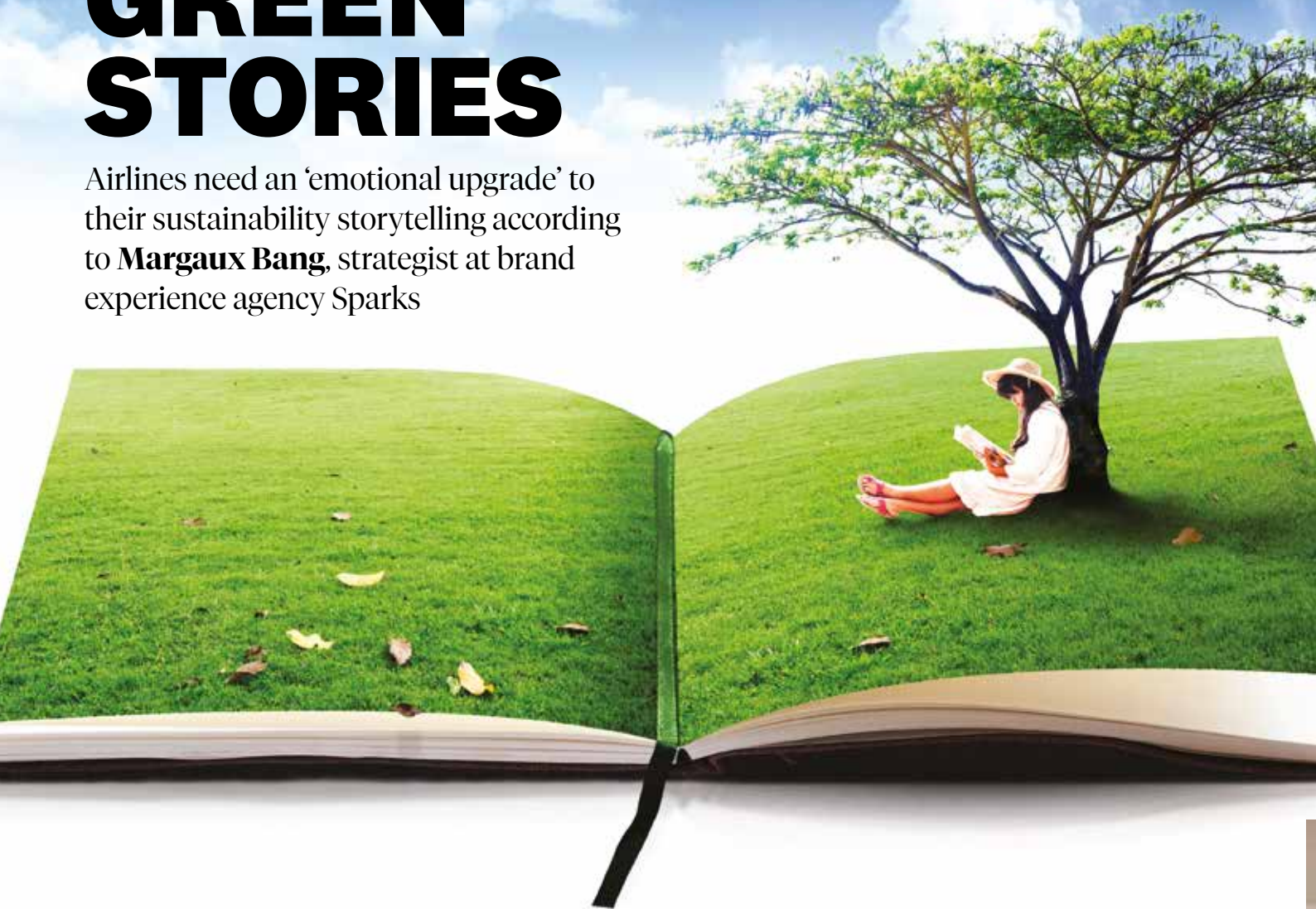
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TELLING GREEN STORIES

Airlines need an 'emotional upgrade' to their sustainability storytelling according to **Margaux Bang**, strategist at brand experience agency Sparks



Today, in the high-tech corridors of aviation and the carbon-accounting realities of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), we've lost sight of the truth that it takes more than evidence to propel change.

In reality, the science of sustainability needs to be felt – through experience, through emotion, through human connection.

As we build the future of sustainable aviation, we need the fusion of imagination and evidence. Because no matter how cutting-edge our solutions, ESG fatigue is real and it isn't a failure of action, it's a failure of imagination.

Building trust through experience

The aviation sector faces a paradox: it is one of the most vital industries to decarbonise, but the moves it is making in that direction are not being felt.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), electric propulsion, new infrastructure and the technical efforts are monumental. The problem is that the public doesn't feel them. This is where experiential marketing becomes not a luxury, but a strategic necessity.

Experiences build trust in ways that data can't. When people witness innovation with their own eyes, when they stand inside a net-zero aircraft cabin or engage with immersive sustainability journeys, they start to believe.



▲ Margaux Bang

Brands doing this effectively are those that let people feel sustainability rather than read about it.

Immersive activations, demo flights or VR experiences can all turn abstract numbers into lived memories. This shifts ESG from compliance to something desirable and human.

TotalEnergies at the 2025 Paris Air Show used experiential marketing to demystify SAF and highlight the infrastructure challenges slowing its adoption. At its booth, the company recreated a fully immersive SAF-powered airport environment – a physical manifestation of a concept typically confined to technical whitepapers and policy discussions.

By simulating what a SAF-enabled airport could look and feel like, TotalEnergies made an abstract future tangible. This hands-on experience helped stakeholders – from policymakers to aviation executives – better grasp the logistical hurdles and opportunities tied to adopting SAF.

“ESG FATIGUE IS REAL, AND IT ISN'T A FAILURE OF ACTION, IT'S A FAILURE OF IMAGINATION”

Emotional connections

The public may not grasp the carbon lifecycle of SAF, but they remember boarding a plane fuelled by it. They may not read emissions dashboards, but they remember being immersed in a space where sustainable flight feels real.

The United Airlines' historic passenger flight using 100% SAF in 2021 was a technical milestone and a strategic move to engage the public emotionally and promote sustainability. The flight was positioned as a tangible example of progress in decarbonising aviation, aiming to transform abstract environmental goals into a relatable and hopeful narrative.

By involving passengers and industry leaders, United sought to create a sense of shared accomplishment and personal connection to the sustainability effort.

Rethinking ESG marketing strategies

Airlines rely on data-heavy reports or fragmented campaigns that don't resonate with passengers. They're good at setting targets and piloting new technology, but weak at translating that into customer experiences, so their ESG marketing needs to be reframed.

To increase consumer willingness to pay for sustainable travel, airlines need to make sustainability exciting and aspirational, a rewarding experience rather than a moral imperative. Brands can better share the successes of how they have implemented ESG, such as including SAF seat upgrades or green booking options. They can reward sustainable

100%

The United Airlines' historic passenger flight using 100% SAF in 2021 was a technical milestone and a strategic move to engage the public emotionally and promote sustainability

◀ It's essential to make sustainable travel a rewarding experience for passengers

“SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS TO BE SEEN AND FELT AS AN UPGRADE, NOT A SACRIFICE”

ESG IN AVIATION: WHAT IT MEANS FOR AIRLINES

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) is more than a buzzword – it’s the framework shaping the future of air travel. Investors, regulators and passengers now expect airlines to demonstrate measurable progress in sustainability and ethics. Here’s how ESG breaks down in aviation:

Environmental

Airlines are tackling carbon emissions through fuel-efficient fleets, sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), and carbon offset programmes. Noise reduction and waste management also fall under this pillar.

Social

Safety remains paramount, but social responsibility extends to employee diversity, fair labour practices and community engagement. Airlines are investing in training and wellbeing initiatives to build a resilient workforce.

Governance

Strong governance ensures transparency, compliance and ethical decision-making. Airlines report climate risks, maintain independent boards, and adopt anti-corruption policies to meet global standards.

Why It Matters

ESG isn’t just about reputation – it influences regulatory compliance, customer loyalty and access to capital. Airlines that lead in ESG are better positioned for long-term profitability and resilience.



▲ Using SAF sends a clear signal to customers that airlines are taking carbon emissions seriously

choices through loyalty programmes and premium perks, sharing proof through storytelling rather than just statistics.

ESG storytelling

Aviation’s decarbonisation isn’t a solo act. It’s a system-wide, multi-stakeholder evolution. Yet the public often sees only fragments – a single innovation, a new fuel type, an airline campaign.

Events such as the Paris Air Show, Dubai and Farnborough offer rare opportunities where the entire industry convenes in physical space. Air shows may be primarily industry-focused, but their impact extends far beyond B2B audiences. The innovations and demonstrations fuel media coverage, social content and trust signals that regular consumers see.

In order to appeal to businesses, you need to appeal to where their revenue is generated, namely the end consumer. B2B ultimately depends on demand at the passenger level, so showing progress and innovation at the start of the value chain helps businesses sell to other businesses.

A breakthrough demo at Paris or Farnborough often becomes a story the public remembers, and air shows act as launchpads for innovations before they reach passengers.

These aren’t just exhibitions; they are arenas of alignment. When done right, events become system accelerators, aligning emotion, science and society.

Touchpoints

Experiential marketing is the bridge between scepticism and momentum. Through experiences, sustainability can be translated into emotive narratives.

Experiences are a powerful tool; designing immersive activations that make progress feel personal, elevating smaller players like SAF pioneers and electric start-ups from side stage to main stage means these are not just promotional moments but opportunities to change people’s perspectives.

Sustainability won’t succeed if it’s seen as a sacrifice. It needs to be seen and felt as an upgrade. Experiential marketing shows the value, not just the cost. ●

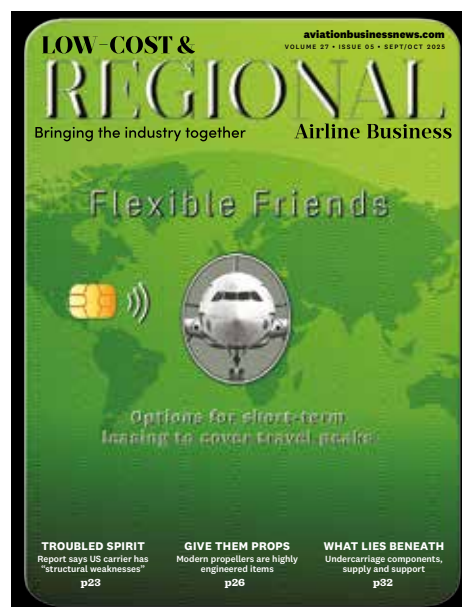
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ABNCAST

Seizing the Moment

Michael Serres, MD of IFE provider Moment talks to **Lee Hayhurst** about the retail potential for IFE-lite systems

Twelve months ago, connectivity provider Moment announced the acquisition of Airfree, a digital retailing marketplace, which signalled what it sees as a key function of the connectivity it is bringing to fleets as airlines seek new revenue streams.

Michael Serres, Moment co-founder and managing director, told ABNcast that there is growing interest from airline bosses in enhancing their onboard retaining capabilities and fast, reliable connectivity is enabling that.

The latest hardware has also been designed to be future-proofed so the onboard connectivity can still be provided, regardless of which providers win the 'battle of the hump', as airlines look to optimise their connectivity through a mixture of LEO (Low Earth Orbit) and GEO (Geostationary Earth Orbit) satellite networks.

Digital experience

Speaking on his company's stand at the World Aviation Festival in Lisbon, Serres said: "There is a big need in the aviation industry right now around connectivity portals and, thanks to our software and digital experience that we have, we are able to meet the needs of airlines who have two, three or four connectivity providers with multiple portals.

"Moment unifies the experience by providing one single connectivity portal so, no matter which connectivity provider is involved, the airline can offer a seamless experience using the technology installed on the aircraft."

Airfree runs on Moment's Flymingo Connect hardware, although it is not the only provider of an airline infotainment product that offers paid-for services in the air. AirFi, Sapphire Cube and Immfly all offer a similar product, although Airfree and Flymingo Connect do have some USPs.



▲ Flymingo Connect hardware offers increased flexibility for airlines

"The Airfree product allows passengers to browse around 350 duty-free shops either on the aircraft's IFE or a personal device"

The Airfree product facilitates shopping either on the aircraft's IFE or on a personal device and allows passengers to browse around 350 duty-free shops. Despite the huge amount of shopping available, the system uses a patented technology to reduce the amount of bandwidth being transferred to and from the plane. Passengers can order securely and choose from multiple delivery options – including on the plane, at the airport or at home – depending on the products selected.

Serres said Flymingo Connect offers increased flexibility compared to its original Flymingo IFE system.

"The big interest in that is you are going to be able to sell more than what's onboard the aircraft – anything you are willing to sell," Serres said. "It's a pure retail experience. Airlines are obviously willing to get new streams of revenue, and products and services sold on the aircraft are an important way of monetising that." ●



Episodes of ABNcast, the podcast from Aircraft Cabin Management parent Aviation Business News are published weekly on the ABN YouTube channel. Make sure you catch all the latest episodes by subscribing: youtube.com/@aviationbusinessnews



GLARE RECYCLING: PROOF OF CONCEPT

Derk-Jan van Heerden of Aethos looks towards a time when the fibre metal laminate used in the A380 can be recycled

As everyone in aviation knows, weight and safety are of extreme importance in aircraft engineering. Hence, when a new material is introduced that solves a major safety issue such as metal fatigue in aircraft, at a lower weight than the traditional aluminium, we welcome it as a revolutionary step forward.

In the early 2000s, GLARE – GLASS REinforced aluminium laminate – was considered that sort of a game-changing material. Developed by researchers at the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), it was first applied in the Airbus A380, the world's largest passenger airliner.

Market dynamics

Now, 20 years later, the first few Airbus A380 aircraft are already being dismantled – significantly earlier than everyone anticipated. Partly because of GLARE's durability, Airbus A380 aircraft were expected to retire after 30 to 40 years of service.

That scenario did not acknowledge the impact of a changing market, however, which currently leans towards point-to-point more than hub-to-hub. As a result, several Airbus A380 aircraft have been scrapped prematurely.

GLARE recycling obstacles

Back when GLARE was developed, TU Delft researchers Erik Templeman and Ad Vlot did consider of how to recycle it. The proposed solution – that the materials separate spontaneously when you heat them briefly – is technically feasible but leaves some issues unaddressed.

René Alderliesten, currently Professor of Structural Integrity and Certification at TU Delft and involved in the development of GLARE early in his career, explains: "In principle it is perfectly possible to establish a recycling process for GLARE. After shredding the material, you can



separate it by either burning off the plastic and reusing the aluminium, or by subjecting it to abrupt temperature fluctuations, which causes the material to separate all by itself. In the latter case it is hypothetically possible to reuse the fibre-reinforced plastic as well, which can only be downcycled."

These methods have significant drawbacks, however. Alderliesten says: "It is quite problematic to burn the chromates used to make the adhesive adhere to the aluminium, because they release all kinds of hazardous substances into the atmosphere. And on a wholly different level, it is very difficult to build a viable business case for recycling GLARE at some scale. In my opinion, we need government regulation and funding to make that happen."

At Aethos, we would love to see our industry come up with something better. Often, that process starts with connecting the theory with the practice: a role Aethos is aiming to fulfil. Together with TU Delft we are currently exploring ways to develop a proof-of-concept for a GLARE recycling method. ●

254

The number of A380s built during the production run, significantly lower than predicted

▲ A380 at Tarbes. The first examples of the superjumbo are being scrapped, years earlier than planned



Find out more at aethos.aero

"WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE OUR INDUSTRY COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER. OFTEN, THAT PROCESS STARTS WITH CONNECTING THE THEORY WITH THE PRACTICE"

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