

Aircraft

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CABIN

Perfecting the passenger experience

Management



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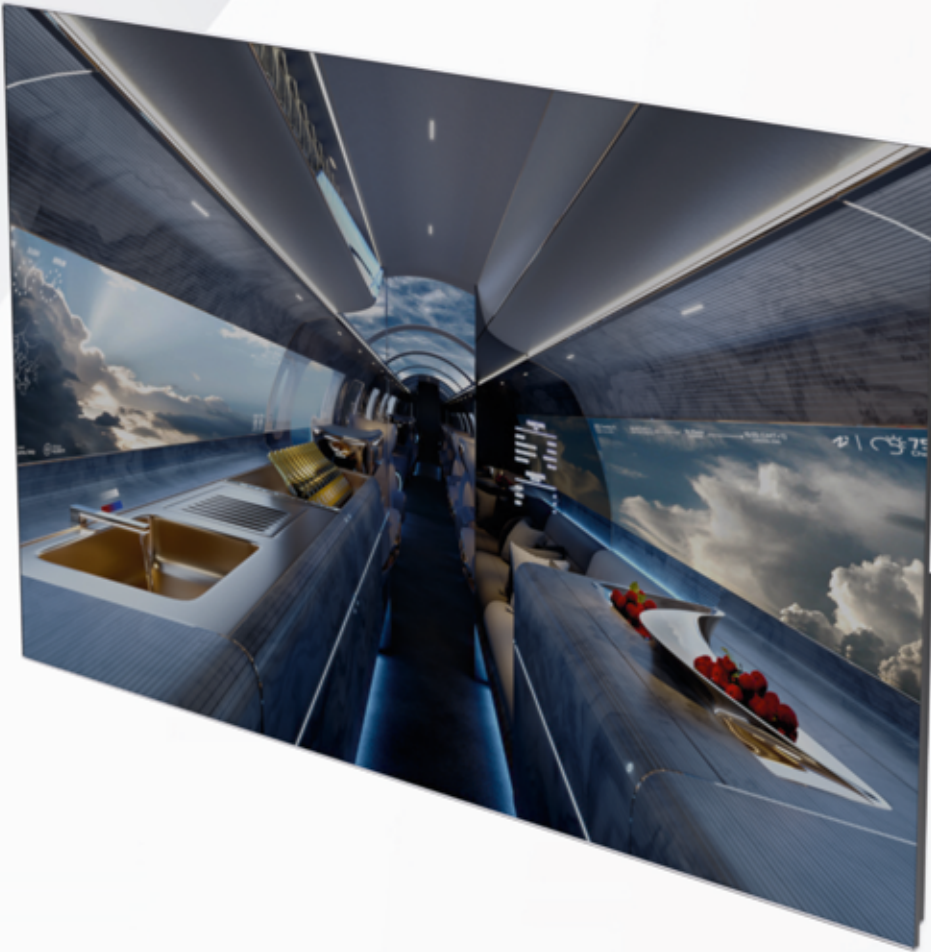
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CONNECTIVITY AND POWER

As I write this, Elon Musk is idling his day away by engaging in a war of words with Ryanair's Michael O'Leary.

Aside from the fact that I think the two of them deserve each other, it is interesting to note what they are arguing about.

Musk is of the opinion that the airline should provide Wi-Fi (supplied by his own Starlink system, naturally), while O'Leary says that such a system adds complexity, weight and drag from the radome, outweighing any revenue it would bring in.

He has a point. Set-up costs are high, and if you are going to introduce a charge for something it needs to work reliably. Point-to-point flights on Ryanair's network are relatively short, which is why the airline has resisted introducing amenities such as in-seat power, arguing that devices can be charged while waiting at the airport.

While the social media spat is unlikely to do anything other than generate publicity for the two megalomaniacs, it does show the split in thinking between leisure airlines and their low-cost counterparts. Leisure airlines are increasingly turning to systems such as AirFi that allow customers access to content and messaging on their own devices, usually in return for viewing ads. The system can also be used to upsell hire cars, tours, additional flights and anything else that the airline wants to list.



▲ O'Leary turning an argument into an opportunity

The media spat will generate publicity for the two megalomaniacs

Meanwhile their low-cost counterparts prefer to focus on the seat alone. The flight is a means to an end and anything that detracts from this purity of thinking is little more than a distraction. Possibly the comfort of the seat will become a point of difference between one LCC and another, but time will tell.

Greg Whitaker

Greg Whitaker

Editor

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P.S: Musk has also posted that Ryanair should be put back in the hands of 'Ryan'. Tony Ryan, who founded the airline, died in 2007. By this logic, his car company should be put back in the hands of even longer dead Nikola Tesla... the man is truly insane.

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Business Briefing.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE INDUSTRY



Cabins

EMIRATES INCREASES ROUTE FREQUENCIES AS RETROFIT ROLL-OUT CONTINUES

Emirates is to introduce Airbus A350 aircraft on routes to Copenhagen, Phuket and Cape Town as the airline increases frequency to these destinations.

Apart from the A350, the airline is also continuing with its retrofit programme for the A380 and Boeing 777. All of the refurbished aircraft now feature a premium economy class in addition to first, business and economy.

From 1 June, a second daily service will be introduced between Dubai and Copenhagen; from 1 July, a third daily service between Dubai and Phuket and a third daily to/from Cape Town will come into effect.

Emirates' twice-daily Cape Town service has seen consistently high load factors over the past year, particularly during peak periods.

Commenting on the deployment, Emirates' regional manager of Southern Africa, Afzal Parambil said, "With the deployment of the next-gen A350 on the third daily service between Dubai and Cape Town, South Africa becomes the only African nation on our network to be served by all three aircraft types on the Emirates fleet. This fleet mix provides the greatest flexibility for our customers to travel in and out of our three gateways, while still providing travellers with the world-renowned Emirates' experience, on every flight."

“This fleet mix provides the greatest flexibility to travel in and out of our gateways



Business

ÉireComposites secures first production contract

> ÉireComposites, a specialist manufacturer of advanced composite structures, has secured its first production contract in the aircraft seating market.

The contract involves producing an initial batch of composite interior panels and structural components for a customer in the premium aircraft seating market. These components will be used in high-end seating systems.

Until now, the Galway-based company has mainly supplied composite structures for aerospace and industrial applications.

This programme is its first production project within the aircraft seating and cabin interiors supply chain, allowing it to apply its composite expertise to visible, passenger-facing interior components.

"Winning our first production contract in aircraft seating is a significant milestone for ÉireComposites," said company CEO Tomás Flanagan.



Business

SAFRAN CABIN TO SELL EZAIR SHARES TO EMBRAER

Safran has entered into a definitive agreement with Embraer for the sale of Safran Cabin's shares in EZAir, their 50/50 joint venture.

The JV manufactures Embraer's interiors in Chihuahua, Mexico, provides associated aftermarket activities, and is responsible for related activities (engineering and manufacturing) in Brazil.

The transaction is subject to obtaining the applicable regulatory approvals and

the customary conditions for this type of transaction.

The Chihuahua location, which employs about 1,100 people, will then be wholly owned by Embraer.

The activities of Safran Cabin Brazil related to Embraer's scopes will become part of Embraer. The non-Embraer related engineering services activities of Safran Cabin Brazil will remain with Safran.

Business

JAMCO TO ACQUIRE CABIN EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER SCHÜSCHKE

Jamco Corporation has announced the acquisition of cabin equipment manufacturer Schüschke. The transaction is expected to close in February 2026, subject to customary closing conditions.

Founded in 1986, Baden-Württemberg-based Schüschke is an supplier of lavatory washbasins, countertops and customised cabin interior components for commercial aviation. Under the leadership of CEO Uta Peter, it has strengthened its certification capabilities and achieved growth.

As part of the transaction, Bain Capital-owned Jamco Corporation will acquire 100% of Schüschke's shares from a vehicle managed by Silver Investment Partners and other investors. Following the acquisition, Schüschke will continue operating as an independent company within Jamco's global interiors platform.

Since Bain Capital installed a new senior leadership team at Jamco last year it has made a number of acquisitions. These include Florida-based IHFA and Italian cabin equipment manufacturer Iacobucci HF.



BRIEFS

- US regional Allegiant is to acquire Sun Country in a cash and stock transaction.

- Wizz Air has opened 'Wizz Class' for bookings. The option allows customers to pay a premium for the front row with a blocked-off centre seat.

- Safran Passenger Innovations has struck a deal with tech provider Skyted to integrate noise-cancelling call equipment into its RAVE In-Flight Entertainment systems.

- Virgin Atlantic has licensed audio content from Stellar Entertainment in order to widen the choice of music available on the airline's IFE.

- Korean Air, alongside fellow Hanjin Group airlines Asiana Airlines, Jin Air, Air Busan and Air Seoul, will introduce Starlink high-speed in-flight Wi-Fi to its entire fleet.

- Mexican airlines Volaris and Viva have instigated a 'merger of equals' with the aim of creating a new low-cost airline group.

- Aviation service provider AAR is to buy interiors engineering company Aircraft Reconfig Technologies (ART) from ZIM Aircraft Cabin Solutions for \$35m in an all-cash transaction.

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Edelweiss' new A350 cabin features 28 business class spaces fitted with Vantage XL seats

14

QantasLink's Network Aviation division is to replace its Fokker F100 fleet with 14 E190s

91

Embraer delivered 91 aircraft in the last quarter of 2025, a marked YoY increase



Cabins

NETWORK AVIATION A320 REFIT PLAN

QantasLink's West Australian airline Network Aviation will begin fitting its fleet of 28 Airbus A320 and A319 aircraft with onboard Wi-Fi and the airline's A320s will also be fitted with all-new seats, equipped with USB A/C charging ports and portable device holders.

The first refurbished aircraft is expected to enter into service later this year, with the full cabin and Wi-Fi programme set to be completed in 2027.

Meanwhile, three second-hand Embraer E190 jets are expected to begin arriving by the end of the year, gradually replacing Network Aviation's fleet of Fokker F100 aircraft. In total, the airline will acquire up to 14 E190s, providing customers with greater reliability, improved fuel efficiency and more

comfort for customers. The F100s, which have been the backbone of Network Aviation's operations for more than three decades, are being gradually retired as the airline receives A320s from Jetstar Asia and the addition of the E190s.

The fleet upgrades complement the Qantas Group's broader fleet renewal programme, which includes firm orders for more than 200 new aircraft and cabin refurbishments of Qantas' Boeing 737 and A330 aircraft, which will include new business and economy seats and larger overhead lockers.

“The full cabin and Wi-Fi programme is set to be completed in 2027



People News

Guy Bradley is new Cathay Group chair

> Guy Bradley has been announced as the chair of the board of Cathay Group from May 13. He will replace Patrick Healy, who is to retire.

Bradley, also the chairman of operating conglomerate Swire Pacific Limited and a director of Cathay Pacific Airways Limited, said: “As chair of the Cathay Group, my focus will be on working closely with the leadership team on enhancing the Cathay Group's overall performance, as well as continuing to support Hong Kong.”

Bradley brings extensive global leadership experience to the role. Since joining the Swire Group in 1987, he has held senior positions across Hong Kong SAR, the Chinese Mainland, Japan, the Middle East, the United States, and other key markets. He currently serves – and will continue to serve – as chairman of Swire Pacific Limited, John Swire & Sons (H.K.) Limited and Swire Properties Limited.



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AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION TO IMPROVE IN 2026

IBA's chief economist & data officer,
Dr Stuart Hatcher, reveals his insights and
predictions for the upcoming year

The economic outlook for 2026 looks broadly similar to 2025: plenty of upset, fast market reactions and (hopefully) a steady climb down to calmer markets. Inflation is easing, interest rates are drifting lower, and oil prices are expected to remain subdued, reflecting weaker Chinese demand and steady supply from the US and OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries).

Trade continues to perform despite policy friction and high consumer costs. For aviation, the environment is generally supportive. Fuel remains down, profits are up, and airlines are in no rush to add capacity beyond taking new deliveries. That discipline, however, tends to fade as route competition intensifies – often with painful consequences.

▼ COMAC's C919 is likely to remain a rarity



“**My 2026 production forecast is for 1,800 aircraft across Airbus, Boeing, Embraer, ATR and COMAC**”

DR STUART HATCHER

Chief economist, IBA Insight

over 900 aircraft: 700 A320-family jets, just over 100 A220s, 42 A330s, and 65 A350s. For Boeing, I expect a total of 670: roughly 510 737s, more than 100 787s, and 25–30 each of the 767 and 777F, alongside continued progress toward certification milestones. Flows from Embraer, ATR and COMAC are somewhat in line with growth expectations set two years ago, albeit delayed. We expect Embraer to lead the pack with 85–90 E-jets, ATR to get back over 40, and COMAC to deliver fewer than 55 for both the C909 and C919. This, of course, remains dependent on being able to source US components.

Secondary market, transactions and retirements

The big question is the impact on the secondary market. Lease rates for older aircraft have softened but remain well above historical norms, reflecting balance rather than weakness. There is no oversupply of flyable aircraft, and airlines are focused on sweating existing assets rather than chasing aggressive growth. Lease starts and ends are at historic lows, with shorter tenors now the norm.

The outlook for retirements remains unclear. While engine demand should sustain part-out activity, retirement volumes may stay below historical long-term norms if operators continue to retain aircraft, especially amid elevated GTF-powered A320 storage. Month-on-month improvements since the October 2025 peak are encouraging, though they may be seasonal. Even so, elevated engine values and lease rates are likely to drive further opportunistic part-outs. ●

Production and delivery forecasts

Aircraft supply is the real potential swing factor. 2025 marked a turning point, with meaningful production progress across OEMs. Airbus stepped up final assembly activity in preparation for higher rates, while Boeing's return to a stable production flow, though behind Airbus, was an important confidence signal.

My 2026 production forecast is for 1,800 aircraft across Airbus, Boeing, Embraer, ATR and COMAC. A significant increase over 2025, but no greater than the rise seen last year over 2024. For Airbus, that means just



SCANNING BAGGAGE FASTER

CT scanners are not just for hand luggage.
The latest equipment for hold baggage can check
items faster and more accurately than ever

As an airline, you can have the best passenger experience in the world, but it all accounts for nothing if luggage is not loaded onto the aircraft.

One of the main pressure points is hold baggage scanning which can be slow and inefficient, leading to items being unnecessarily removed for manual checks. However, computerised tomography (CT) technology is transforming the process. We spoke to Richard Thompson, VP portfolios, innovation and digital at Smiths Detection.

► **Hold baggage screening is largely invisible to passengers. Why does it still matter so much?**

Although passengers rarely see hold baggage screening equipment, its performance has a direct impact on their journey. If a bag fails to make it onto the aircraft or doesn't arrive at the destination, the passenger feels the consequences immediately. For airports and airlines, this also means operational disruption and rising compensation costs.



“
**The SDX 100800 SCT LS
has been designed
specifically to process
very high baggage
volumes reliably**
”

RICHARD THOMPSON

VP Portfolios, Innovation and
Digital at Smiths Detection

► **What challenges are airports facing that have shaped the development of the SDX 100800 SCT LS?**

Airports are under intense pressure: passenger numbers continue to rise, space is limited, budgets are constrained, and turnaround times are getting ever tighter – particularly with low-cost carriers. Many passengers now deliver bags to the airport as little as 30 minutes before departure, leaving very little room for delay. The SDX 100800 SCT LS has been designed specifically to help airports process very high baggage volumes reliably within those constraints.

► **How does the new system improve throughput?**

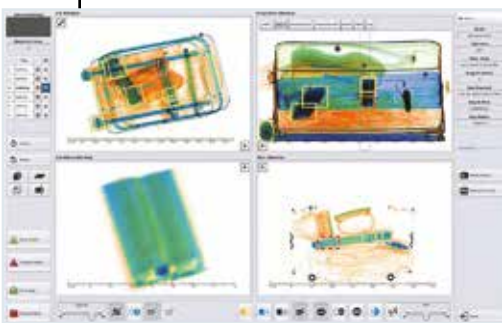
Throughput is one of the key differentiators. The SDX 100800 SCT LS can process up to 1,800 bags per hour per machine. This is achieved largely by minimising the gap between bags on the conveyor. Even small reductions in spacing have a major effect on capacity over time. Smiths Detection has optimised both the software and mechanical design to keep bags flowing without compromising image quality.

► **What role does the scanner's physical design play in operational efficiency?**

Another important feature is the large input aperture. If baggage doesn't fit into the scanner, it has to be diverted, which adds time and complexity to the operation. The SDX 100800 SCT LS is designed with the largest practical aperture, reducing the need for diversions and helping baggage flows remain smooth and consistent.

► **How future-proof is the SDX 100800 SCT LS in terms of regulation?**

Future-proofing is a major focus. Hold baggage systems are typically installed for 10-15 years, so customers need confidence that their investment will remain compliant as security regulations evolve. The SDX 100800 SCT LS meets current standards such as ECAC Standard 3.2 in Europe and TSA Standard 7.3 in the US, but it is also designed with sufficient detection capability – such as high-resolution, dual-energy imaging – to meet anticipated future standards.





2

► What role does AI play in the system?

AI is layered on top of the core CT X-ray technology to support automated threat recognition. The system automatically detects explosives and flags suspicious items for operator review. Screeners can also identify other items of concern such as wires, compressed gases or lithium-ion batteries.

► Does the system integrate with airline or passenger data?

At present, it does not. Thompson notes that deeper integration of baggage screening with passenger or airline data raises significant privacy and regulatory concerns, particularly around GDPR. Smiths Detection's current focus is on AI-driven image analysis rather than passenger data integration.

► If you could change one thing about the baggage screening ecosystem, what would it be?

Limited capacity in regulatory testing laboratories is a major bottleneck. Certification processes can take time due to restricted access to approved testing facilities, affecting the entire industry. Greater test capacity would allow machines to be certified sooner and give customers greater confidence in future-proof compliance. ●

1. Baggage can be screened much faster with modern CT equipment
2. Hardware will likely remain in place for decades, so compatibility with likely future standards is required



WHAT IS IN BAGGAGE SCREENING?

Computed Tomography (CT) is an advanced X-ray imaging technology that creates a full 3D image of a bag's contents, rather than a 2D projection. As baggage passes through a CT scanner, hundreds of X-ray images are captured from multiple angles and reconstructed into a detailed volumetric model.

This allows the system to analyse items by shape, density and material composition in three dimensions rather than relying solely on overlapping shadows, as in traditional line-scanning X-ray systems.

Why CT is Superior to Traditional Line-scanning
Traditional line-scan X-ray systems generate flat, 2D

images, which can make it difficult to distinguish between overlapping objects or identify well-concealed threats. CT eliminates this limitation by enabling operators and algorithms to rotate, slice and interrogate the contents of a bag from any angle.

Because CT provides far greater material discrimination and spatial accuracy, it significantly improves explosive detection performance, reduces false alarms and supports higher levels of automation. This makes CT technology more resilient against evolving threats, such as smaller quantities of explosives and more complex methods of concealment.



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MEETING THE DEMANDS OF PRIVATE PASSENGERS

Charter flights come with elevated expectations – clients' requests are becoming increasingly complex, with little to no room for error

The market for private jet flights is steadily growing – its size is currently estimated at \$17.67 billion and is expected to reach \$25.79 billion by 2031. As demand grows, with it comes elevated expectations and increasingly complex demands from clients.

According to Marton Modis, VP of business development at charter jet provider KlasJet, in today's competitive environment, VIP group charters must match private jet service standards.

Devil in the detail

Modis emphasises that private aviation is an incredibly demanding field with a unique set of challenges. To meet them, care and attention must be invested in every single trip, flight and mission, and that means attending to even the most minute details.

"A perfect example of this need to go the extra mile is our recent flight for a group of high-net-worth individuals to Africa. They had very particular requests regarding in-flight service and catering, asking for their favourite snacks and



“**Every flight – no matter if it is organised for royalty or first-time flyers – should be treated with the same level of care and attention**”

MARTON MODIS

VP of business development
at KlasJet

"These differences can be striking. For example, a sports team will be extremely sensitive to the catering that complies with team nutritionist protocols. On the other hand, a corporate incentive trip might just want recommendations on Michelin-star dishes that can surprise and excite the client," says Modis.

He goes on to explain that it is this level of attention to individual need, along with the high-quality service and team, that enables his company to be competitive in today's market.

However, it is essential to understand that every new flight is a new story. One cannot be successful based solely on yesterday's achievement.

"What elevates certain providers is a mindset shift. Every flight – no matter if it is organised for royalty or first-time flyers – should be treated with the same level of care and attention. Clients value and appreciate every small gesture the crew and the company make to make them feel at home," Modis concludes. ●

1. Clients expect attention to detail
2. The B737-800NG is a popular choice for VIP group charters



1

drinks from home to be available. Such flights also carry significant challenges regarding flight permits and fuel availability so, compared to those, making sure everyone on board can enjoy their favourite flavours is a breeze," he says.

The operational model is also shifting from fixed to 'floating' bases, where the fleet follows market demand rather than parking in specific airports for extended periods. This makes it easier to offer quick response times to clients.

Cultural differences

Another example of adaptability is the ability to account for any cultural differences, which appear not just between people from different countries but also industries and sectors.



2



A JUICY STORY

Longbottom & Co CEO **Alexander Jeffreys** explains how his company is transforming tomato juice from a low-value commodity into a premium, revenue-generating product for airlines

One curiosity about cabin catering is that passengers will often ask for products that they will rarely, if ever, consume on the ground.

Whether this is due to the unfamiliar social situation of being packed into an aircraft, or because of the change in pallet at altitude is debatable. However, the amount of ginger ale, small salty pretzels and tomato juice consumed when flying far outstrips the uptake of these goods on the ground.

The first two items on this list, ginger ale and pretzels, come pre-packaged in individual servings, but tomato juice is usually served from a catering Tetra Pak, after having been reconstituted from concentrate by the importer.

This is a great shame, according to Alexander Jeffreys, the new CEO of drinks manufacturer Longbottom & Co, who argues that most tomato juice on the market – and particularly in aviation – is made from UHT concentrate paste



“When you have a genuinely good product available in a category, the category grows as people want to drink it”

ALEXANDER JEFFREYS

CEO, Longbottom & Co

diluted with water and enhanced with artificial additives.

“Because the American market base point for the tomato juice product category is so much lower, it is a low-end product,” he explains.

However, within the European regional market, where it is common to have to pay for your own drinks even on the legacy carriers, customer expectations of quality are higher. This has provided Longbottom & Co with the ideal environment to introduce tomato juice not made from concentrate, packaged in individual serving cans, to the market.

The commercial impact for airlines has been significant. “Our first customer was British Airways,” recalls Jeffreys. “They told us they had been looking for a product like it for years, so we put it on board, where it replaced a UHT concentrate product. Once in place, they saw some remarkable results – the price increased by 25% and volume sales went up by 35%.”

The same increase was replicated across further clients. When Norwegian replaced UHT concentrate juice with the Longbottom product, sales increased by 45%, with the additional benefit of increasing the sales of premium vodka by 38%.

“The rationale behind it is relatively simple,” says Jeffreys. “We’ve seen it across all sorts of categories. When you have a genuinely good product available in a category, for example Fever Tree tonic, the category grows because people want to drink it. So that’s more people ordering it, but also more people purchasing a second drink.”

Jeffreys adds that operational detail also plays a role. Typical mixer-to-spirit ratios often leave passengers with unused vodka. Norwegian found that passengers frequently asked for a second can of tomato juice to finish their drink,





2

“When Norwegian replaced UHT concentrate juice with the Longbottom product, sales increased by 45% and premium vodka sales increased by 38%”

effectively doubling mixer sales per passenger – a welcome outcome in a buy-on-board environment.

For international full-service carriers such as Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Qantas, where drinks are complementary, the appeal is slightly different. Premium tomato juice offers a healthier, non-alcohol-heavy option, giving the airlines a differentiator from the competition, while also reducing reliance on more expensive wines and spirits. Jeffreys notes that at Qantas, demand exceeded expectations shortly after launch, with the juice also being popular as a breakfast drink.

Despite being new in the role as CEO, Jeffreys is no stranger to the premium drinks sector. Prior to his current role, he was sales director at the same company, and before that, he held senior positions at a number of companies including Sacred Spirits, Aspasie and Sipsmith.

Despite being sold in individual 150ml serving cans, Jeffreys believes there is a weight-saving benefit over traditional packaging.

“If, for example, you know that you’ll sell five cans per flight, then you have to load less weight than if you’re speculating on two litres of Tetra Pak juice. So, the smaller the format, the more customisation per flight you get. We see that with our carriers – on some routes they might load one or two cans, but for others they’re loading up to 20 or 30.”

Future plans

Jeffreys is optimistic for the future as he plans for expansion. “The bottom line is we want to be available to as many passengers as possible, both when they’re on the plane and when they get off – and even later on when they go out,” he says, explaining that his desire is for the product to be available in airport lounges

1. Longbottom’s Virgin Mary tomato juice is a premium product

2. Individual serving cans mean airlines can customise how much they carry per flight, leading to overall weight-saving benefits

and in bars everywhere. “It’s about those touching points. I have had people walking up to me and saying, ‘I tried your product on British Airways and I loved it. Where can I get it?’ The the bottom line is that we don’t want you to have to walk up to someone from the brand to know where you can get it; we want it to be readily available. Where it is available, we see customers coming back time and again,” he says.

“That’s the nature of premiumising a relatively dusty category. Once people realise how much better it is, they just want more. And we want to be able to let them have it,” Jeffreys concludes. ●



Wireless charging may be seen as a trend, but it's finding more traction in the cabin as a growing number of airlines adopt inductive charging solutions. **Alex Preston** looks into whether cutting the cord really is a snip

Personal electronic devices (PEDs), especially smart phones and laptops, have become such an indispensable part of our daily lives that as passengers we now take four to five such items with us on a flight. Indeed, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), 83% of travellers carry a phone and 60% carry a laptop, devices typically powered by lithium batteries.

As Daniel MacInnes, director of PriestmanGoode observes, "With the rise of free in-flight Wi-Fi, battery drain is increasing, making constant power access a necessity."

One solution to avoid low battery anxiety is the use of power banks, and 44% of passengers carry these portable, rechargeable units which are primarily designed to provide power to

electronic devices. However, there have been an increasing number of lithium battery-related incidents onboard flights in recent years, and a growing list of airlines now prohibit the onboard use of power banks. The concern over safety even prompted the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to publish a new Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) in May 2025, which included the advice to only charge PEDs through the on-board in-seat charging outlets.

In addition to existing USB-based in-seat power outlets – commonly USB-A but migrating to USB-C – wireless charging is gaining traction as airlines now view it more positively than was previously the case.

Unplugged

Wireless charging offers a seamless, cable-free solution that eliminates

physical restrictions when using devices in-flight.

According to MacInnes, wireless charging was initially a trend-led differentiator borrowed from the automotive industry. "However, we have seen it shift from a luxury novelty to a global expectation," he says.

Mark Reed, business development director at IFPL, acknowledges that wireless charging in aircraft cabins is still marginal, but says it is expanding, primarily in premium cabins on new or recently retrofitted aircraft, where seat designs can accommodate it.

Ryan Braggins, design lead at tangerine agrees. "From my experience, once airlines become aware of these technologies, they generally push to integrate them into new products. Whether they make it into production seats depends on several factors, including budget, timeline feasibility,

“WITH THE RISE OF FREE IN-FLIGHT WI-FI, BATTERY DRAIN IS INCREASING, MAKING CONSTANT POWER ACCESS A NECESSITY”

and the impact on other critical seat functions that are non-negotiable for the airline.”

Indeed, MacInnes admits that PriestmanGoode views wireless charging as a secondary but essential ecosystem component. “It won’t eradicate the USB-C port, as passengers still need to charge laptops and tablets, but it provides a seamless safety net for passengers,” he opines.

Both design agencies work closely with seat suppliers, because, as MacInnes explains, “integration cannot be an afterthought”. He continues: “We aren’t just ‘adding a charger’; we are co-engineering the furniture to ensure the module is beautifully and discreetly integrated into the seat’s architecture.”

Stumbling blocks

In today’s first and business class cabins, integrating wireless charging is relatively straightforward because space constraints are less severe, and most premium seat suppliers include it as part of their baseline offering. But wireless charging is not without its challenges.

For instance, the contact positioning between the charging pad and the device needs to be engineered to remove

alignment sensitivity, ensuring consistent and effective charging across a wide range of devices. MacInnes says that early iterations often left passengers frustrated if their phone moved slightly and stopped charging.

As a designer, Braggins says challenges arise when the charger’s location or orientation needs to change from what is already certified. “Airlines often request design and layout modifications to better meet passenger needs, differentiate from competitors, and enhance the overall experience. These changes can require feature relocation and redesign.”

As an example, on LOT Polish Airlines’ recent 787 business class seat, tangerine redesigned the entire upper stowage area for each seat to increase personal storage and add a privacy door. “This reduced the space available for the original charger location, requiring us to relocate the charger and undertake additional engineering and certification work with the seat supplier.

“In this case, the change was implemented without affecting budget or schedule, although similar modifications can sometimes introduce delays or additional costs, regardless of how minor they may seem,” he explains.



▲ Ryan Braggins
Design lead, tangerine

According to Braggins, installing a wireless charger on a vertical surface, rather than a horizontal console or tabletop, introduces additional considerations around device retention and security. This often increases costs due to the need for extra components to secure the device, ensure reliable charging performance, and accommodate various device sizes.

He believes that wireless charging is also gaining traction in lower cabin classes, particularly premium economy. Here, seats offer limited horizontal surface space for induction chargers, requiring “creative integration into vertical consoles or seatback areas”.

PriestmanGoode’s MacInnes agrees. “In denser cabins, space is at a premium. We’ve designed hidden trays under the armrests. It’s a clever use of ‘dead space’ that significantly elevates the premium economy experience without encroaching on the passenger’s living area.”

Gotta have faith

The company says we will likely see a shift in confidence thanks to next-generation technologies like MagSafe Integration.

MagSafe is Apple’s proprietary magnetic technology that features an array of magnets around the wireless charging coil, optimised for alignment and efficiency, that perfectly connects across iPhone 12 to iPhone 16 models.



▲ Seamlessly integrated into cabin surfaces, IFPL’s Cobalt Unplugged is fully protected from abuse



▲ **Daniel McInnes**
Director, PriestmanGoode

MagSafe chargers provide up to 15W of power, while still accommodating existing Qi-enabled devices.

For MacInnes, moving MagSafe technology from the home into the cabin is a game-changer. “It provides instant gratification through tactile alignment and ensures a consistent fast charge. There is also thermal management, which manages heat; within the confines of an airline suite, that is critical.

“By focusing on higher wattage and magnetic locking, we move the feature away from being a ‘gimmick into a high-performance utility,” he states.

Suppliers step up

IFPL is among the handful of in-seat power suppliers that have released a wireless charging solution based on the Qi standards developed by the Wireless Power Consortium (WPC).

According to Reed, the company developed its wireless charging module to meet operator demand for a reliable, minimal maintenance power solution, and the increasing passenger need for convenient, cable free power.

83%

83% of travellers carry a phone while 60% carry a laptop, devices which are typically powered by lithium batteries



▲ tangerine oversaw the cabin upgrade of LOT Polish Airlines 787 fleet, featuring seats from Recaro, which include wireless charging in the new business class

“SOMETIMES, SELECTING INDUCTION CHARGING MAY MEAN SACRIFICING ANOTHER VALUABLE FEATURE”

Qi2-certified, Cobalt Unplugged offers between 15-25W depending upon seat configuration and device compatibility.

“Using the Qi2 standard our modules deliver safe, efficient charging while integrating seamlessly into a variety of seat designs,” Reed says. “The units are compact, lightweight and slim, providing a streamlined cabin environment without compromising on performance. Their fully encapsulated design protects against liquid ingress and misuse, ensuring long-term durability.

“The modules integrate seamlessly into any cabin layout and are compatible with a wide range of seat designs and mounting configurations. Powered via the existing DC bus or any suitable seat electronics box, retrofit installation is straightforward and fast, making them a practical and elegant solution for modern aircraft cabins.”

Reed reveals that the feedback from airlines for its wireless charging solutions has been very positive. Without revealing specific customers due to confidentiality, he says airlines emphasise that reliability, integration simplicity and consistent passenger satisfaction remain their top priorities – reasons why USB-based power continues to be the primary solution across most fleets.

Elsewhere, Amphenol PCD’s Qi2 Wireless Power module, Astronics’ WCM and True Blue Power’s TWC15 Series Wireless Chargers are also all Qi compliant and provide up to 15W of power.

Cut that cable?

Airlines aim to deliver the best possible passenger experience, and we are seeing Qi or Qi2 pads integrated into armrests or side consoles. But what of the wider rollout?

An ebullient McInnes states, “Our advice is to go for it now. As the technology simplifies, we expect to see this trickle down from premium cabins into economy. In the modern cabin, wireless charging isn’t just a ‘wow’ factor anymore; it’s a fundamental part of the passenger’s digital journey.”

Braggins is more cautious. “From experience, I recommend airlines gather as much information as possible about the feature options available from their chosen seating partner. Sometimes, selecting induction charging may mean sacrificing another valuable feature, such as open worktop or stowage space – particularly in premium economy and smaller business class seating products.

“Material selection around induction charging areas is also critical. These high-wear zones are prone to scratching and degradation from frequent device placement and removal.

“Finally, airlines should remember that induction charging is an addition, not a replacement, for USB-C or universal charging ports for PC power. Some passenger devices may not be compatible with wireless charging technology, so maintaining multiple charging options is essential.” ●



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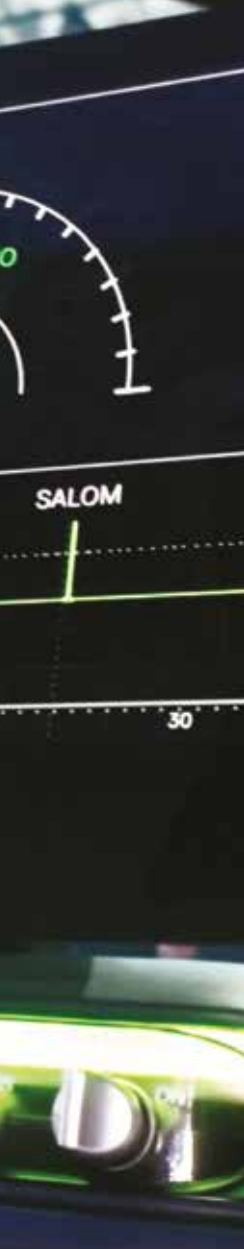
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FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

Why settle for old tech? New aircraft with modern lighting and cabin fit-outs are here





1

If you were able to design the cabin for an aircraft in the future, and were given a clean sheet and an unlimited budget, the chances are that you would come up with something very different to what is in the air today.

Whatever the design of the exterior, the interior would need to be similarly cutting edge. Lightweight materials and modern mood lighting and colours would be the order of the day and, if starting afresh, you could come up with new solutions for passenger comfort and accessibility.

One company that isn't just dreaming about the future is Diehl Aviation. Its 'Future Cabin' concept at the last AIX offered a glimpse into what the inside of aircraft may look like in years to come.

In the main area of the cabin, instead of traditional spotlights or strip lighting, the ceiling features large-area light panels that flood the space with light. High-tech screens partially replace windows, offering not only a view outside but also additional flight-related information, such as details on the route or weather conditions.

The industrial design team has adopted what it describes as 'bionic structures', an approach modelled after forms found in nature. This design technique isn't just about aesthetics – it significantly contributes to weight reduction. For example, the ceiling's design mirrors the intricate patterns found in a leaf or the wings of a dragonfly. These structures are not only visually striking, but they also reduce the weight of components by almost a third compared to conventional designs.



2

1: Cockpit controls have been completely redesigned in Supernal's eVTOL concept

2: Aircraft Lighting International's 'Astra' product offers a wide range of customisation 3: Diehl Aviation's 'Future Cabin' concept incorporates 'bionic structures'

3

"LIGHTING IS WHAT YOU FEEL, BUT NOT NECESSARILY WHAT YOU NOTICE"

While this design is a concept for aircraft yet to come, one aspect that will enter service is the ECO Bracket, which is used to secure overhead bins in the cabin. Diehl Aviation developed the ECO Bracket together with partner 9T Labs.

Looking ahead, the company plans to produce these brackets from thermoplastic materials recovered from recycled components. Thanks to their integrated fibre reinforcement, ECO Brackets will be lighter than the parts currently used, further contributing to fuel efficiency.

Lighting

Another area of the cabin that has undergone radical change over the past few years is cabin lighting. Even in luxury private jets, lighting was until recently performed with fluorescent tubes that had two settings, on and off. However, modern technology has meant that cabins are now lit with LEDs, and can have any combination of colours, temperatures and mood patterns.

The most significant shift is towards lighting designed around human biology rather than pure visibility. Advanced LED systems increasingly support circadian-friendly programmes that adjust colour temperature and intensity throughout the flight, helping reduce jet lag and passenger fatigue on long-haul sectors. Lighting is now choreographed to guide sleep, wakefulness and meals, particularly important as airlines emphasise wellbeing as part of the premium experience.

"Lighting is a key part of the experience as a passenger, whether you're working or just enjoying the flight," explains Brian Bement of New York-based Aircraft Lighting International.

"With lighting, what the cabin feels like during different phases of flight is key," he continues. "It's what you feel, but not necessarily what you notice. You'll know when you get to the end of a flight and everything comes up bright and you get woken from that 'luxury' experience you've had during the flight when the lights are low."

"Our solutions are typically very effective, both from a cost and a logistical point of view," he adds, then goes on to highlight that there are also other reasons why airlines – even LCCs – wanted to make the switch to LEDs.

"Traditionally, lighting draws lots of electricity. So there's a power advantage by using LEDs in the cabin (and the cockpit's no different). Incandescent lights are typically a heat source, so reducing heat and power and also a solution that gives better optical comfort for all onboard is a win."

“HAVING BETTER OPTICAL COMFORT FOR ALL ONBOARD IS A WIN”

Upgrading aircraft to modern lighting is an easy win for aircraft owners.

Bemont says, “We have a lot of enquiries from both airlines and aircraft lessors, as the latter have to do something with the airplane when it comes back to them”. He stresses that LEDs have a far longer life span than their old-style counterparts.

“There’s a sustainability issue with legacy aircraft lighting as well. Those old fluorescent tubes contain mercury and need recycling,” he explains.

Lift off

Thinking of modern aircraft types, weight and battery performance are important aspects when designing equipment for eVTOLs, as payload and range determine the success of an eVTOL. Power has to cover the short vertical take-off power to maximise mission range and the landing phase.

So how does all this affect the lighting solution? “The steady voltage supply onboard eVTOLs is actually a relaxation compared to typical applications in airliners,” claims Diehl’s Jan Petersohn. Here the generation of electrical power from the turbines leads to voltage variations that must be compensated by technical means in the equipment. Eliminating these requirements allows for a streamlined, lightweight design. However, since battery power for an eVTOL is prioritised for payload and range, high efficiency of all other power consumers is a critical success factor.



1: Ambient lighting makes all the difference to an aircraft interior, as demonstrated here with Aircraft Lighting International’s products **2:** Diehl’s ‘Future Cabin’ concept uses high-tech screens to create a range of visual effects

2

Diehl’s eVTOL lighting system also keeps weight to an absolute minimum while maintaining high standards for light quality and brightness. “Having developed numerous generations of LED lighting for large aircraft, Diehl has strong partnerships with leading LED manufacturers and can rely on the best LED raw materials with the highest efficiencies,” Petersohn asserts.

In the long term, Petersohn believes that the new challenges in the design of equipment for eVTOLs and the results obtained will also be useful for large commercial aircraft. ●

THE EVOLUTION OF CABIN LIGHTING SYSTEMS

Aircraft cabin lighting has quietly evolved from a basic safety requirement into a powerful tool for passenger wellbeing, brand expression and operational efficiency. Several key trends are shaping how airlines and OEMs now think about light in the cabin.

Full colour spectrum LEDs

Modern cabin lighting systems offer millions of colour variations, allowing cabins to transform seamlessly between phases of flight. Cool, bright tones support boarding, while warm colours are for the flight phase. For airlines, these programmable environments also enable subtle brand reinforcement through signature hues, without the need for physical redesign.

Zonal and seat-level control

Granular lighting control is becoming more sophisticated. Rather than treating the cabin as a single space, lighting can now be zoned by cabin class – or even individual seats – supporting mixed-use environments.

Light as wayfinding and safety

Integrated floor path lighting, illuminated monuments and softly lit ceiling features are being used to improve spatial awareness and passenger flow.

As cabins become darker and more mood-oriented during the main flight phase, lighting also plays a growing role in maintaining compliance with safety regulations while minimising visual clutter.

Efficiency and sustainability

LED technology continues to deliver weight savings, longer life cycles and lower energy consumption compared to legacy systems. Airlines benefit from reduced maintenance and fewer component replacements, supporting both cost control and sustainability targets.

Design integration and storytelling

Lighting is no longer an afterthought. Designers are using it architecturally, embedded into ceiling panels and sidewalls to create ambience without adding mass. In many cabins, lighting now acts as a subtle narrative device, marking the transition between flight phases and reinforcing an airline’s brand identity.

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CONTROL IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

Aircraft cabin management systems are getting smarter, with greater functionality and efficiency. **Alex Preston** unpicks some of the boosts behind this new brainpower



Today's cabin management systems (CMS) are much more sophisticated than the systems commonly used just a few years ago. New instrument clusters such as cabin noise-cancelling controls or climate control, which may once have been seen as a luxury experience, can be found across all aircraft types and carriers.

As Marcel Schmedes, technology specialist/project manager at Diehl Aviation remarks, "In addition to its obvious role in supporting aircraft cabin operations, the CMS is in a very interesting and powerful position to enable new ways of flying and offer a new passenger experience.

"Imagine context- and passenger-aware systems. These could provide crew and passengers with new, personalised services, appearances and interactions, offering a completely new air travel experience. New generations of CMS will certainly offer interfaces for individualised services tailored to passengers, such as personal assistance, natural language processing and personalised support in addition to their operational requirements."

For Lee Clark, senior VP at Rosen Aviation, while there is a myriad of ways in which today's CMS solutions are redefining the passenger experience, all of them essentially boil down to one thing – seamless functionality.

"We are collectively decades into the digital age, and with that progress has come no shortage of hard lessons learned," he states.

In reference to aircraft CMS solutions, Clark says those lessons have taught us that more technology, more functionality and more 'wow' factor does not inherently equate to an elevated passenger experience without a careful, holistic approach to system design. He believes that factors like such as user interface, latency, customisability and smart system preferences are the unsung heroes that truly reshape CMS solutions and passenger expectations.

"Technology will always evolve, often rapidly, but how we implement it is what separates exquisite from average," Clark asserts.

Intuitive design

"Perhaps the most prominent example is having to navigate through multiple menu layers to perform control functions like turning on lights or adjusting window shades," Clark continues. "For all controls, especially of the most basic and core functions, user inputs must be right at the passenger's fingertips.

"The elephant in the room is of course artificial intelligence, a broad technology category that has found its way into virtually every nook and cranny of our personal and professional lives. We're now on the precipice of AI personal assistant avatars that



▲ Marcel Schmedes, technology specialist/project manager at Diehl Aviation

interpret our wants and needs within the cabin, instantly translating them to any number of changes and functions within the cabin. Biometric sensors, voice commands and passenger trend analytics, in addition to direct user commands, transform CMS into a living, breathing asset with one singular goal: create the best possible passenger experience," he adds.

What this "best possible" amounts to will be driven by the increased rollout of connectivity and the growth of smart cabin technologies.

Connectivity gains

According to Clark, the CMS being developed today are becoming an extension of passengers within the aircraft. "Even current systems are more closely integrated with personal devices and connectivity solutions, and this trend will only continue. Smartphones, tablets, laptops, smart watches, AI glasses and wearables, wireless headphones and cloud services will all be in constant communication with onboard CMS systems to keep the busiest passengers in complete command of their environment."

Schmedes picks up the baton. "The availability of cost-efficient connectivity solutions and the 'all

"WE'RE NOW ON THE PRECIPICE OF AI PERSONAL ASSISTANT AVATARS THAT INTERPRET OUR WANTS AND NEEDS"



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▲ At its core, Celestia is an intelligent, IP-based CMS and technology system designed specifically for high-end aviation

aircraft connected' philosophy of many airlines paves the way for a new paradigm in smart function management. Imagine highly dynamic, hassle-free application ecosystems and the auto-synchronisation of personal data for individualisation. The potential for a 'software-defined aircraft' is manifold. Imagine the possibilities! Diehl Aviation is working on various research projects to develop the different building blocks of such architectures, ranging from onboard protocol standardisation to cloud infrastructure components," he says.

Companies such as Diehl and Rosen have a laser focus on seamless functionality, where connectivity solutions work simultaneously and almost stealthily, creating elevated experiences within the cabin without being directly noticed.

"It's technology that's there when you need it and invisible when you don't, providing intuitive, value-added function in every cabin type," says Clark.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in premium suites.

Getting personal

Rosen Aviation's PO-RT-AL (Personally Optimised – Real Time – Augmented Luxury) concept allows passengers to control and customise lighting, video, sound, ambiance, time of day, scent, external views and comfort settings to figuratively transport themselves from one location to another like a true-to-life portal.

"This concept," says Clark, "is not defined by a specific group of technologies but rather a broad collection of audio and video solutions carefully integrated in a complementary architecture, enveloping and engaging passenger senses to ultimately make them forget they are inside of a cramped metal tube for multiple hours, arriving refreshed, relaxed and more focused."

Clark reveals that the company's first iteration featured a large, curved IFE display, a digital window and digital skylight, and Rosen's Immersa In-Seat AudioSphere, which "harnesses the power of raw sound mechanics and our ear's natural tendencies to vividly depict tone, timbre and 3D spatiality". He says collectively, these technologies create engaging, highly customisable stimuli that transform the passenger journey unlike anything ever experienced in an aircraft.

Designing for the future, Clark says, "We've seen dramatic shifts in the VIP cabin space that have left many customers and operators in challenging positions for support, maintenance, upgradability and most importantly, the passenger experience itself." These shifts have left very large gaps in the market, which Rosen is helping to fill with Celestia.

IP ethernet-based and scalable, Celestia boasts an array of automatic configuration and self-diagnosing capabilities that make set-up and continual support much less labour intensive than other systems. It also supports high-resolution video and all contemporary video source solutions such as USB-C and HDMI.

With such an agile and scalable system that is adaptable, Celestia has evolved the principles of mission morphing to what Clark calls "an elevated level". He explains: "Mission morphing describes a system that can support a flight of foreign diplomats on one leg of a journey immediately followed by a family vacation on the next leg. This can involve physical changes to the

"THE TECHNOLOGIES CREATE ENGAGING, CUSTOMISABLE STIMULI THAT CAN TRANSFORM THE PASSENGER JOURNEY"

► CANSAS HPC is the latest improvement to CMS and cabin controllers from Diehl



▲ Lee Clark, senior VP at Rosen Aviation

environment such as seating, media and connectivity content, lighting, and relaxation settings.

“We have long advocated that premium commercial airlines stand to gain significant differentiation by leveraging VIP technology suppliers and innovators, and Celestia provides ample opportunities that are beneficial to premium commercial operators.”

Schmedes also agrees that traditional CMS solutions usually lack the capabilities for dynamic lifecycle management and (easy) customisation. Furthermore, he says, mechanisms like interoperability are rudimentary.

“The new generation of systems will change that, allowing for fast, cost-efficient lifecycle management, including non-essential application deployment. To complement existing CMS solutions, additional or parallel installations were often used – such as, for example, a dedicated light controller for a new mood lighting system – because modifying or reconfiguring existing CMS solutions was cumbersome and costly. Of course, our CANSAS HPC (High Performance Controller) can be used as such a system, either as an additive controller or as an application and wireless server instance. New CMS solutions should incorporate this in a much more charming way, at least for non-essential functions, like our CANSAS platform software.”

Going into detail, Schmedes explains that CANSAS HPC was designed specifically to address the increasing demand for scalable, secure and multi-critical cabin systems across a wide range of aircraft platforms.

Use cases range from non-essential, passenger-centric application servers to fully integrated, multi-critical cabin management systems (DAL C/D/E), as well as secure communication gateways with a high Security Assurance Level, including aircraft-to-ground applications.

From a maturity standpoint, the design philosophy of CANSAS builds on proven concepts already in service, as Schmedes describes. Key architectural elements are shared with the line-fit cabin management system flying on the Embraer E2 fleet since 2018. The current HPC-based generation is now in the final stages of qualification for a



customer in the Americas, with entry into service planned for 2026.

“Beyond the baseline system, CANSAS is designed to be future-ready. Open standards, interoperability and secure data integration are fundamental design principles. This enables applications such as predictive health management architectures, standardised data exchange via ARINC 853 (CSMIM), and connectivity to third-party systems,” he says.

“Furthermore, we are actively expanding the ecosystem around CANSAS – for example through our joint solution with Thales, which integrates CANSAS capabilities with the Thales Onboard Data Centre.”

Visions of the future

Elsewhere, Clark says that from an architecture standpoint, systems are quickly migrating away from proprietary, closed source architectures built on limited or out-of-date protocols that drastically hinder customisation and personalisation. Initiatives like MOSAIC (Modular Open-Source Architecture In Cabin) are forcing system and component providers to design for interoperability and system flexibility from the onset, which opens a trove of options for the end user.

“As the name suggests, MOSAIC principles turn aircraft of any shape and size into a blank canvas that owners and operators can truly personalise with technology solutions that meet and exceed their diverse, unique, and often never-been-done-before list of requirements.

“Tomorrow’s aircraft cabin will very much mirror today’s smart home environment, having recently undergone the same industry shift resulting in the Matter standard. Matter created an open-source architecture with standard communication protocols, and the result was a massive eruption of third-party technology solutions. We will start to see the same in aviation,” concludes Clark. ●

**“TOMORROW’S AIRCRAFT CABIN
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SMART HOME ENVIRONMENT”**

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1

THE FUTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY

Iñigo Valenzuela, founder and chief executive of Smartvel, says airlines are uniquely placed to address accessibility issues that are faced by a growing number of travellers as the global population ages

For travellers with disabilities, every flight starts long before arrival at the airport. It begins with uncertainty. “Will I get the support I requested? Will my wheelchair be handled properly? Will staff understand my needs at each stage of the journey? And who is responsible for each step of the journey?”

The results of a recent survey that was commissioned by my company, Smartvel, have made one thing clear:

while accessible infrastructure at airports is key, it is airlines that sit at the centre of the travel experience – and they have the greatest power to make or break the journey for travellers with disabilities.

Accessibility begins with the airline, not the airport. Our survey revealed that the preferred channel for requesting assistance is the airline’s website.

Travellers turn to airlines first, expecting accurate information, clear instructions and reassurance, and they would love to know everything in one search.

Yet, all too often, this information is fragmented, inconsistent or overly generic. Security checks remain a stressful and unpredictable part of the journey, while passengers struggle to find accessibility information before travelling.

Meanwhile, travellers worry whether the airport infrastructure will be adapted to their needs and, while airports control physical infrastructure, airlines are the primary interface with passengers. This is where confidence is either built or eroded. When information

1: Handling passengers who have reduced mobility with dignity is critical **2:** Every step of the journey must be considered, from booking to leaving the destination airport **3:** Accessibility is important in all parts of the cabin

about accessibility is incomplete or unclear, passengers are left guessing at critical moments.

The role of the airline

For passengers with reduced mobility (PRM), including those who use manual or electric wheelchairs and other mobility aids, the journey is shaped by how well the airline communicates and coordinates.

That means ensuring passengers know in advance information such as what assistance is available at every moment, and how to book it. Where and when to meet assistance teams at departure and arrival airports is also important, as is how their mobility equipment will be handled, including electric wheelchair battery protocols and check-in procedures.

It's also helpful to know what to expect at security and boarding, including priority lanes, personal screenings, equipment handling and seat transfers procedures as well as aircraft-specific accessibility information, such as aisle chair availability, onboard restrooms and seating options.



2

A seamless, step-by-step communication journey can transform anxiety into confidence. Airlines have the unique ability to own this communication layer, bridging gaps that airports alone can't solve.

Critical touchpoints

One of the strongest findings is that security and boarding represent the highest-friction moments of the journey. Passengers reported inconsistent procedures from airport to airport, such as a lack of technical training among staff

handling mobility aids and performing safe seat transfers, plus airline and airport teams members who were not always aligned on protocols.

Other complaints included moments where a passenger's dignity was compromised, for example when a staff member spoke to their companion instead of them. This isn't just a customer service failure – it's a brand experience failure and an ESG problem.

Airlines have an opportunity to set clear expectations, align with local ground handling partners, and ensure their procedures protect both dignity and safety.

A recurring theme was staff training deficiencies. Travellers consistently highlighted how a lack of empathy and technical skills compounded stress at key moments like security screening, check-in, boarding and seat transfers.

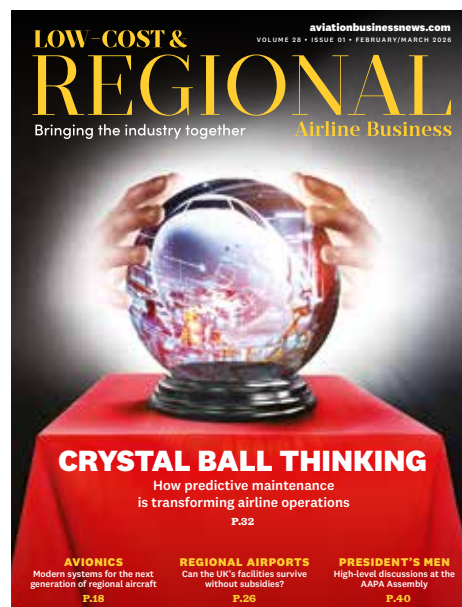
For airlines, this represents a clear opportunity. By investing in accessibility training for both frontline and ground handling teams – whether managed internally or by third parties – they can ensure consistent, respectful treatment of passengers with disabilities.

Empathy, technical competence and clear communication should be standard practice, not special treatment.



3

“MOMENTS WHERE DIGNITY WAS COMPROMISED ISN'T JUST A CUSTOMER SERVICE FAILURE – IT'S A BRAND EXPERIENCE FAILURE, AND A ESG PROBLEM”




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THE PATH FORWARD:

- Make accessibility information central to the customer journey.
- Invest in staff training for frontline and ground handling teams and coordination with airport partners.
- Design solutions with travellers, not for them

The elephant in the airport

While most people are genuinely in need of the support offered by airlines and airports, we are also aware that sadly some people do abuse the system, which means that support is not always prioritised for travellers that really need it.

There is not a clear line here. In some cases, a specific certificate is asked for, in others it's not required. It's difficult to find the right solution when accessibility procedures are not the same at airports and airlines around the world.

Creating an accessibility solution that works for all

We need an accessibility solution that centralises and personalises information from airlines and airports, guiding PRM travellers through each stage of the journey.

Real progress starts with bringing structure and intelligence to the information that already exists – across airlines, airports and international regulatory frameworks. Today, guidance is scattered, inconsistent, and often difficult to interpret. The goal is to consolidate this landscape into something coherent and actionable.



“ACCESSIBILITY IS NOT A NICHE – IT’S A MUST HAVE OF RESPONSIBLE AIR TRAVEL”

What's needed is an approach that brings all this together: operational procedures, public policies and global standards – combined with the lived experience of end users and the expertise of accessibility associations.

By unifying factual, operational knowledge with insights from travellers who rely on mobility aids, the industry can build solutions that are both technically accurate and truly centred around the user.

The output should be a smart content matrix structured by journey stage and location (airport, airline, terminal), aligned with IATA SSR (Special Service Request) codes (WCHR, WCHS, WCHC), and translated into clear, user-friendly language.

The result will be an evolving system that gives travellers with disabilities the clarity, confidence and respect they deserve. Accessibility is not a niche – it's a must have of responsible air travel. As some airlines have said, this is a

matter of respect and being socially responsible. It is a clear must have for any company that wants to be a reference in equality treatment.

With an ageing global population and growing awareness of disability rights, accessibility is no longer optional – it's a strategic imperative. Airlines are uniquely positioned to lead this change.

Airlines control the booking interface, the communication journey and the passenger relationship. By owning accessibility, they can set themselves apart, build loyalty and demonstrate leadership where it matters most: inclusion, dignity and trust.

A call to the industry

Accessibility isn't just a compliance checkbox – it's a human right and a strategic imperative. Airlines have a unique opportunity to lead with empathy and innovation.

By integrating clear accessibility information, prioritising staff training and involving users in product design, they can turn one of the most stressful journeys into one of the smoothest.

What's needed now is industry-wide commitment to close the accessibility gap not in the future, but today. ●

1: Concept from Collins Aerospace for carrying passengers in their own wheelchair 2: An 'Airchair' for bringing passengers into the aircraft



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Michael Doran outlines the issues raised at the AAPA meeting in Bangkok held in November

In November, the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) held its 69th Assembly of the Presidents in Bangkok. Each year the Assembly brings together airline leaders, major OEMs and international media from across Asia Pacific. The 2025 event, hosted by Bangkok Airways, was attended by close to 200 delegates.

Among the delegates were CEOs and senior leaders from the AAPA affiliated airlines, including Air Astana, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Bangkok Airways, Cathay Pacific, China Airlines, EVA Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Japan Airlines, Lion Group, Malaysia Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Qantas Airways, Royal Brunei, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways and Vietnam Airlines.

Also in Bangkok were leaders from Airbus, Boeing, Embraer, GE Aerospace, Pratt & Whitney and Rolls-Royce along

with IATA director general Willie Walsh, who didn't disappoint with some pointed comments on air traffic management (ATM), sustainability, governments and profit-making OEMs.

Willie Walsh talks turkey

On a more positive note, Walsh said there was a lot to be excited about regarding air transport in Asia Pacific, now the largest market in the world with around 34% of global passenger traffic. He explained, "This is an area where you can see the true value of aviation from the economic contribution that it makes through the connectivity you get from it."

He outlined the need for "sensible investment" in ATM to match the very substantial investments being made by airlines and airports to provide additional connectivity, which is at risk of being held back by the lack of progress being made in relation to air traffic management.



1. Willie Walsh says ATM needs sensible investment in Asia Pacific
2. Japan Airlines is a long time member of AAPA
3. Embraer's Arjan Meijer says now is a pivotal time for the E2 jet
4. Mongolia's Hunnu Air has adopted Embraer E2 jets
5. AAPA's Subhas Menon is confident that 2026 will be a year of growth
6. Embraer's E190-E2 has a state-of-the-art cockpit

fellow engine maker Safran was close to 21% in 2024.

"So we're doing all the work for 6.7% and these suppliers have been doing extremely well and improving their performance during a period of massive disruption, which has added massive costs to the airline industry," said Walsh. "It really p***ed me off to hear them talking about increasing their prices because of tariffs and other supply chain issues."

AAPA is confident for 2026

AAPA reported that between January and October 2025, Asia Pacific airlines carried 322,292 international passengers, growing traffic by 10.4% over the same period in 2024. Director general Subhas Menon expressed confidence in the region's continued air transport growth through 2026, supported by resilient economies and strong passenger and cargo demand.

"Asia Pacific airlines continue to demonstrate agility in managing supply chain constraints, with capacity growth keeping pace with demand, however further escalation of tariffs could exacerbate these bottlenecks," Menon said. "Stakeholders across the aviation ecosystem must work together to navigate the evolving challenges of the external environment."

Aside from supply chain issues, many of the region's airlines have also had to deal with fallout from global conflicts, particularly the closure of Russian airspace and the war in Ukraine. Over the past 12 months, airspace over 14 countries has been closed which produced an inefficient operating environment with risks from military crossfire and spoofing of air navigation systems.

Affirming the collective target of 5% SAF utilisation by 2030, the Assembly called on governments to support fuel suppliers by establishing policy and regulations to accelerate SAF production. ●

"When you consider that the technology available to us today is so far advanced from what we've had historically, I think there is an opportunity to skip a generation of investment and look very much in the future to provide the critical support that the industry will need to keep pace with the development of airports and airlines."

With passenger demand running high, the overall mood was generally positive and enthusiastic but the common theme among the CEOs was the impact of ongoing supply chain disruptions. The leading cause of concern remains aircraft delivery delays and engine time on wing. Walsh believed most people would say the situation is not getting any worse, but added, "I think there's huge frustration that it's not getting much better."

IATA recently commissioned a report which estimated that the industry is facing additional costs of US\$11.4 billion (£8.5 billion) as a result of supply chain disruption in 2025.

"This is through a number of factors, including using older, less efficient aircraft that add to the fuel bill and maintenance costs; these are additional costs the industry can't afford to bear, and it's gone on for too long."

IATA estimates airlines will make an operating margin of about 6.7% in 2025, whereas some of the critical suppliers are making margins far in excess of that, despite being at the root of supply chain disruption. Walsh cited that in the first nine months of 2025, GE Aerospace had an operating margin of 27.6% from commercial engines and services, while



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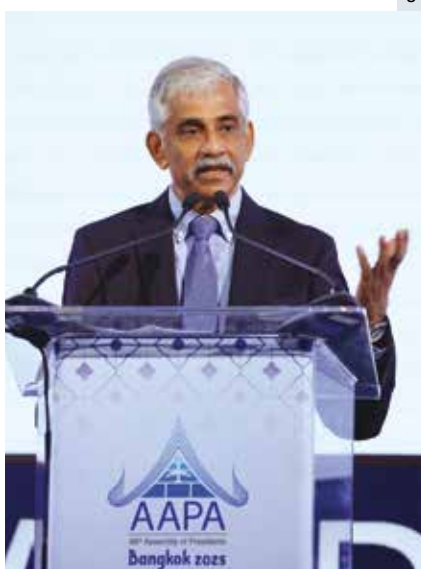
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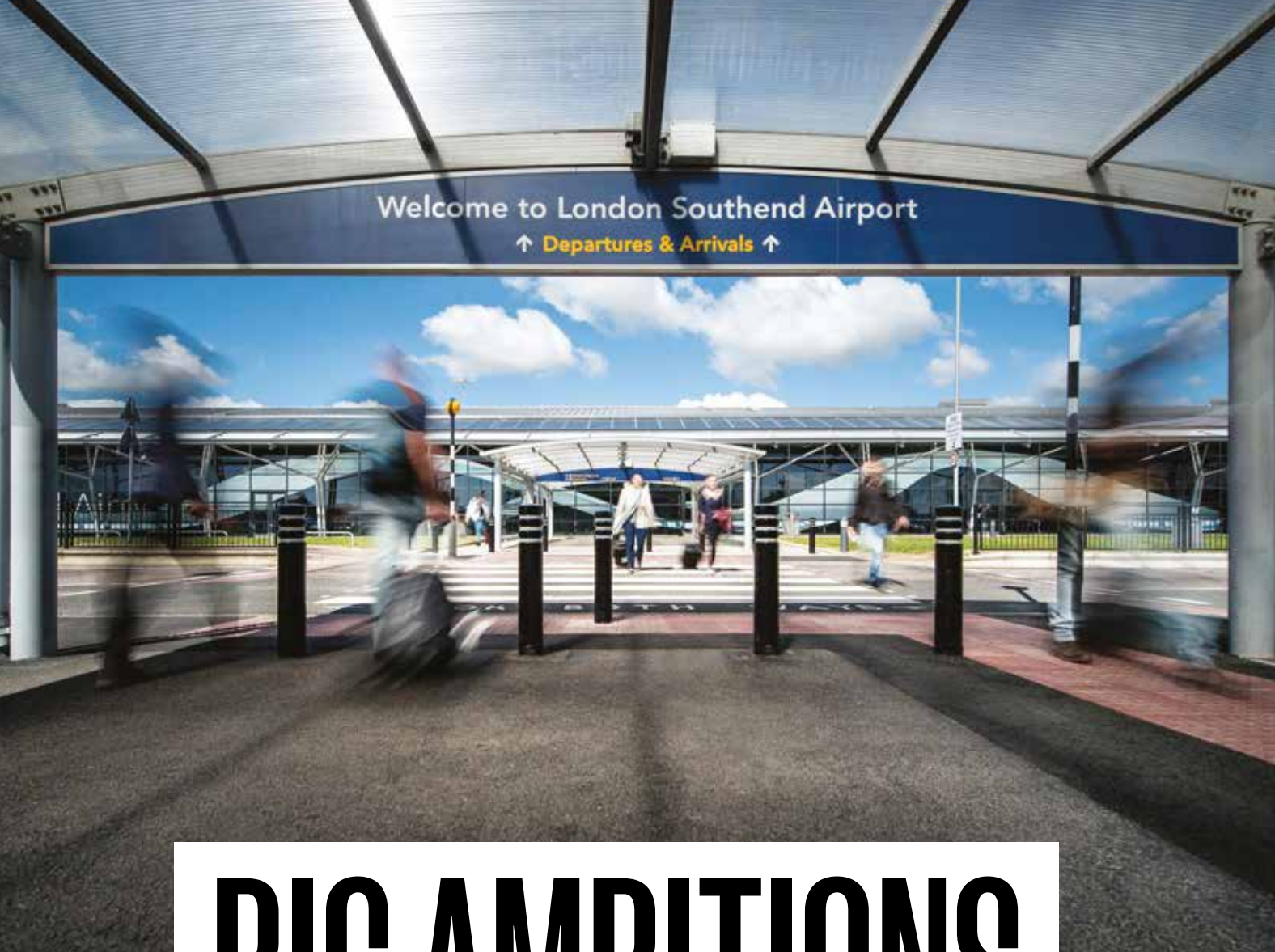


5



AAPA

**"YOU CAN SEE THE VALUE OF AVIATION
FROM THE CONTRIBUTION THAT IT MAKES
THROUGH THE CONNECTIVITY IT PROVIDES"**



BIG AMBITIONS

Regional airfields are embracing technological innovations.
Gerrard Cowan looks at some of the new equipment in use

Smaller airports face unique challenges in staffing and resources when compared to their larger counterparts. However, technological advances in everything from security to pushback operations are helping to overcome these issues and open new opportunities for regional facilities, industry experts have told *Aircraft Cabin Management*.

London Southend Airport is a three-aircraft easyJet hub located in Essex, southeast England. The airport provides flights to 24 destinations in 13 countries and is estimated to have hosted 750,000 passengers in 2025.

Nigel Mayes, business development director for London Southend Airport says that smaller airports operate with leaner teams and infrastructure, meaning “efficiency and cross-department collaboration are key”. Mayes adds that the airport has made a range of investments in technology and systems to boost this efficiency.

For example, it has invested in upgraded security technology, notably through new computed tomography (CT) security scanners. Because these allow passengers to leave electrical items and liquids in their bags, it “makes security screening faster and more efficient”, enthuses Mayes.

Additionally, he points to the addition of an AeroCloud passenger processing system, an integrated platform that is designed to cover every stage of the journey.

Likewise, the new Eforsair airport operational platform provides digital logbook technology that enables smarter asset and stock management, equipment checks and task-tracking.

Assaia

Assaia’s ApronAI solution is designed to provide increased visibility across all aspects of airport operations, helping to boost predictions in turnaround events and enhance user control; through

1. Southend is the smallest of the London orbital airports, but will still handle a projected 750k pax per annum this year 2. easyJet is London Southend's primary airline 3. The terminal has upgraded security and speed with the introduction of new technology

computer vision technology, it can provide real-time insight into factors like plane arrival times, fuelling processes and more.

Sarah Owen, the company's vice president – EMEA, says that operational efficiency is not simply about size, but also resilience. While larger airports often have redundancy built in through extra staff, spare gates and back-up equipment, their smaller counterparts rarely have that flexibility.

"A single late inbound flight or equipment shortage can have a disproportionate impact on the rest of the schedule," she explains. "Their teams are also more likely to multitask across different operational areas, which increases the need for reliable, real-time information."

According to Owen, Assaia's platform helps to boost agility for smaller airports by providing precise, live visibility of every turnaround; this is encapsulated in a single, shared picture of the ramp that every stakeholder can access, sending alerts when an activity risks falling behind schedule.



3

"For example," Owen explains, "if baggage unloading takes longer than planned, the system immediately notifies the relevant stakeholders so they can reallocate resources before it affects departure."

Embross

Jean-Luc Rauline is chief operating officer at Embross, which produces passenger self-service kiosks and other solutions including bag drops and the software needed to support the technology. This includes the TravelStream solution, a biometric-based, automated passenger system covering the journey from curb to gate. It has also recently launched the Evolution line, offering compact and modular designs that are well-suited to smaller facilities.

"Smaller airports must deliver the same quality of passenger experience as major hubs, but with fewer resources and tighter space. That's really where technology can make the difference," says Rauline.

Embross's solutions are designed to be scalable, he continues, meaning they can work as effectively in small, regional terminals as larger ones. For instance, he

points to the company's work at airports in Western Canada, such as Victoria and Kelowna, where it has installed new common-use passenger processing systems and self-service kiosks.

"The idea is to give smaller airports the same flexibility that large ones already enjoy. This includes the ability to share infrastructure between airlines, adjust to peaks in demand, and speed up the journey from check-in to gate without adding more staff or space."

This technology can be particularly useful for smaller airports, which tend to have leaner teams, meaning they often lack the spare capacity to absorb pressure when disruptions occur or passenger numbers rise.

"By taking care of routine processes, such as check-in, bag tagging and boarding, our systems allow airport staff to focus on where they're needed most, helping passengers and managing exceptions," says Rauline. "Behind the scenes, our software also supports remote monitoring and predictive maintenance, which means technical issues can often be resolved before they interrupt service."

Mototok

Mototok produces a range of towbar-less aircraft tugs. The systems are powered by electric motors and can be fully remotely controlled, meaning the operator can walk anywhere around the aircraft to see every vantage point, while the compact design of the systems means they can be more effectively utilised

"SMALLER AIRPORTS MUST DELIVER THE SAME QUALITY AS MAJOR HUBS BUT WITH FEWER RESOURCES"



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1. Automated check-in kiosks at Southend reduce the pressure on staff. 2. New equipment may make it viable to push back an aircraft remotely from a control centre

at commercial airports, according to Billu Kler, senior manager – business development for international sales. The equipment is equally valuable in hangar space as it is easier to park aircraft in different spaces.

Kler goes on to discuss the problem of smaller airports having periods without large numbers of flights coming in and then going quiet: “So trying to resource people is difficult. It can be very expensive. They may get part-time people to fill in the gaps.”

Such staffing demands can create issues around training, says Kler. However, the company’s tugs do not require a driving licence and can easily be utilised by local teams after minimal training, without waiting for a specialised pushback team.

Additionally, because the systems can be controlled outside the tug, there is no need for a cab, meaning they have a wider point of view. “We’re adding another layer of safety to a task that’s of the highest criticality at the airport,” he explains.

While the systems are currently utilised by an operator walking alongside

the tug, trials are underway to investigate the potential of operating from a distance, for example from a control centre. Kler elaborates: “If you’re able to push back an aircraft remotely from a control centre, this means we’re not exposing the operator to any external impact, like bad weather or lightning – that would be extremely helpful.”

Future advances

Rauline says Embross is looking to the potential of AI, a major feature of its new Evolution products, which have an AI-powered core that tracks performance, detects potential issues and can correct minor faults automatically.

“Deploying AI agents will improve our knowledge databases and automate technical documentation usage for our technicians. This will enable Embross to bring new services to our smaller airport customers at a more affordable price.”

Regarding Assaia, Owen says the company also sees potential for AI and other advanced technologies, notably in steering aviation towards connective and predictive operations. Additionally, she says the company is aiming to make it easier for smaller airports and other users to access and act upon operational data, notably through the TurnGPT tool, which would allow users to query turnaround data in plain language.

“OUR SIZE AND TEAM ETHOS ALLOWS US TO ADOPT NEW TECHNOLOGY QUICKLY, SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY”

For example, an operations manager could ask the tool for data on the flights with the longest boarding times in any given period and receive an instant, data-driven answer, Owen explains.

Automation and clean energy

London Southend Airport is exploring technologies that enhance efficiency, sustainability and the customer journey, according to its press blurb. Nigel Mayes tells us that it already generates almost a quarter of terminal energy usage from an on-site solar farm, with the goal of increasing this to a much higher percentage in the near future.

“We’re also exploring possibly digital automations in our customer relationship management, AI support on our website and further considerations to optimise both passenger flow and team efficiency,” says Mayes. “Emerging technologies such as AI have enormous potential to improve forecasting, personalise the passenger experience and support sustainable growth – areas that align closely with our long-term strategy.”

Despite the challenges, Mayes says London Southend sees its size as an advantage. “We’re easy, speedy and friendly, and the nature of our size and team ethos allows us to adopt new technology quickly, safely and effectively.” ●



2

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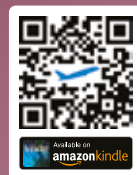
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JUST LANDED

A look at some of the major carriers' amenity kit designs

“THE MAISON KITSUNÉ KITS COMBINE PARISIAN CHIC AND TOKYO MINIMALISM”



Who: British Airways

What: Anatomē kits

Web: britishairways.com

For understandable reasons, airlines don't like to talk about items on board as 'waste', whether it be unserved meals or physical goods. Accordingly, BA has chosen to emphasise the reusability of its kit bag, loungewear, socks, etc in the marketing material for its latest amenity kit designed in partnership with luxury British wellness specialist anatomē.



Who: EVA Air

What: Maison Kitsuné kits

Web: evaair.com

Taiwan-based EVA Air has launched a differentiator in the form of an amenity kit designed by Paris-based lifestyle brand Maison Kitsuné. The product will be produced by Formia and is said to combine "Parisian chic and Tokyo minimalism".



Who: Brussels Airlines

What: New amenity kits

Web: brusselsairlines.com

Instead of licensing a fashion brand, Brussels Airlines has recruited three local stylists, Griet Aesaert, Elisia Poelman and Barbara Geusens to design bags, sleep masks and toiletries respectively. The amenity kits are also notable for being supplied in bags made from real Belgian leather.



Who: Emirates
What: 'United for Wildlife' amenity kits

Web: emirates.com

Promoting amenity kits as something beyond simply a pouch for toothpaste is increasingly common. Emirates has embraced this trend with kits designed in association with charity United for Wildlife and each bag contains a story card that explains the plight of one of two dozen endangered species.



Who: Riyadh Air
What: Kayanee kits
Web: riyadhair.com

New airline brands are keen to emphasise their own identity and points of difference to their competitors. Accordingly, newcomer Riyadh Air has made a licensing agreement with local wellbeing brand Kayanee. In addition to the usual items, business class passengers will enjoy a pulse point oil and refreshing facial mist.



Who: Turkish Airlines
What: UNESCO kits
Web: turkishairlines.com

In common with many airlines, Turkish is keen to promote the history and culture of its home country. Accordingly, the new amenity kits called the "UNESCO Türkiye Series" are inspired by six world heritage sites in the country and feature four different ebru (Turkish Marbling) designs and three traditional carpet-rug motifs.



"THE UNESCO TÜRKİYE SERIES AMENITY KITS ARE INSPIRED BY SIX WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN THE COUNTRY AND FEATURE EBRU DESIGNS AND CARPET-RUG MOTIFS"



ABNCAST

Ticket sales come at a cost

Richard Clarke, T2RL chief executive, spoke to Lee Hayhurst on the price of payments

In Latin American countries, the number of ways consumers pay when transacting online has ballooned in the digital age to an estimated average of 40.

So, while the airline sector's own clearing house (IATA's BSP) was developed to simplify the flow of money, greater fragmentation is an inevitable challenge for carriers today.

Richard Clarke, T2RL chief executive, said the difference between accepting payment in one way versus another could be 2% to 3% in costs.

Therefore, offering choice while driving down cost of revenue acquisition as airlines become modern retailers is critical. "That matters in our industry with such thin margins," said Clarke.

"Airlines have to get their act together with respect to payments. How broad, how deep do they need to go? Their consumer base will respond to that. Some will do better, some less well.

"Making it easy for the customer, making sure there's credit available, making sure it's a bona fide transaction... being able to trust the infrastructure – these are all going to matter."

Low cost carriers, by design, already operate in a ticketless environment and don't have as much technical debt to overcome to make the transition.

Offer, Order, Settle, Deliver

However, the entire sector is on the path to an Offer, Order, Settle, Deliver (OOSD) future with payments at the core.

"The airlines are working on it," Clarke said. "Offer, Order, Settle, Deliver and modern retailing in general require quick



▲ Richard Clarke believes airlines "need to get their act together" in respect to taking payments

and easy payments in an efficient and optimised manner for the customer, but also for the airlines."

Clarke insists the technology is available to support this change and payment orchestration platforms will be vital partners.

It comes down to priorities, which vary from airline to airline and from region to region, meaning there are early adopters, like in South America, and laggards.

According to Clarke, "Deployment is taking longer than people would want, so benefits are being realised more slowly, which means some airlines will prioritise other areas.

"The name of the game is conversion. You have brought people to your website or mobile app and you want to take their money." ●



ABNcast publishes a new episode on Monday every week featuring companies and industry professionals talking about some of the key issues in the aviation industry. Subscribe on ABN's YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/@aviationbusinessnews>



"Airlines have to get their act together with respect to payments. How broad, how deep do they need to go?"

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CRYSTAL CABIN AWARDS: SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED

We look at the categories and some of the nominees for the most contested trophies in the Cabin business

The Crystal Cabin Awards jury has selected the shortlist for 2026. Eighty-five innovations from all areas of the aircraft cabin show how the industry is responding to key challenges: ultra-long-haul, accessibility, material circularity, digital services and new comfort standards. The winners will be announced on 14 April 2026 at the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg.

Cabin concepts

Increasing flight times and differentiated passenger needs are accelerating the development of new comfort solutions. The submissions show how consistently manufacturers are redefining ergonomics, well-being, flexibility and connectivity in all cabin classes. Airbus, for example, is introducing a new cabin concept that redefines the passenger experience on different levels. In the A350 Master Suite, the Airspace interior has been further developed to accommodate an exclusive first-class master suite with a double bed, private toilet and bar – made possible by a newly designed centre module. Spaceframe, designed by BMW Designworks, brings a modular, recyclable seating system to economy class that combines comfort and sustainability. Meanwhile, Collins Aerospace has presented SkyNook, a flexible retreat zone in the rear that transforms unused space into multifunctional areas for families and special needs.

In the area of digital connectivity, the submissions show how air passengers will be able to work and relax online in the future. AirFi Wingman from AirFi.aero acts as an AI-powered real-time travel concierge for the cabin, combining connectivity, shopping and entertainment in a single product that, unlike other solutions, is at a high level of technological maturity.

Thales has teamed up with Diehl Aviation to develop SmartSuite, a system that combines

technologies such as edge computing, AI, IoT and machine vision to increase operational efficiency inside and outside the cabin to offer passengers a continuous travel experience. Together with its partners Starlink, Axinom and Spotify, United Airlines has introduced a new cloud-based platform designed to enable a seamless, consistent premium experience on board.

Accessibility

Focusing on diversity, manufacturers are setting new standards for accessible travel. Mobility Assist aims to revolutionise the transfer from wheelchair to seat with its AeroSlide Transfer System: an extendable sliding plate replaces lifting with horizontal sliding, reducing risks and preserving dignity.



1

2





1: The Well-Voyage Seat 2: Last year's award winners 3: Mobility Assist's 'Aero Slide' entry 4: SkyBudi offers to convert existing seats into a full-size bed

3



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SkyBudi Pty Ltd wants to take accessibility to a new level with its lightweight reclining seat SkyBudi: three standard economy seats are converted into a full-size bed without airlines having to change their cabin equipment. It can be installed in a few minutes, uses existing seat belts for secure fastening and is universally compatible with narrow-body and wide-body aircraft.

Meanwhile, Toyota Boshoku Corporation has entered the Well-Voyage Seat into the contest. The Well-Voyage is a fully removable seat module that enables continuous transport from the gate to the cabin without transfers and also facilitates access to the on-board toilet. The system reduces the risks of manual handling, preserves passenger comfort and dignity, and increases efficiency when boarding and disembarking.

Sustainability

Entries in the Sustainable Cabin category showcase innovations that ensure comfort while reducing CO₂ emissions.



1



2

“STUDENTS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS ARE RETHINKING THE AIRCRAFT CABIN”

1: The passenger service unit prototype from the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

2: Expliseat has made use of titanium to save weight **3:** The Elevated Class concept from Chaise Lounge in the Breakthrough start-ups category

France-based Expliseat is focusing on titanium and carbon fibre with TiSeat: the lightweight seating solution reduces fuel burn and emissions and demonstrates how lightweight construction directly contributes to sustainable mobility.

Elsewhere, Safran Seats aims to redefine sustainable seating with CIRCLE: recycled materials and reuse of waste combine for up to seven kilogrammes weight reduction per business seat. This saves fuel and reduces CO₂ while ensuring a modern cabin ambience.

Testori Textiles is introducing plant-based fibres for seat covers, curtains and surfaces with its Plant-based Fibre Textile System. They meet technical and flame-retardant standards, reduce environmental impact and strengthen the circular economy.

Breakthrough start-ups

In the new Breakthrough Start-ups category, Spanish company Chaise Longue is causing a stir with its Elevated Class concept. The concept

redefines business class and combines privacy and community: quiet suites with personal retreats are situated below, while flexible areas for working, eating or relaxing are positioned above. The result is a luxurious, versatile cabin space that adapts to the individual needs of passengers.

University

In the university category, students and research institutions are demonstrating how they are rethinking the aircraft cabin. Hamburg, home of the Crystal Cabin Award, is strongly represented with three projects, including the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences' smart, networked passenger service unit developed in cooperation with ZAL Centre for Applied Aeronautical Research.

Elsewhere, students from the University of Texas at Austin have proposed a new seating configuration for greater comfort and efficiency in single-aisle aircraft with the Twin Aisle NGSA concept.

The Georgia Institute of Technology has also made it onto the shortlist three times in collaboration with Delta Airlines and Airbus, with exciting innovations in the areas of catering and cabin cleanliness. ●



3

JURY PROCESS AND AWARD CATEGORIES

In February 2026, an international jury of 27 experts will select the three finalists in each of the eight categories: Accessibility, Breakthrough Start-ups, Cabin Concepts, Cabin Technologies, IFEC & Digital Services, Passenger Comfort, Sustainable Cabin and University.

The Crystal Cabin Award 2026 winners will be honoured on the evening of 14 April at the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce. All finalists will present their innovations during the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg (14-16 April).



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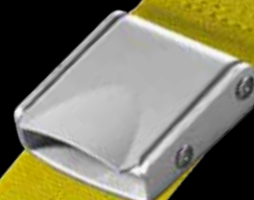
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A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

Pascal Parant, group chief commercial and marketing officer at Vallair, explains how circular-economy principles now underpin modern aircraft retirement

There are around 32,000 commercial aircraft in service or storage today, each representing substantial lifetime asset value.

Aviation has long pursued environmental virtue through both new programmes and incremental optimisation, with platforms such as the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 evolving over decades while retaining some common parts across generations.

This longevity has created two distinct end-of-life pathways. Older 'n-2' aircraft are dismantled and transformed into scrap metal or repurposed objects. More recent generations, however, continue to yield high-value components. Their engines, APUs, landing gears and LRUs can be overhauled, recertified and returned to airline maintenance cycles.

Increasingly, this applies to 'n-1' aircraft and even to 'n', the newest generation: more than a dozen A320neo airframes with GTF engines were parted out in the past year, their components helping ease supply-chain pressures.

Today, up to 95% of an aircraft's mass can be reused, recycled or valorised. Yet recycling carries ESG and legal responsibilities: aircraft contain hazardous fluids, metals, batteries, composites and even small radioactive sources. Under European law, the final owner of the aircraft is responsible for compliant dismantling, making proper teardown an environmental, regulatory and safety requirement under EASA, ICAO Annex 16 and EU waste directives.

Economic and ESG value

Using overhauled components (USM) reduces CO₂ emissions by 50-90% depending on the part – a key principle of the circular economy promoted by the EU, ICAO and AFRA.

Financially, an end-of-life narrowbody can generate anywhere from \$2.5 million to \$8 million in



recovered value, with engines contributing 70-85%. Amid global shortages, returns can be realised within 6-12 months, while re-using green time on engines and landing gear can deliver 15-30% extra value in the final months of operation.

USM also shields airlines from rising OEM catalogue prices, which have increased 8-15% annually since 2022. Operators can cut maintenance costs by 20-40%, while lessors benefit from value preservation when assets are returned off-lease or unserviceable.

Vallair's role

Vallair supports aircraft through their full lifecycle: base maintenance, storage, component MRO and teardown. Its Montpellier site specialises in narrowbody maintenance and limited dismantling, while its Châteauroux facility offers narrowbody and widebody base maintenance, long-term storage and full teardown capability.

Vallair ensures aircraft deliver maximum value with minimum environmental impact, from first flight to final teardown. ●

32k

Aircraft in use or in storage at the present time

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A photograph of an airplane cabin interior, viewed from the aisle looking towards the front. The cabin is dimly lit with a strong blue light emanating from the overhead luggage bins and the front of the cabin, creating a futuristic atmosphere. The seats are dark and arranged in rows on both sides of the aisle.

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