

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

Now well-established as the 'must attend' event for the passenger experience industry, Aircraft Interiors Expo's (AIX) event manager, **Polly Magraw** explains why 2016 is set to be a record year.

Aircraft **EXPO**[®]
interiors
5-7 APRIL 2016
HAMBURG MESSE | GERMANY

From 5-7 April, 16,000 visitors, including executives from more than 180 airlines, are expected to pass through the doors of the Hamburg Messe to attend this global event. Over 530 exhibitors, including 60 present for the first time in 2016, will be showcasing products ranging from inflight entertainment and connectivity systems to seating and lighting to energy efficient materials and components.

AIX is just one part of the Passenger Experience Week in 2016. This opens on 4th April with the Passenger Experience Conference (PEC), where executives from Alitalia, Airbus, Bombardier, Zodiac and many other industry leading companies will offer their views and invite debate about the future of the global passenger experience industry.

The following day will also see the opening of World Travel Catering and Onboard Services Expo (WTCE), which is co-located with AIX in Hamburg. WTCE offers a platform for

BELOW: The aerospace industry is fast approaching a paradigm shift in creating the ultimate passenger experience

professionals across the transport industry to source product innovations for retail and hospitality services and will welcome exhibitors such as LSG Sky Chefs, Global Inflight Products among others.

The three events together create the platform that sets the agenda for our industry and the future of the aircraft cabin: from seats to in-flight entertainment and connectivity (IFEC), in-flight hospitality to retail - the overall passenger experience. AIX this year takes place against a backdrop of



continuing growth in the global airline sector, with a growth in passenger numbers and sustained profitability forecast for 2016. According to IATA, almost \$750 billion will be spent on air transport in 2016, with growth in passenger numbers forecast to grow by 6.9%, well above the average 5.5% of the past 20 years.

The importance of aircraft interiors also continues to grow, with two thirds of respondents in IATA's 2015 Global Passenger Survey ranking aircraft quality and interior as a key factor in their perception of an airline brand.

Airlines and the wider industry are clearly recognising this, with spend on IFEC alone expected to reach \$6 billion from now until end of the decade. Companies are also increasingly focussing their efforts on collaborating with their peers. Seat manufacturers are working closely with IFEC, galleys and other component providers, using the combined expertise of different manufacturers to design integrated products which take the passenger experience to the next dimension.

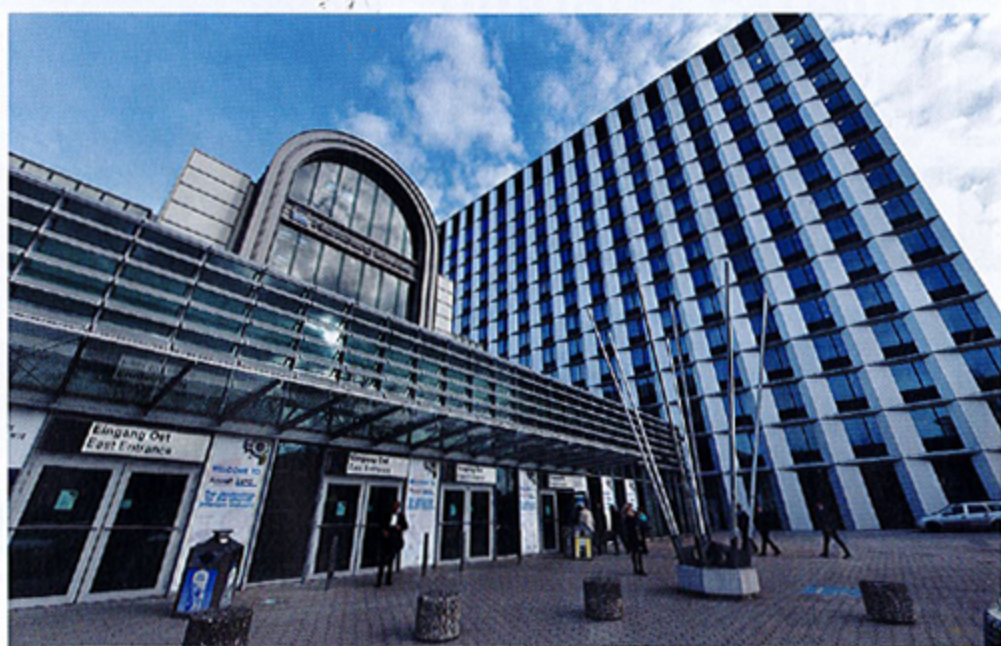
Let us entertain you

Passengers today expect to stay connected and entertained in the same way in flight as they do on the ground. In-flight apps are central to this as almost all passengers now travel with personal devices, from iPads and tablets to iPhones and smartphones. Long-haul flyers, and increasingly short haul passengers also, now have access to a multitude of entertainment options, from films to live television, newspapers to interactive games.

The physical design of cabins is also changing to accommodate this. Seat manufacturers such as Zodiac and Recaro are developing holders for personal tablets on tray tables, and the popularity of personalised embedded screens in seating has shown the influence that technology has across all aspects of the cabin.

Technology and connectivity isn't just changing the flight itself, but enhancing the entire passenger experience from departures to arrivals. Monarch Airlines, for example, has introduced a new service that links with Apple smart watches enabling passengers to buy duty free items, order food for their flight or check in.

Staying connected is now a key priority for travellers, and a major consideration when selecting a carrier. No wonder then that airlines are seeking to drive consideration by introducing unique IFE features for their passengers. Take Virgin



ABOVE The Aircraft Interiors Expo takes place in Hamburg from 5-7 April

BELOW Polly Magraw, Aircraft Interiors Expo event manager

America's partnership with Netflix for example, #NetflixOnboard enables their passengers to live stream their favourite shows in the air. Another example is Panasonic Avionics' Companion app which integrates fully with airlines' IFE systems, allowing passengers to select films and build playlists for their journey.

Take comfort

The aviation industry is expected to grow 4.6% a year for the next twenty years. It will need more than 30,000 aircraft to meet its primary objective - transporting passengers from A to B.

However, all airlines, particularly low cost carriers, must not only look to maximise passenger numbers but must also ensure their passengers are comfortable and entertained, especially in today's marketplace where consumers are highly selective and price sensitive. This level of comfort comes from an uninterrupted, seamless experience - something that is increasingly becoming the expectation of passengers.

Collaboration is central to achieving that seamless experience and manufacturers are working together to offer an enhanced level of comfort and service combined. For example, Vision Systems' recent partnership with AAR to improve electronically dimmable windows (EDW) technology in-flight is a common-sense, creature comfort that enhances the passenger experience. Developments like this enable airlines to strengthen their brand through an enhanced product offering, driving greater customer loyalty and retention.

Collaboration also enables the

industry to develop new steps forward in the passenger experience. A recent example is the Waterfront concept business class seat. With B/E Aerospace's Super Diamond seat as the platform, it includes a full privacy door, customised lighting, climate control and a Panasonic Avionics 24-inch HD 4K touchscreen monitor connected to smartphones. Whilst still a concept, it clearly shows the prospects of providing 360° passenger comfort.

Collaborating is an excellent way of driving innovation, and combines the strengths of several firms to develop world-beating products. The future of air travel is about taking care of passengers in a more holistic way - offering them convenience, comfort and a novel experience on board - and collaboration is key to achieving that.

Personalise your journey

The aerospace industry is fast approaching a paradigm shift in creating the ultimate passenger experience, with both manufacturers and airlines recognising the value in providing passengers with a seamless journey with no interruption to their lives on the ground.

Leveraging advances in connectivity and IFEC, airlines are increasingly able to attract customers through innovative features that give them the maximum control over their journey, and most importantly, a personalised journey.

Whilst the cost of travel will always be a major consideration, today's passengers care about the quality of their experience and whether it meets their individual needs and tomorrow's passenger's will expect that experience to be a seamless and personalised one. www.aircraftinteriorsexpo.com

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