
En Route's force for good

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UK-based airline catering specialist [En Route International](#) has revealed more details of its new sustainability program developed for its airline customers.

At the recent WTCE expo in Hamburg, Robert Dalboth, Managing Director of En Route, explained the reasoning behind the announcement of the strategy, dubbed “Four the Future.”

“We’ve been working on environmentally friendly products for some time without there being a framework or structure,” he told *PAX International*. “Firstly, it’s come from a definite push from the industry - our customers are mentioning sustainability credentials more and more. And secondly, it’s important how we do things at En Route.” This isn’t just in reference to the company’s attitude towards the environment - Dalboth is speaking about En Route as a whole.

“We obsess about doing things the right way, so this year we’ve spent a lot of time on our mental wellbeing throughout the business and, always, we’ve done a lot of charity work,” he explained. “We want to be a force for good and a responsible corporate citizen, and certainly when we’re looking at feedback from our teams, who are the younger generation, it’s a real passion of our employees.”

Richard Wake, Creative and Marketing Director, said that the new program is about creating a measurable framework across the company's supply chain, as well as its product development, right through to launching a product.

"It's about reducing our own environmental impact and it's also about helping our customers to meet their own unique environmental targets as well," Wake said. "There are different ways to do these things, and through our initiative we are giving our customers as many options as possible to answer these different questions. Particularly internationally, what works for one airline may not work for another. We have a lot of different products and a lot of different approaches."

En Route has been creating environmentally friendly products for years, so it's not a new thing for the company, continued Wake. "I think there has been an enormous step change across the industry over the past few years and you can see it in abundance at the show this year. I think it's fantastic."

Dalboth said En Route was focused not just on the environment but also its employees, customers and suppliers. As he explained: "We want everyone to be engaged in the journey that we're on. When we listen to our employees, they want to give up their time to help local charities, and to give our food waste to charities. It's about how to feel proud of the products we're selling." This, he noted, is a concern of a growing workplace demographic.

"Millennials and the younger generation can't feel proud about making a product that's damaging to the environment," Dalboth pointed out. "It might make us money but it won't resonate with them."

The four pillars of En Route's environmental strategy are: Reduce, Remove, Replace and Reimagine. Examples of Reduce include using less packaging without affecting the performance of a food product, as the company has done with its cheese program. "We've managed to take out 20 tonnes of waste from our cheese program with Emirates Business Class by reducing packaging," Dalboth said.

Remove is about taking out materials that are damaging to the environment - items that take a long time to biodegrade or can't be recycled - and replacing them with alternatives that don't need separation. Wake cites the example of its recyclable and compostable snackbox, which incorporates only two bits of packaging instead of eight or nine, as in a traditional box.

Reimagine centers on innovative collaborations with customers and suppliers and "really getting into detail with service onboard," explained Wake. "It could be a change of service, taking weight out, taking material out, packaging things in a different way through a change of service. It's about understanding service and how the crew serve the product, how it's loaded onto the aeroplane."

En Route accomplishes this via its innovation team, with members picked from every department; the team works through the entire development of a product or service to achieve the very best outcome and validate the product at every stage of development. The group is just one of the company's many programs that have led to more efficient, effective products with the bonus of an overall happier, more validated workforce.

For more information about En Route's initiatives and offerings, visit its [website](#).