

AirFi celebrates 15 years of onboard evolution



Laura Rösches, CEO, AirFi

Last week, [AirFi](#) celebrated 15 years of innovation, growth and partnership across the aviation industry. Over the years, The Netherlands-based company has evolved, from a vision to transform onboard operations to a global platform powering inflight entertainment, onboard retail, connectivity and crew solutions for airlines.

When it was founded, AirFi's goal was to make life easier for cabin crew and create more engaging experiences for passengers. Throughout its tenure, the company has marked milestones from pioneering portable wireless streaming technology and connected crew solutions to introducing in-seat ordering, expanding LEO connectivity capabilities and supporting more than 80 airline and transportation operators worldwide. AirFi attributes these achievements to both its customers and its team.

Looking back on its trajectory, AirFi has evolved to meet industry demand, developing a clear focus on delivering intelligent solutions that are part of a connected cabin ecosystem.

As CEO Laura Rösches tells *PAX Tech*, "The passenger experience is no longer judged by what sits in

front of the seat; it is judged by how intelligently entertainment, retail, payments, connectivity and operations work together. The winners will be the airlines that see onboard technology as a commercial platform, not a collection of separate products.”

Shifting airline priorities

While AirFi is now focused on supporting its airline customers in delivering this cohesive experience, Rösge explains that 15 years ago, the inflight connectivity experience was largely divided into two separate worlds: inflight entertainment and onboard retail.

“Airlines invested in both, but they were often treated as standalone products rather than part of a broader digital strategy,” she says, noting that there was also widespread belief that each airline needed bespoke technology built around its own processes.

Today, Rösge sees two clear approaches emerging among carriers.

“One group still prioritizes highly customized solutions, accepting the complexity and limitations that inevitably come with them,” she explains. “The other is taking a more strategic approach, choosing best-in-class specialist partners and buying technology based on the outcomes it delivers, whether that is a much higher ancillary revenue or contribution margin, better pax engagement, greater operational efficiency or a faster time to market.”

Rösge believes the second approach will increasingly define the aviation industry.

“Airlines do not need to own every piece of technology, they need trusted partners who innovate continuously and deliver measurable business value,” she affirms.

AirFi as an ideal partner

AirFi is positioning itself as an “easy to work with” partner, with Rösge calling the company an extension of the airline team, rather than another system they have to manage.

She says while customization was once the default for connectivity and onboard payment systems, airlines have moved away from that approach due to cost, downtime and lack of scalability.

“Now we see more airlines asking a much simpler question: what do we actually need this to do for the business? And then choosing solutions based on that, plus the ability to add or remove as they need,” Rösge explains.

A big part of that shift is that the focus has moved away from adding more features to removing friction around payments and onboard retail.

“If a passenger wants to buy something, it should be as straightforward as possible, no unnecessary steps, all payments that are regionally relevant, no complicated processes for crew, and no barriers that get in the way of the transaction,” she explains.

Airlines are moving away from standalone entertainment, retail, payment and operational systems in favor of integrated platforms that work together seamlessly.

“In reality, they are all part of the same passenger experience onboard,” Rösge says. “For us, that is where most of our development is going over the next year: making integration tighter and deployment simpler, so airlines can get value without having to spend time or effort stitching systems together.”

15 years on, AirFi is not just reflecting on where it has been, but where the company is going in terms

of personalization and delivering a seamless, connected passenger experience.

“At the end of the day, our aim is pretty simple: make it easy for airlines to use us, keep things flexible without adding complexity and help drive more value out of every flight,” Rösger concludes.