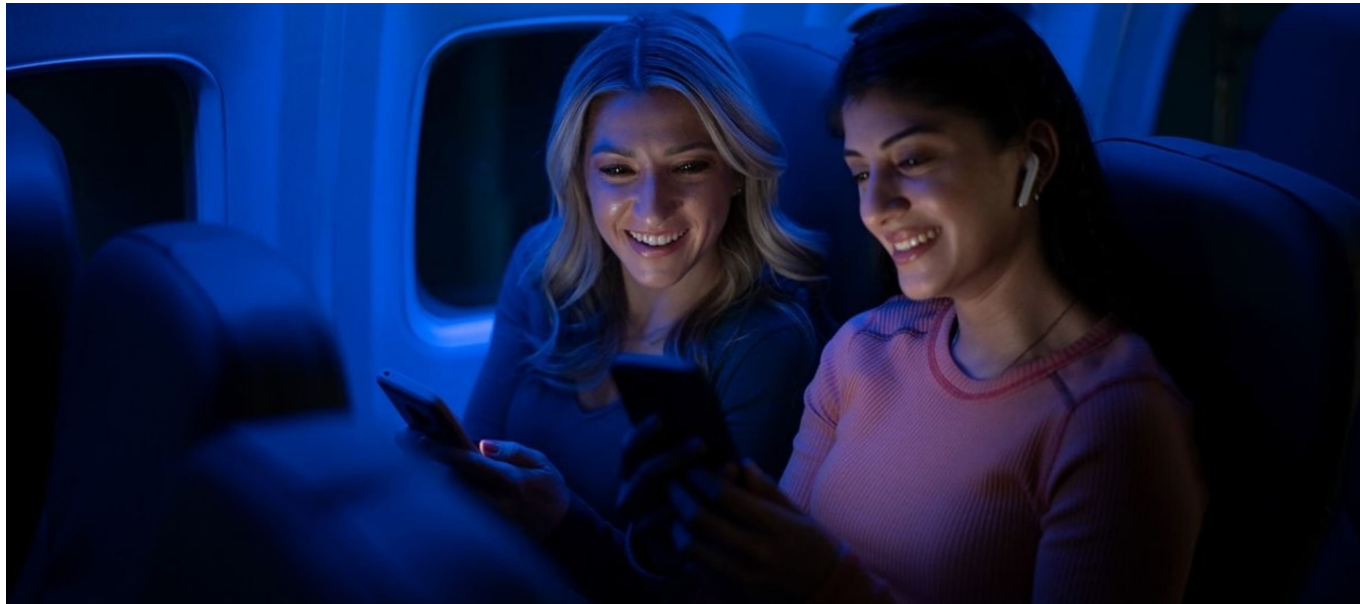


Viasat: Making inflight connectivity work for airlines

This is a special feature from the [April 2025 AIX issue](#) of PAX Tech Magazine, on [page 38](#).



Investment in ultra-reliable, robust satellite connectivity is a must to power more demanding passenger expectations

Whilst inflight connectivity (IFC) is a hygiene factor for the majority of passengers, for airlines it is a Pandora's box—with different business models and pricing strategies available for providing the ultimate IFC experience. Fortunately, companies such as [Viasat](#) are on hand to help airlines make sense of these options.

Speaking to *PAX Tech*, Laney Hind, Director, Airline Programs at Viasat, Inc., says that the premise here is a good one: inflight connectivity is no longer just about providing internet access. It has become a key component of airline differentiation and even revenue generation.

“We often say at Viasat, ‘If you know one airline, you know one airline.’ Each customer has varying priorities, objectives and goals, and it is really important that we understand these. Having provided inflight connectivity for more than a decade, we have listened intently to these goals and now offer a variety of business models to attain and even exceed them.”



Laney Hind, Director of Airline Programs, Viasat

Hind explains that Viasat offers a range of business models to airline customers, along with service level agreements (SLAs) so an airline can have confidence it will get what is agreed upon. The models range from full, fast and free, which is often tied to customer retention and brand loyalty, to an ad-sponsored model, whereby an airline can offer access to free Wi-Fi after a passenger views an ad, thereby offsetting costs.

“The process starts with the airline’s ambitions, however,” she says. “By empowering the customer to create the connectivity experience that is best for its goals, we can from there collaborate on a model that can generate success for all.”

Valued service

Success is not just measured in financial terms. As Hind says, an airline’s ability to maximize IFC services are myriad depending on its goals. “And often, customers are measuring against a variety of metrics—return on investment (ROI), improved net promoter score (NPS), loyalty, etc.,” she states.

For example, a low-cost carrier might have goals more aligned to offsetting investments in inflight connectivity or generating revenue from it. This can take many shapes ranging from ad-supported Wi-Fi sessions to offsetting fraud by having connectivity onboard to handle real-time retail purchases.

As Hind observes though, many airlines tie the inflight connectivity services to NPS scores, which is a powerful metric and shows how tied in the Wi-Fi experience can be to the overall brand sentiment. If loyalty is a key driver, it can be measured by engagement with loyalty programs. Delta, for example, reported in February that more than 3.5 million new SkyMiles members joined the program in just two years through Delta Sync Wi-Fi. IFC services also generate unique opportunities to personalize the passenger experience and engage with passengers in a more intentional way.

“We are seeing more and more personalization strategies across the industry,” she notes.

According to the Viasat 2024 Passenger Experience Survey, 87 percent of passengers are prepared to watch ads in order to have free Wi-Fi onboard. According to Hind, this willingness to watch a short ad for access to free Wi-Fi presents a compelling business case for airlines, as advertisers can leverage route-specific ad targeting.

“For example, advertisers can target flights into a certain city during a large event—say a marathon or the Super Bowl, or can promote destination-specific offers that, based on the flight’s destination, are sure to reach an appropriate audience. Viasat Ads is our platform for airlines that decide to pursue this approach. Additionally, Viasat’s bot-free environments ensure that ad impressions are genuinely reaching human passengers, which maximizes engagement and return on investment.”