

Viasat marks one year anniversary of Inmarsat acquisition at AIX



Maik Brückner, Director, Commercial Air - Europe at Viasat Inc.

On the first anniversary of [Viasat](#)'s acquisition of Inmarsat, the company returned to the Aircraft Interiors Expo (AIX) to showcase its latest connectivity solutions. This year, the company's display 2

focused on its new satellite terminals, its approach to GEO and NGSO and a multi-orbit approach in the interoperability of its networks.

Viasat is currently flying on 3,600 aircraft across 60 airline customers, a point of pride for the company that was on display via an interactive screen depicting the demand at AIX.

As Maik Brückner, Director, Commercial Air – Europe at Viasat Inc., tells *PAX Tech*, “We are prepared for the trend of more airlines moving to free connectivity, but that takes many forms. There are a lot of different ways to offer it and promote passenger engagement.”

This year at AIX, Viasat brought a completely new preview of its terminal strategy, updating its GM-40 terminal, with the addition of a dual modem, which has a Viasat modem card and software defined radio, to ensure it can tap into all of the company’s satellite assets, the legacy buyer side pieces, the legacy inverse side pieces, the partner satellites and potential NGSO partners.

“We are future-proofing this terminal to give our airlines the highest flexibility in the market,” says Brückner. Ultimately the goal is to allow passengers to seamlessly roam between different networks, a milestone that Brückner says Viasat is very excited about.

He explains that the antenna requires the highest touch on the aircraft. If an airline does not need to replace or adjust it and can simply upgrade the in-cabin equipment, it is beneficial to their bottom line.

Brückner notes that pending aviation certification, the dual modem will soon be part of the company’s main product, with expectations for it to be available late next year.

“The airlines are also excited about it because future-proofing releases them from lots of pressure when it comes to cost or aircraft downtime,” says Brückner.

Brückner adds that the aviation industry is moving beyond connectivity as a means of transmission, now enabling airlines to layer other services on top to better engage passengers inflight.

Brückner notes that these services might come in the form of advertising or connectivity, with AI functioning as part of the digital portfolio.

“The beautiful part for us is that it’s built on the backbone of reliable connectivity,” he says.

Brückner notes that airlines and passengers are expecting a high quality of service across the board when it comes to connectivity, calling it the baseline for all other digital products and services. He says that it presents new monetization opportunities for the airlines when they know how to take advantage of connectivity systems.

Brückner adds, “How they choose to deliver that inflight product to the passenger is really up to them, whether that’s leveraging AI tools or enabling free connectivity through various different models or advertising.”

A year on from the Viasat and Inmarsat acquisition, the company is poised for further airline partnership announcements in the latter half of the 2024. Most recently, Viasat was selected by airlines including Korean Air, Royal Jordanian Airlines and Icelandair.

“Last year at AIX the ink on the acquisition wasn’t really even dry yet. We had two booths, the team was coming together. It’s kind of wild a year later to take a look at what we’ve accomplished this year in terms of integration,” Brückner concludes.