

Viasat's multi-orbit roadmap meets global demand



Don Buchman, Senior Vice President and GM, Commercial Aviation at Viasat, at APEX Global EXPO 2025 in Long Beach, California

With the upcoming launch of ViaSat-3 F2, the second satellite in [Viasat's](#) three-part ViaSat-3 geostationary constellation, Don Buchman, Senior Vice President and GM, Commercial Aviation at Viasat, tells *PAX Tech* how striving to meet the demand for year-on-year growth since Viasat launched ViaSat-3 F1 two years ago supports the supplier's roadmap for multi-orbit connectivity.

"There is an insatiable demand for data, ever increasing by 10, 20, 30 percent year-over-year," Buchman reveals. "For us to keep up, we have always had this multi-year, multi-decade approach to capacity."

With ViaSat-3, he says there are no more compromises for the passenger.

"It is keeping up and allowing our customers to deliver free inflight connectivity," he affirms.

What does free inflight connectivity mean? For Buchman, it means more devices on more aircraft for more people. And that each device or user is not limited by bandwidth.

“That is the linchpin for multi-orbit,” he says, explaining that with Telesat’s future multi-orbit approach, once there is enough capacity in high-demand areas, latency-sensitive applications can be supported by overlaying low-latency services on top of the broader high-capacity network.

“Coverage-wise, it is complimentary. Capacity-wise, it is complimentary in terms of experience,” he adds.

Fly-Fi for free

One such airline that has been delivering connectivity to its passengers via Viasat for more than a decade is [JetBlue](#). Recently, Viasat announced a multi-year extension of service on JetBlue aircraft already equipped with its latest technology, plus a partnership to install new aircraft with Viasat Amara, the supplier’s next-gen IFC solution.

Buchman credits the success of the longstanding partnership to the airline’s strong brand and its ability, or as he says, “sixth sense,” to anticipate passenger needs before they are even expressed.

He highlights JetBlue’s distinctive route and cost structures, noting that Viasat collaborates with the airline to deliver a product that enhances the passenger experience while remaining financially sustainable.

“More recently, we worked with [DIRECTV](#) and brought live television directly to the seatbacks on JetBlue’s new aircraft, like the 220s,” he reveals. “It has just been fantastic. We are really excited to extend our relationship with JetBlue.”

Viasat Amara sees global uptake

Viasat Amara was selected by [Aeromexico](#), [Etihad](#), [ANA](#) and [LATAM Airlines](#) this summer. Buchman points out that in addition to being selected by a geographically diverse range of airlines, the IFC solution is also being tapped for a broad range of regional versus long-haul routes, speaking to its global appeal.

He also underscores the evolving mindset of both airlines and passengers when it comes to connectivity onboard. Buchman says that in the past two years, there has been accelerated uptake in the international market, where Wi-Fi is no longer just a requirement that must be satisfied onboard, but becomes a key part of an airline’s brand.

“Passengers complain if you do not have it. If you do have it and it does not work, they are going to complain even more,” he emphasizes. “Now it is as important, if not more important, than food and other amenities onboard.”

When it comes to IFE trends such as inflight streaming and multi-personal electronic device use onboard, Buchman says Viasat Amara is fulfilling demands.

“Viasat Amara is bringing in more capacity, more coverage, more resiliency around the world,” he says.

Viasat Amara enables airlines to customize inflight content to reflect their brand, offering live streaming and creating opportunities for retail partnerships.

“For example, an airline can bring in a streaming service that is looking to get awareness or gain customers. They can offer a promotion onboard and say, offer free for this type of service, either through the seatback, or personal electronic device or through the portal. That brings value to the third party to get more customers,” he explains.

This model benefits passengers by introducing them to new content they can continue enjoying after the flight, while also creating value for airlines by offsetting costs through third-party partners eager to pay for customer acquisition.

“Our roadmap is basically the lowest unit production cost of bandwidth. We are driving down the cost of bandwidth such that we can deliver more for the same economics, for the same price,” Buchman tells *PAX*.

Connectivity meets entertainment

With airlines focused on personalization, Buchman highlights the chance to enhance the inflight experience by offering live sporting events—whether through direct partnerships with leagues or via digital streaming services.

“You can personalize what is happening on board,” he says, highlighting Viasat’s Connected Partner Platform, where the supplier sells space on its server to third-party apps. “It could be food and beverage to the seat. It could be a moving map. You can basically bring in your own apps.”

“As this convergence of connectivity and entertainment continues to meld into one, the connectivity players are the ones that are really bringing that to service. That is what we are going to continue to invest in. Now, you really cannot tell the difference between connectivity and entertainment.”