

Trend hunting: Industry experts weigh in on lighting trends expected in 2021

This is a special feature from *PAX Tech*'s February 2021 [Color Schemes, Lighting and Connectivity digital edition](#).



Blue branded lighting by Cobalt Aerospace in the Joon cabin. The color blue is a color that broadly communicates trust, reliability and professionalism. Credit: Joon

Lighting is used strategically in hospitality settings to communicate with visitors, whether it acts as a guide around a venue, indicates quiet time or enhances the visual aesthetics of a space. The same rings true for cabin interior lighting. With the pandemic strongly suggesting an uptick in travel-related anxiety, interior lighting designers and suppliers are finding ways to curb the unease to meet customer requests.

[Cobalt Aerospace](#) is seeing demand for white light that refreshes a dated cabin appearance, and [Lufthansa Technik](#) has developed cabin lighting that shifts with new time zones with its partner [jetlite](#).

Sophisticated selections

Cobalt Aerospace has noticed an increase in operators favoring more sophisticated hues for cabins, Gary Girard, President of Cobalt Aerospace, tells *PAX Tech*. Strong colors remain popular during boarding, but airlines are opting for more relaxing colors inflight, such as muted purples and blues.

These colors help passengers feel reassured and comfortable, Girard says.

The designer and manufacturing company offers LED cabin lighting in bespoke colors with its Cobalt Spectrum drop-in mood lighting system. Beyond enhancing the passenger experience, LED lighting systems offer long-term operational benefits and cost savings, Girard explains.

With Cobalt Spectrum, airlines can choose lighting scenes that complement brand colors, enhance passenger sleep and the appearance of meals, and create designs such as Northern Lights. Cobalt Spectrum also includes Age Correction Technology, a set of algorithms to correct LEDs as they age. The color and light wash in the cabin will be consistent, eliminating the risk of patchy and faded light that can come with alternative and older systems.

MINI Q&A!

PAX Tech: Of more than 16 million LED colors, why are some colors more popular than others?

Gary Girard, President, Cobalt Aerospace: Certain colors are popular for various reasons; most often based on branding, color theory, science and trends:

BRANDING

- Airlines want interior lighting schemes to match, enhance or complement the brand
- Industry branding is dominated by colors like blue, red, green and yellow, and interiors design often corresponds to this

COLOR THEORY

- Airlines choose these colors for the positive connotations, the traits they want a customer to associate with the brand
- For example, blue is a color that broadly communicates trust, reliability and professionalism
- Red communicates passion, excitement and importance

SCIENCE

- Science proves that light has a huge influence on the human body and Cobalt Aerospace helps airlines select color journeys that are in tune with natural biorhythms
- Poorly lit cabins can mean long-haul passengers struggle to regulate their sleep and wake cycle, leading to ill health and a poor passenger experience
- Calming, muted colors like lavender can be used to encourage the body to produce melatonin, leading to a restful sleep
- Pale sunrise colors can be used to gently ease the body into wakefulness

TRENDS

- Brand and interior will always be influenced by trends within the aviation industry and as part of a broader setting
- With Cobalt Spectrum's Virtual Light Modes, operators can add and remove an unlimited number of light sequences, ensuring the cabin stays up to date with the latest lighting trends [P](#)

Q&A with Cobalt Aerospace President Gary Girard

LED systems will outlast fluorescent tubes several times over, Girard says. Because the lifespan of an LED unit is longer than fluorescent, installing an LED system contributes less landfill waste as units need to be changed and replaced less often. Unlike fluorescent tubes, Cobalt Spectrum units contain no harmful mercury.

“LED lighting is the perfect choice for airlines as it will benefit the operator from the very first flight and will also continue to improve the passenger experience, as well as lessen operational costs in the longer term,” Girard says.

Everything is going to be all-white

Cobalt Aerospace is seeing operators keen to include all-white schemes.

“A high-quality white light wash can go a long way to make the interior of an aircraft look fresher and newer, particularly in the case of older aircraft,” Girard says. “This can benefit operators by extending the life of a cabin design and giving passengers confidence in the aircraft they are flying on.



Cobalt Aerospace tells *PAX Tech* that many operators are seeking all-white color schemes in the cabin, which can help refresh the interior

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The industry’s recovery post-pandemic will be all about rebuilding passenger trust and encouraging customers to feel safe when traveling by air. Creating a comforting cabin ambience will be key to reassuring customers, and light certainly has a big part to play in creating an environment that feels clean and safe,” he says.

Light and rhythm

Thoughtful lighting also helps benefit passengers’ moods long after touching down. Together with its partner jetlite, Lufthansa Technik offers cabin lighting scenarios that can shift passengers’ inner clock up to three hours.

“The trend goes beyond mood lighting to chronobiological effective lighting that reduces jet lag,” Dr. Achim Leder, Chief Executive Officer of jetlite, tells *PAX Tech*.



Together with its partner jetlite, Lufthansa Technik offers cabin lighting scenarios that can shift passengers’ inner clock up to three hours. Credit: Lufthansa

This is achieved by providing a specific light color at the right time, explains Niels Dose, Product Sales & Key Account Manager at Lufthansa Technik. By helping to adapt biorhythms – a recurring cycle in human function, such as sleeping and waking – to the destination time zone, passengers will feel less jetlag and have an overall better experience during and post-flight, Dose says.

At the core of the solution for line fit and retrofit is an algorithm developed by jetlite that focuses on chronobiology. Considering flight parameters such as routes, directions and time zones, the algorithm yields optimal lighting scenarios for increased overall passenger health and wellbeing. For example, warm light with a high proportion of red for relaxation is supplied during periods of rest, whereas cooler light with a high proportion of blue color provides stimulation for more active phases, Leder says. jetlite is developing an app that gives passengers recommendations on the ways to reduce jetlag at every step of the journey.