

Guest column: Amenity kits - The sustainability challenge

This is a special feature from *PAX International's 2022 Amenities & Comfort digital edition with bonus Food & Beverage coverage*, on [page 16](#).



Plane Talking Products is working closely with natural, vegan, plastic-free cosmetic brand Scence to create sustainable personal care options for amenity kits

You can't talk about any inflight product today without considering its afterlife. Will it be thrown away? If so, how and where? Can it be tamper-proofed and reused? Is data available to show what products are most popular to inform future product selection?

There is no question that amenity kits are going green. The days of bags full of stuff that's neither wanted nor used are over. Passengers expect more care and attention: in what they get, how they can use it and - crucially - in what happens to it afterwards.

I see pockets of good ideas but nobody has sorted the truly sustainable amenity kit - yet.

[Plane Talking](#) recently carried out a detailed review of the 'classic' kit, analyzing every aspect of materials, usage, and disposal. We wanted to ensure we didn't lose sight of the real meaning of sustainable in this context, so we took it back to basics.



Alison Wells, Co-Founder and Director, Plane Talking Products

Rotable versus disposable?

It's far better to be given a useful reusable bag made from a durable material with a clear secondary use. A handy smartphone pouch or lunch bag that encourages the passenger to take it and reuse ticks a lot of boxes: it takes the airline brand into the home, results in less waste on board, and is a product with a post-flight afterlife.

Is it truly sustainable?

Many airlines have already switched to bamboo or wheat straw contents. But it's important not to forget ancillary items: nylon bristles, plastic tubes, zippers, hygiene wraps. To be properly sustainable, all aspects have to be considered.

What's new?

The latest innovations in personal care can take time to become standard in our daily lives. Shampoo bars are one example. It takes a while to get used to the idea but once you do, there's no going back. How about toothpaste or mouthwash tablets instead of brushes, tubes and bottles? Plane Talking is working closely with natural, vegan, plastic-free cosmetic brand [Science](#) that is really at the forefront of the revolution in personal care. In addition, innovation in materials such as seaweed and coffee grounds are rapidly developing into usable materials we can apply to amenity kits.

Of course, cost remains a factor, as well as a deep understanding of what's "good" and what's "bad." But we need to find a way forward.

One answer to this is Plane Talking's work with the [Aviation Sustainability Forum](#). Its collaborative research projects delve deep into products, supply chains and waste management to help airlines and suppliers establish a database of materials that are both sustainable and cost-effective. This work in progress is a major step in the right direction.

One thing is clear: a focus on sustainability means a great opportunity to breathe new life into the amenity kit.