

# Guest Column: The trendy trinity of amenities

This is a special feature from *PAX International's* April 2021 [Amenities & Comfort digital edition](#).

In this guest column, Simon Ward, Director of TravelPlus Insight and Founder of TravelPlus Airline Amenity Awards, discusses three key trends in passenger amenities; hygiene, wellness and sustainability>.



WESSCO International supplied this line of products for JetBlue

## Setting the scene

As I reflect on the changing landscape of the world of onboard amenities, the last decade could well be remembered as the Golden Era for passenger amenities and the luxury branded amenity kit. Our 2019 TravelPlus Airline Amenity Awards featured a plethora of luxury brands that had partnered with airlines to produce some of the greatest kits we have witnessed in our 10-year history.

It goes without saying I have read numerous articles and *have* had discussions with airlines and suppliers over the past 12 months about the future of the amenity kit; design, functionality and

purpose. Airlines continue to reduce stockpiles of sleep suits, amenity kits and numerous other onboard items as a result of the pandemic, with some selling items online to develop new revenue streams whilst reducing stock.

However, I'm not sure how I feel about selling the exclusive award-winning First Class Lalique amenity kit for just \$74 that is currently listed on Singapore Airlines' online store. My view is that unlike offering other cabin class products for sale the selling of exclusive First Class amenities devalues First Class passenger gifts. Given the current state of the industry, I fully accept the reasons why airlines are exploring this avenue.



Simon Ward, Director of TravelPlus Insight and Founder of TravelPlus Airline Amenity Awards

Suppliers were quick to pivot at the start of the pandemic to meet the demands for PPE for passengers and cabin crew. I applaud the industry for showing outstanding initiative and innovation as we witnessed the birth of PPE kits. [FORMIA](#) launched the Clean Kit range; [WESSCO International](#) introduced the TravelShield brand; Matrix the BeCleanCo brand. [Linstol](#) teamed up with [Aerocare](#) and household brand [Dettol](#) was introduced onboard by both SAUDIA and British Airways.

A major shift of focus away from sustainability has inevitably occurred as more plastics are used in PPE kits and we are yet to witness the full impact of this. This is not purely a product of this industry 2

but a global problem that must be urgently addressed.

### Hygiene, wellness and sustainability

Today's key focus for onboard passenger amenities is hygiene, wellness and sustainability. Interestingly a [TravelPlus Insight](#) survey carried out in 2019 found that more than 80 percent of Business Class kits contained plastic items from packaging to combs and toothbrushes. I am confident airlines will quickly change to using more sustainable and eco-friendly materials such as recycled paper packaging, bamboo and corn starch along with other new materials coming to the market. For the near future I expect PPE kits to continue being provided alongside an existing amenity kit.



PPE kit on Saudia has contents from Dettol, a well-known cleaning supplies company

### Lost luxuries

The future is both exciting and challenging for suppliers as airlines release new tenders and the green shoots of recovery strengthen. A big question is how to incorporate PPE products like hand sanitizers, antiseptic wipes and face masks together with luxury brand cosmetics, socks, eye masks and dental kits all within a desirable and functional bag.

Airlines need to play their part in this circular economy by ensuring the amenity kit bag has a secondary use and/or is collectable. Rotating designs, such as in Business Class, encourages passengers to take them when they leave the aircraft rather than recycling or disposing of them.

Consideration also has to be given to airline and supplier Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. These programs are seen as key market differentiators for business as more consumers look for products from responsible companies.

It comes as little surprise that significant efforts are underway to incorporate sustainability within the supply chain. Add to this the desire to include more passenger wellness products such as

aromatherapy balms, oxygen mists with rehydration powders and tablets. The supplier will be tested to the limit.



The TravelShield line of PPE and amenities on American Airlines

I certainly do not see airlines investing more at this time, but neither is it sustainable for suppliers to have margins continually squeezed. I believe now is the time for airlines to truly evaluate their passenger amenity offering across all classes and be unafraid of change. At the same time, suppliers must educate airlines on materials and products.

As for the future of luxury brand partnerships, the jury is out as airlines must focus on restoring passenger confidence based on safety and wellness. I see airlines offering a more tailored approach. It is not out of the realm of possibility that they could offer passengers a personal choice of amenities prior to boarding, using similar technology in place for onboard meals and I'm sure logistics could be overcome. A number of items, like dental kits, could be placed in lavatories with other items such as socks, eye-masks and hairbrushes, made available only on request.

### Supplier looking at change

FORMIA launched a sustainability strategy last year committed to ensuring that all inflight socks and eye masks will be made from 100 percent recycled PET. Virgin polyester will be changed to recycled PET that will carry the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) certification. To drive the initiative forward, FORMIA is absorbing the additional cost of the material, rendering the move cost neutral for airlines and in turn supporting their sustainability efforts.



The Clean Kit Range from FORMIA

[JetBlue](#) has refreshed Mint Business Class with amenity offerings in collaboration with WESSCO International focused on passenger health and wellbeing. The amenities are unlike any other currently in the skies. WESSCO collaborated with JetBlue and Wanderfuel to design, produce and execute the launch of four route specific kits: Flow, Renewal, Awake and Sleep. Each feature a variety of wellness brands and products. The brands included in each kit will be rotated every quarter ensuring that frequent flyers receive a wide variety of products. This is an industry first, and takes amenity kits to a totally new level helping to ensure passenger wellness. I'm confident that others will be taking a close look at the success of this exciting amenity program.

### **Optimistic and excited**

I am very optimistic and excited about what is to come in this new chapter of onboard passenger amenities, particularly the cherished amenity kit. I'm confident that suppliers will rise to the challenges that lie ahead and airlines will adapt to the demands of their guests. As we all embrace change, I look forward to continuing playing my part and welcoming the day we bring back the TravelPlus Airline Amenity Awards and are together again.