

En Route International streamlines airline catering supply chain for global consistency

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En Route operates global teams, working closely with local suppliers to maintain a stable supply chain

Ensuring consistent quality, cost efficiency, and seamless logistics in airline catering is a remarkable achievement. [En Route International](#), specialist supplier of food and packaging solutions for airlines and airline caterers, has optimized its approach to global sourcing and supply chain management to meet the evolving needs of its airline customers. Andrew Sharp, Supply Chain & Procurement Director at En Route, provides insights into how the company maintains high standards while boosting efficiency.



Andrew Sharp, Supply Chain & Procurement Director, En Route International

Quality across a global supply chain

With a vast supplier network spanning multiple continents, En Route International ensures product consistency through a rigorous quality control process. "Our Technical Food Safety team works alongside Procurement and Product Development to evaluate, select and onboard suppliers," says Sharp. The company implements continuous supplier audits and product surveillance, regularly testing product samples at its offices to uphold industry standards.

En Route operates global teams in the Americas, UAE and APAC, working closely with local suppliers to maintain a stable supply chain. Collaboration with airline and catering customers further strengthens product quality.

"By integrating feedback from caterers and conducting internal product checks, we ensure consistency across every manufacturing site," Sharp says.

Selecting the right suppliers is critical in the highly regulated airline catering industry. En Route follows a balanced scorecard approach, evaluating food safety accreditation, manufacturing processes, facility audits, and product quality, he explains.

"We assess suppliers based on their adherence to specifications, commercial due diligence, and production capabilities, including consistency and flexibility," he says.

Its industry expertise allows En Route to align products with strict airline standards while maintaining long-term relationships with manufacturers. The company also develops bespoke solutions tailored to airline needs.

"By leveraging our knowledge and partnerships, we create products that cater to both individual airline requirements and broader industry standards," Sharp adds.



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Balancing cost with quality

Supply chain fluctuations pose significant challenges for cost management, but En Route remains committed to delivering value without compromising quality by working with long-term partners to drive operational improvements. Rather than relying on short-term transactional relationships, Sharp says the company focuses on strategic partnerships that help control costs.

Supply chain efficiencies are created by leveraging scale synergies and reducing unnecessary expenses while maintaining product quality. The company's guiding principle is to reduce costs, not quality, ensuring that customers receive consistently high-value products despite market fluctuations.

This makes reliability in supply chain management even more essential to prevent delays in airline catering. En Route achieves this through precise demand forecasting and inventory management.

"We create clear demand forecasts to support effective planning and ensure reliable supply," says Sharp. By maintaining inventory in line with expected demand, En Route mitigates risks associated with supply chain disruptions.

Collaboration with airlines and caterers, supported by data-driven forecasting, allows En Route to maintain stock ahead of orders, using a combination of road, sea and air freight to optimize logistics and ensure an efficient supply chain solution.

Innovative sourcing for evolving needs

The airline catering landscape has shifted significantly since the pandemic, requiring suppliers to adapt quickly, Sharp explains.

"Following COVID, global supply chains became unstable, with inconsistent availability and unreliable lead times," he recalls. En Route tackled these challenges by holding significant stock levels, ensuring continuity of service when other suppliers struggled.

As supply chains stabilized, En Route refined its forecasting capabilities, leading to business growth and improved efficiency. "We now hold fewer weeks of inventory while maintaining high service levels globally," Sharp notes.

With airline travel expanding, caterers have struggled to hire staff quickly enough to meet growing demand. En Route has responded with labor-saving solutions, such as pre-packed galley boxes. "These provide passengers with an onboard selection while eliminating the need for caterers to handle packaging and assembly," Sharp says.

Additionally, En Route ships chilled, ambient and frozen products via air and sea freight to various countries, ensuring menu consistency for airlines worldwide.

"We transport premium U.K. and European cheeses to Singapore, offering high-quality selections not available locally," says Sharp, as an example. These cheeses arrive pre-packed in a crew-friendly format, allowing for quick and efficient onboard service.

By maintaining a commitment to quality, cost efficiency and supply chain resilience, En Route continues to enhance the airline catering experience for its customers worldwide.