

SWISS announces departure of Heike Birlenbach after 36 years with Lufthansa Group



Heike Birlenbach, Chief Commercial Officer, SWISS

After 36 years in various leadership positions within the [Lufthansa Group](#), Heike Birlenbach will leave [SWISS](#) and conclude her career within the Group as planned at the end of September. She will then pursue new professional opportunities outside the Lufthansa Group, the July 8 press release said.

Since the beginning of 2024, Birlenbach has served as Chief Commercial Officer of SWISS, overseeing the airline's commercial divisions. In this role, she has further strengthened SWISS's premium positioning and driven forward key strategic initiatives.

Under her leadership, SWISS introduced its new long-haul travel experience, SWISS Senses, further developed its customer strategy and strengthened partnerships in Switzerland. She also championed the digitalization and modernization of passenger services and provided fresh momentum for an even stronger focus on the needs of customers. Through these efforts, Birlenbach has made a significant contribution to the progress SWISS has achieved in recent years in enhancing the passenger experience and further strengthening its premium positioning, the airline said.

Consistent passenger focus

Prior to joining SWISS, Birlenbach held various leadership positions within the Lufthansa Group for many years in London, Amsterdam, Milan, Munich and at the Group headquarters in Frankfurt. Among other responsibilities, she shaped the global sales organization, promoted the digitalization of passenger channels and supported the development of new products and service concepts, always with a strong focus on passengers and high-quality standards.

Jens Fehlinger, CEO, SWISS, said, "Heike Birlenbach has made a significant contribution to SWISS. She has represented our premium ambition with great passion, driven important future topics such as SWISS Senses and the further development of our customer experience, and consistently brought in the perspective of our customers. At the same time, she has been a valued sparring partner and leader for many across the company. For that, I thank her personally and on behalf of SWISS from the bottom of my heart."

As part of the further development of leadership structures within the Lufthansa Group, the Chief Commercial Officer function at airline level will no longer continue in the future, the airline revealed in its statement. Topics relating to the passenger experience at SWISS will be overseen directly by CEO Jens Fehlinger, while SWISS WorldCargo will be assigned to the Finance division. The coming months will be used to further align the organization for the long term and ensure a seamless transition.

After leaving the Group, Birlenbach will remain active and pursue new opportunities outside the Group.