
Aircraft interiors in a digital world

By **Jane Hobson** on | Events



This is a special feature from *PAX Tech's April Aircraft Interiors Expo Hamburg 2020 edition*.



Polly Magraw, Event Director, Aircraft Interiors Expo

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of Aircraft Interiors Expo. In this Q&A, Event Director Polly Magraw tells *PAX Tech* how the digital transformation at the heart of the industry is revolutionizing the passenger experience towards a customer-centric, personalized cabin interior

***PAX Tech:* Can you describe what the future of AIX will look like?**

Polly Magraw: That's the million-dollar question! The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) reveals that every day, the aviation industry transports more than 10 million passengers and predicts that demand for air transport will increase by an average of 4.3 percent over the next 20 years. It's almost impossible to predict how that growth will be played out in terms of the passenger experience and, in turn, AIX.

For instance, if you think back a little more than 10 years ago to what mobile phone technology looked like pre-iPhone, you can see how in just a decade, mobile communications have evolved beyond almost all recognition. What we can predict is that technology will continue to revolutionize air

travel on every level; from making it more sustainable to completely transforming the passenger experience. I'd expect to see the development of the Internet of Things (IoT) in the cabin, more personalization in terms of the food and drink served on board, plus a greater focus on wellbeing. What we can guarantee, as the industry evolves, is that all of these elements and more will be showcased at AIX and the co-located World Travel Catering and Onboard Services Expo (WTCE) in years to come.

PAX: What is it about the event that has led to so much growth, success and companies returning to Hamburg year after year?

Magraw: AIX is the world's leading event for the cabin interiors, inflight entertainment and passenger comfort industries. It has built its outstanding reputation over more than 20 years, with each successive year embracing and showcasing the latest developments within the industry. From the very beginning it has not only provided a platform for airlines and their suppliers to spotlight the very latest in the passenger experience, but also a forum for the industry to meet, exchange and discuss ideas, share insight and learn from each other. This year we're expecting to welcome more than 16,000 attendees with AIX 2020 offering a unique opportunity for suppliers to speak directly with more than 1,500 attendees from the world's airlines and generate highly targeted business leads.

PAX: What can both exhibitors and visitors expect to see at AIX this year?

Magraw: This year will see 600 suppliers showcasing the very latest in products and services. Boeing and Airbus will be joined by other industry heavyweights including Collins Aerospace, Safran, Recaro, STELIA and Adient, as well as first time exhibitors such as Apollo Aerospace Components and Foviatech GmbH. There will also be the industry's largest representation of inflight entertainment and connectivity (IFEC), which returns to the IFEC Zone. Specialists such as Astronics, Thales, Inmarsat, Panasonic Avionics Corporation and Global Eagle will all be in attendance with the very latest in OTT systems, 5G and VR.

I'd also strongly advise visitors to schedule time for the CabinSpace LIVE Seminar Theatre, which is open to all. It will play host to industry experts who will lead debate and discussion on key market trends and challenges. Topics confirmed this year include the challenges and opportunities of creating an accessible cabin, how to extract value from customer-centric experiences and the outlook for the aircraft interiors market.

PAX: Does the Expo feature anything new this year? Why did Reed decide to bring this in?

Magraw: Absolutely. In 2020, we will bring our dedicated meetings program called AIX Connect to Hamburg. It is designed to help buyers meet exhibitors during the show to build business connections and discuss new projects. Exhibitors taking part will be paired with procurement teams, OEMs and key airlines buyers to discuss business opportunities. The program will give attendees the benefit of increased networking opportunities while exhibitors enjoy high-quality business connections matched to their product offering.

Networking is at the heart of AIX, so it makes sense for us to launch a specific platform to facilitate business between suppliers and the airlines and OEMs. And, to make AIX as productive and simple as possible for everyone attending, we'll soon be launching a new and improved AIX App to assist visitors in connecting with key exhibitors. By doing this, we can ensure that AIX continues to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to understanding innovation now, and in the future. We will do this by listening to and speaking with the industry to keep AIX relevant, educational and – perhaps most importantly – business-focused.

PAX: Which speakers do you have confirmed so far, and what topics to be discussed at the event?

Magraw: Our Passenger Experience Conference, taking place on March 30, offers an unrivalled opportunity to hear some of the world's foremost experts share their insights, ideas and analysis behind cabin design and passenger experience.

Sessions will delve into how innovations might impact on and influence the passenger experience. With digital transformation at the heart of industry evolution, PEC will consider how personalization in aviation will evolve, plus discuss some of the innovations that will deliver tomorrow's customer-centric journeys.

Speakers will include Florent Petteni, Aircraft Interiors Marketing Director at Airbus, who will talk about 'disrupting from within'; author and entrepreneur Peter Shankman will deliver a keynote presentation on how customer experiences will dictate the global economy over the next 50 years, and how Gen Z and Gen Alpha are plotting to take their travel to the next level. There will also be a session on driving new revenue streams with Michael Raasch, head of Airline Solutions at AOE and a closer look at sustainability with Thomas Rotte, Industrial Design Engineer from the Technical University of Delft.

PAX: Can you share with us the names of some of the companies that are AIX vets, as well as some new companies who are expected to make their AIX debut this year?

Magraw: We're set to welcome back most of the biggest names in the industry -Airbus, Molon Labe, Safran.

Meanwhile, AIX will warmly welcome many new names to the event, including AD Aerospace, specialists in aircraft video surveillance; Aircraft Interior Refurbishment *España* S.L (AIRE), a leading cabin maintenance business; seating specialist Dynamic Safety LLC, and; cabin interior manufacturer and supplier, Schoutteten Froidure.