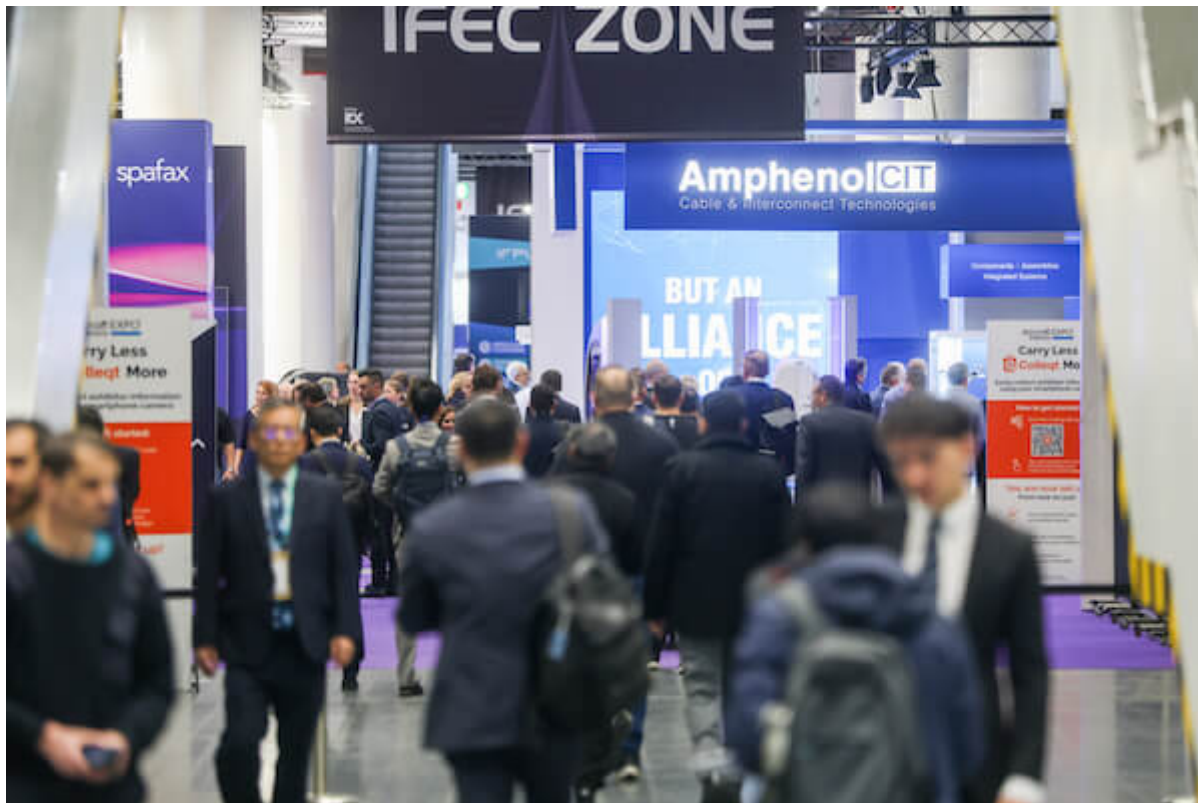


AIX 2026 marks 25 years of cabin innovation

This is a special feature from the [April 2026 AIX Hamburg issue](#) of *PAX Tech*, on [page 80](#).



The IFEC Zone at AIX 2025

The Aircraft Interiors Expo ([AIX](#)) returns to Hamburg for its milestone 25th edition in April 2026. Looking back on how the event has evolved since its first edition in 2000, Event Director Archana Dharni tells *PAX Tech* it is the pace of change she finds most striking.

When AIX launched in Cannes in 2000, cabin innovation moved in decade-long cycles. Today, we see refresh cycles of just three to five years, with technology evolving almost annually,” she explains.

Dharni says the strategic importance of the cabin has also transformed.

“In 2000, interiors were largely seen as a cost center. Today, cabin experience is a core competitive differentiator. Airlines are winning or losing customers based on comfort, connectivity and sustainability,” she notes. “The 25th edition is a milestone moment for AIX and the wider cabin interiors community. It is a celebration of how far the industry has come, from traditional manufacturing to an era defined by digitalization, sustainability and cross-sector collaborations.”



On the expo floor at AIX in Hamburg

Trends shaping themes

Dharni highlights three major trends shaping the 2026 event: sustainability, digitalization and the continued rise of business aviation.

“Sustainability has moved from a ‘nice to have’ to a business-critical priority,” she says.

With airlines under pressure to meet net-zero goals by 2050, she emphasizes the impact this is having on procurement decisions.

“Lightweight materials, circular design and transparent supply chains are now top of mind. Hamburg Aviation’s FAIRcraft project, for example, is pioneering fully circular cabin prototypes designed for disassembly and reuse,” Dharni says.

In terms of digitalization, she notes that connectivity is changing how cabins are built and operated.

“It is no longer about Wi-Fi access points but designing integrated digital ecosystems where IFE, cabin management systems and passenger devices interact seamlessly. Airlines increasingly want connectivity-as-a-service rather than buying hardware outright,” Dharni explains.



Archana Dharni, Event Director, AIX

A platform for the future

Co-located with the World Travel Catering and Onboard Services Expo (WTCE), Dharni says 30 percent

of visitors attend both shows.

“This synergy allows teams to source everything from seating and IFE to catering and onboard service solutions in one trip,” Dharni says. “The crossover between cabin design and onboard service, particularly in sustainability, creates opportunities for collaboration that would not happen elsewhere. The innovations and partnerships being formed at AIX 2026 will define the next generation of passenger experience, smarter, more sustainable and more connected than ever before.”