

AIX and WTCE Virtual: Day one recap



Aviation professionals from across the global cabin interiors and onboard services community came together online yesterday to mark the start of the first Aircraft Interiors Expo ([AIX](#)) and World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo ([WTCE](#)) Virtual events.

The first day included product launches, seminars with industry experts, conversations among airlines leaders and more.

Product launches at the core

AIX Virtual highlighted a range of products spanning inflight entertainment, lighting and LED, galley equipment and seating.

Among the products on display, [MGR Foamtex](#) presented its MGRSoftWall® NextGen quick release, vertically mounted, lightweight panel system. Featuring its ZOTEK®F OSU XR foam, Nextgen is 50 percent lighter than MGRSoftWall and suitable for a wide range of aircraft interior applications from seat structures, suite walls, bulkheads, partitions, monuments, side walls and ceiling panels.

[Intelsat](#) demonstrated how it is transforming inflight connectivity. Its software-defined network is combined with an equally robust in-cabin network to continually optimize an ever-growing range of airline services and operations. Access technology through its 2Ku system provides the bandwidth needed to provide an optimal experience for the crew and passengers while smart software solutions ensure bandwidth is distributed optimally across the in-cabin network.

Suppliers from the onboard hospitality industry at WTCE Virtual revealed the latest food and drink products and innovative retail solutions. [Foodcase International](#) demonstrated its concept solution for buy-on-board and pre-order. This includes a selection of Western and Asian style ready meals based on authentic and local flavor profiles created by local chefs.

Gourmet snack manufacturer [NibNibs](#) revealed its newly launched Telstar Heavenly Cookies. The indulgent mini star cookie make a perfect accompaniment to coffee or tea on board, and with 30 percent less sugar and no artificial sweeteners, colors or preservatives.

Australian aviation footwear brand [Sky Soles](#) shared how it has used the past 18 months to focus on innovation, sourcing high performance breathable vegan leathers for its product offering. Embracing sustainability and the need to do better by the planet, the company has also undertaken a full packaging redesign with the goal of using entirely recycled and recyclable packaging.

PEC addresses major industry topics

With a line-up of speakers including airlines, suppliers, analysts, and consultants, attendees had the opportunity to hear from a diverse range of industry voices.

Launching the [Passenger Experience Conference](#), Simon Calder, Travel Correspondent at The Independent and a regular guest speaker on Sky News, BBC Breakfast and CNN, led panel '*Putting people at the heart of each journey in the digital age.*' Joined by representatives from [Seymourpowell](#), [Accor Hotels](#) and [ANA](#), it explored how the industry can safely bring the human touch back into flying and create new personal and people-centric experiences.

The session was followed by a packed line-up of representatives from [Avensis Aviation](#), [Airbus](#), [Mormedi](#), [Alstom](#), [JetBlue Airways](#) and [flypop](#) in '*New cabins, new routes – the show goes on.*' The panel explored how underlying passenger experience business models are evolving to create robust businesses for the future.

In the final session of the day entitled, '*D is for dignity: democratizing air travel for passengers with disabilities,*' experts from [Flying Disabled](#), Avionics, [Heathrow Airport](#), [FACC](#) and Nico Langmann, athlete at the Paralympics Tokyo 2020, came together to recognize how the aviation community can collaborate to take a harmonized and human-centric approach to accessibility.

Senior airline leaders discuss the pandemic as catalyst for innovation and new players

On day one of AIX Sessions, John Strickland, Director, [JLS Consulting](#) welcomed senior airline leaders including Tom Stevens, Director of Brand & Customer Experience, [British Airways](#); Birgir Jónsson, CEO, [Play](#); and Tonje Wikstrøm Frislid, CEO, [Flyr](#) to explore how airlines have adapted to new passenger needs and what the future holds for new airlines starting from a blank slate. '*Airlines: the leadership discussion*' revealed how the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for innovation and in the case of Flyr and Play, creating all new opportunities for the emergence of new players in the industry.

Among the shared themes covered in the panel, the increasing need for a frictionless travel experience was embraced by all, with Tonje Wikstrøm Frislid, CEO, Flyr revealing that the airline's ultimate goal is to deliver "a friction-free and friendly journey – from booking tickets online to checking in and arriving at the destination." She also revealed that the data-driven approach being undertaken by the airline meant it could "personalize its communication across multiple customer channels and journeys."

Looking to the future, all of the panelists agree technology will play an increasingly important role, representing one of the most fundamental aspects of how airlines and the wider aviation sector has transformed as a result of the pandemic.

Sustainability in focus

Sustainability was a major focus of AIX Sessions. Lukas Kaestner, Co-Founder, [Sustainable Aero Lab](#); was joined by Dr. Achim Leder, Co-Founder and CEO, [Jetlite GmbH](#); Nico Buchholz, Founder, Flightlevel 500; and Omer Bar-Yohay, Founder, [Eviation Aircraft](#) for panel session '*Encouraging the start-up scene in aviation: How they can help achieve sustainability goals.*'

In catering, session '*Where to next? Sustainability trends,*' highlighted the latest thinking when it comes to sustainability trends. Led by [Sarah Klatt-Walsh](#), founder and owner of Sarah Klatt Consulting, leaders from the aviation sector discussed how airlines and suppliers should collaborate to reduce waste.

Melanie Berry, Director of Customer Experience at [Iberia](#), kicked off proceedings reviewing how the airline has been making progress in reducing plastic use. "Customer experience has to be as

sustainable as it can be," she said, adding that all new innovations should be reviewed to see how truly sustainable they really are.

Matt Crane, the founder of [The Aviation Sustainability Forum](#), said that collaboration is key to make the sector more sustainable. He said that it is vital that businesses "come together to develop solutions that are sustainable at source and optimized for waste management", adding that the industry needs "to do better and find ways to break down barriers," particularly when it comes to the way waste is managed.

Also, during the session, sustainability champion Anne De Hauw, Founder of [IN Air Travel Experience](#), discussed the waste hierarchy, explaining why it is important to move waste higher up to avoid it being incinerated or put in landfill sites. She said that "a move to a circular economy is essential." Founder of [NowNewNext](#), Ariane van Mancius explored the topic of veganism and how the trend is growing globally, adding that airlines need to introduce true ticket pricing where the cost reflects how sustainable the journey is.

Discussions on improving the customer's onboard experience unfolded in '*Why hospitality is key to rebuilding passenger confidence,*' session with representatives from WestJet, Plane Talking Products Limited, Black Swan Data and Qatar Airways.

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As Media Partners for AIX and WTCE Virtual, the September [WTCE edition](#) of *PAX International* and [AIX edition](#) of *PAX Tech* are available the event, and online.



Day 2: more networking and learning opportunities

The second day of AIX and WTCE Virtual is underway today, filled with sourcing, networking, and learning opportunities.

At the Passenger Experience Conference, attendees can join live sessions on the following:

- *How airlines can offer their passengers more value with digitization and outstanding customer experience:* 10.00 – 10.45 CEST
- *Innovative materials and methodologies underpinning recovery:* 11.00 – 12.00 CEST
- *The sense & non-sense of sustainable food packaging onboard:* 12.15 – 13.00 CEST
- *Reducing the cabin's environmental footprint:* 14.00 – 15.00 CEST
- *Strategies for a digital revolution in the cabin:* 16.30 – 17.30 CEST

Registrants can also watch on-demand sessions, including '*Women behind aviation,*' moderated by PAX Tech Editor Jane Hobson. The session brings together a cross-section of women in senior roles in the aviation sector to discuss career paths; current and future initiatives to improve both diversity in the workforce and in leadership roles; plus, immediate challenges for the industry to address.

Aircraft EXPO
Interiors VIRTUAL



Clockwise from top: Fadimatou Noutchemo Simo, Douala, Young African Aviation Professional Association, Jane Hoskisson Director Talent, Learning, Engagement and Diversity at IATA, Erin Lear Founder of Jet Blondie and Executive Sales Director, Jet Token, Karyn McAlphin Design Director at SEKISUI KYDEX and Moderator Jane Hobson of PAX Tech

Speakers include Fadimatou Noutchemo Simo, Douala, [Young African Aviation Professional Association](#); Erin Lear Founder of [Jet Blondie](#) and Executive Sales Director, [Jet Token](#); Karyn McAlphin Design Director at [SEKISUI KYDEX](#); and, Jane Hoskisson Director Talent, Learning, Engagement and Diversity at [IATA](#).

The talking points include learnings from sectors outside aviation, role models and mentoring both for professional development and encouraging more women into aviation, the benefits that a diverse and gender-balanced workforce brings to corporate culture, innovation and the bottom line.

Day two of AIX Virtual will also see the return of The Crystal Cabin Award Winners, at 15.15 (CEST) when winning entrants will be presented in two special categories: Clean and Safe Air Travel and the

Judges Choice Award. Recognized as the only international award for excellence in aircraft interior innovations, a high-caliber jury made up of renowned academics, engineers, specialist journalists and airline and aircraft manufacturer representatives will honor extraordinary cabin concepts and products.

For more information and to register to attend, [click here for AIX](#) and [click here for WTCE](#).

AIX and WTCE Virtual replace the live editions, which will not take place in 2021 due to the ongoing challenges and global restrictions on international travel. AIX and WTCE will return to Hamburg from June 14 to 16, 2022 at the Hamburg Messe.