APEX FTE EXPO concludes with APEX Awards Ceremony in Singapore



Turkish Airlines at the 2026 APEX Awards Ceremony at Swissôtel The Stamford in Singapore

The 2026 APEX FTE EXPO closed with the APEX Awards Ceremony at Swissôtel The Stamford, sponsored by Thales and Spafax. Airline chief executives, passenger experience leaders and industry partners from across the globe gathered for an evening of recognition spanning lifetime achievement, passenger-rated airlines, and ideas that connect the cabin to the wider journey.

“Every honor presented in Singapore tonight traces back to a single question: what makes a journey better for the people onboard? The airlines and leaders recognized this evening answered that question with vision, discipline, and genuine care, and passengers noticed,” APEX Group CEO Dr. Joe Leader said. “From the leaders whose careers shaped our industry to the airlines that travelers themselves elevated through their ratings, tonight’s honorees show what a better journey looks like. Here in Asia’s growing aviation market, the global airline community comes together to celebrate them.”

The ceremony recognized the following honorees and winners:

2026 APEX CEO Lifetime Achievement Award

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Dr. Andrés Conesa Labastida, CEO, Aeroméxico receives the 2026 APEX CEO Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by APEX CEO Dr. Joe Leader, at the APEX Awards Ceremony in Singapore

Aeroméxico CEO Dr. Andrés Conesa Labastida received the 2026 APEX CEO Lifetime Achievement Award, becoming the first Latin American airline CEO to earn the honor in APEX's five-decade history. Since becoming CEO in 2005, Dr. Conesa has guided Aeroméxico through industry upheaval, a global pandemic, and a successful financial restructuring, building Mexico's global airline into a benchmark for reliability and a distinctly Mexican spirit of service. Under his leadership, Cirium named Aeroméxico the world's most on-time global airline in 2024 and 2025. He joins a distinguished circle of honorees that includes Air France-KLM Group CEO Benjamin Smith and United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby.

2026 APEX Lifetime Achievement Awards
APEX presented two 2026 APEX Lifetime Achievement Awards to leaders whose careers have shaped what passengers experience in flight:

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Spafax Chief Executive Officer Niall McBain receives the APEX Lifetime Achievement Award in Singapore

- **Spafax Chief Executive Officer Niall McBain:** Across nearly three decades as CEO, McBain transformed Spafax from a traditional inflight content provider into a global entertainment, creative, and media agency reaching nearly a billion passengers. A longtime champion of APEX, he helped sustain the association through the darkest days of the pandemic.

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Terry Steiner, Founder and President, Terry Steiner International, received the 2026 APEX Lifetime Achievement Award in Singapore

- **Terry Steiner International Founder and President Terry Steiner:** For more than three decades, Steiner has built the trusted bridge between Hollywood, independent film, and the world's airlines, championing independent cinema onboard and helping airlines curate entertainment that reflects their brands.

2027 APEX Five Star™ and APEX Four Star™ Airline Awards
APEX Official Airline Ratings™ constitute the first airline rating program based solely on certified passenger feedback, with ratings collected via TripIt® by SAP Concur across more than one million passenger-rated flights. This year, airlines around the world earned 2027 APEX Five Star™ and APEX Four Star™ recognition. Each distinction was earned entirely through the voices of the airlines' own passengers.

The full list of 2027 APEX Five Star™ and APEX Four Star™ Airline Award recipients is available here.

2027 APEX Best™ Global Awards

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Cathay Pacific received the APEX Best™ Global Award for Best Cabin Service

For more than a decade, the APEX Passenger Choice Awards® have recognized airline performance based entirely on verified passenger feedback. Determined by certified passenger ratings collected via TripIt® by SAP Concur, the 2027 APEX Best™ Global Awards honor the airlines travelers rated highest in the world across five categories:

- Best Cabin Service: Cathay Pacific
- Best Entertainment: Emirates
- Best Food & Beverage: Turkish Airlines
- Best Seat Comfort: Korean Air
- Best Wi-Fi: Qatar Airways

The full list of 2027 APEX Best™ Award winners is available here.

APEX Innovation Awards

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Thales received the APEX Innovation Award for Inflight Entertainment in Singapore

Debuting this year, the APEX Innovation Awards celebrate the ideas making travel easier to navigate, more connected, and more human, honoring the airlines and partners putting new solutions in passengers' hands on the ground and in the air. Among this year's honors, the APEX Cabin Innovation Award recognizes work that brings design, technology, and hospitality together in the onboard environment. The 2027 APEX Innovation Award winners include:

- Inflight Connectivity: Emirates
- Inflight Entertainment: Thales
- Safety Video: Philippine Airlines
- APEX/IFSA Cabin Innovation Award: Air France

APEX World Class™

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ANA was among the 2026 APEX World Class™ winners honored in Singapore last week

APEX World Class™ represents the pinnacle of airline recognition, honoring carriers that deliver excellence across safety and well-being, sustainability, guest service and food and beverage execution. These airlines were recognized for passenger experience that meets the APEX World Class™ standard: ANA, Emirates, Fiji Airways, Japan Airlines, Oman Air, Qatar Airways, SAUDIA, Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Xiamen Airlines.

APEX/Crystal Cabin Award “Seamless Journey”

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Air India received the inugural APEX/Crystal Cabin Award “Seamless Journey" award for its Vista Digital Platform

APEX and the Crystal Cabin Award Association celebrated the first APEX/Crystal Cabin Award “Seamless Journey,” bringing the Crystal Cabin Award to Asia for the first time. The award honors visionary concepts that break down the boundaries between the aircraft cabin and the wider travel experience, connecting time onboard with the airport, the transfer, the destination, and beyond. The inaugural honor was presented to Air India for its Vista Digital Platform.

“The first APEX/Crystal Cabin Award Seamless Journey carried two reputations to Asia at once: Hamburg’s rigor on the cabin and APEX’s view of everything around it,” APEX Group CEO Dr. Joe Leader said. “Air India’s win shows that the best ideas now start from the passenger’s whole trip, then work back to the seat. Judging that idea took two organizations willing to look beyond their own borders, and Singapore was the right stage for it.”

Together, the conversations and celebrations of APEX FTE EXPO 2026 left an industry united behind a single ambition: making every journey better for every passenger. The industry reconvenes next in Seoul on November 3 to 4, 2027.

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