

# Designworks director sees need for change in the short and long term

As the aviation industry looks for solutions to bring back passenger comfort and confidence will the industry need a “quick fix” or in a profound change in the way airlines operate?

Probably both, said [Johannes Lampela, Director of Design for Designworks](#) (A BMW Group Company) who spent an hour talking and fielding questions from online visitors at the [July 1 PEC Virtual Series](#) webinar moderated by Jennifer Coutts Clay, Author of *JETLINER CABINS*.

“We need immediate response to bring back confidence and trust to air travel,” Lampela said. In this new industry climate, he said the message needs to change. Sanitation information is important to passengers. Touch screens need to be adapted to allow passengers to use their own personal electronic devices for control.

Generally, Lampela said he thinks airlines are responding well and taking action. A few examples were the establishment of Delta Air Lines’ Global Cleanliness Division and the “wellness ambassadors” that are now aboard Etihad Airways. Suppliers are also creating solutions for the short term needs of their airline customers.

“But even with growing confidence we cannot overlook the long term opportunity to create a better experienter for all,” Lampela said.

Three concerns were on a passenger’s mind as they return to air travel, according to an informal survey done by Designworks: Proximity to other passengers, cabin cleanliness and air quality. Lampela said survey respondents were concerned about being seated close to strangers and the casual contact with them in the boarding and deplaning process. More than half of the survey respondents stated that their confidence would increase if they could be assured of the cleanliness of the cabin air. Sanitation in common areas and seating were also important to survey respondents.

To make some the changes that would put passengers at ease, Lampela said airlines should “develop a visual design language of clean and healthy.’ Surfaces within the cabin should be seamless, making them easier to clean. They should also seek out antimicrobial materials or surfaces that can withstand sterilization.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, suppliers have shown the industry seating and cabin configurations have pushed the envelope of traditional design. Would double decker seating and staggered configurations in economy class be part of the future? Lampela says airlines have long shied away from radical changes.

“Typically the aviation industry is very slow to react to change because of the long development timeline and testing requirement and enormous costs related to both,” he said.

However, he said the industry would do well to explore their options and concentrate on giving passengers features that they truly value.