

Innovators celebrated with Outstanding Achievement awards at FTE Global 2021

Innovators from airlines including [American Airlines](#), [Delta Air Lines](#), [Spirit Airlines](#), [CVG](#), [YVR](#) and [DFW](#) were recognized with Outstanding Achievement awards at the [FTE Global 2021](#) event held in Las Vegas early December.

The [FTE Airline/Airport Transformation Power List Americas ceremony](#) took place at the FTE Global 2021 Networking Party — sponsored by [MAG USA](#) and hosted by [McCarran International Airport](#) — at the ARIA Resort & Casino.

A total of 20 leaders from airlines and airports across the region were recognized for their achievements, and three in each category were awarded with an Outstanding Achievement trophy.

Outstanding Achievement trophy winners:

Matt Muta, Vice President of Innovation, Delta Air Lines



Photo credit: FTE

Vice President of Innovation, Matt Muta, was presented with an Outstanding Achievement trophy for overseeing innovation through exploration, rapid prototyping, envisioning and the development or investment in new technology.

Delta Air Lines launched its new Travel Planning Center – a one-stop guide packed with resources to manage travel requirements – and added more interactive features to its Delta Discover Map that give customers the ability to filter, search and book travel in a couple of clicks.

Another example is the Delta FlyReady app, a digital health credential solution that assists customers in scheduling a COVID-19 test that meets destination requirements. Delta is also launching a facial-recognition programme for TSA PreCheck members at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport,¹

setting a new standard for the industry as the first airline to build a dedicated bag drop space for TSA PreCheck customers.

Rocky Wiggins, Senior Vice President and CIO, Spirit Airlines



Photo credit: FTE

Rocky Wiggins, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Spirit Airlines, received an Outstanding Achievement trophy.

Spirit has brought in new aircraft to its fleet, grown its route network, and introduced innovative solutions. As part of its “pledge to invest in the guest”, Spirit began developing the nation’s first biometric photo-matching solution for domestic air travel in 2019.

Spirit is the first to make the solution available for domestic guests, and the first to pursue combining it with automated self-bag drop capabilities to reduce face-to-face interaction. Spirit’s re-imagined check-in experience is installed at LaGuardia Airport and Chicago O’Hare airports with plans in place to make it available in other airports soon.

Maya Leibman, Executive Vice President and CIO, American Airlines



Photo credit: FTE

Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer for American Airlines, Maya Leibman, accepted her Outstanding Achievement trophy virtually and was recognized for her efforts in leading the airline's broader transformation push by putting in place next generation strategic initiatives, including transitioning to the cloud, advanced analytics, machine learning and the advancement of DevOps tools and principles.

During the pandemic, American Airlines quickly recognised the need for a completely touchless check-in experience. Applying Delivery Transformation principles, the team was able to install 2,100 touchless kiosks in 230 airports within six weeks, reducing the average session time at the kiosk down to 17 seconds.

Brian Cobb, Chief Innovation Officer, CVG International Airport



Photo credit: FTE

Brian Cobb, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport's (CVG) Chief Innovation Officer, is pushing the boundaries of innovation, with recent projects including the introduction of ecological-based surface protectant, autonomous ground service equipment, autonomous floor cleaning robots and a pilot of the "Gita" robot.

At the start of the year, CVG launched a new strategic plan called New Heights to leverage ventures, partnerships and collaborations, which led to the airport taking on oversight and management of Oxford Airport in Ohio, which will serve as a micro-lab and a primer for new technology developments.

Oxford Airport aims to become an optimum collaboration site and test cell for talent and tech from startups, education, established companies, and governmental agencies. Brian Cobb was awarded for his exceptional leadership in shaping the future of the airport.

Lynette DuJohn, Vice President Innovation and CIO, Vancouver International Airport



Photo credit: FTE

Lynette DuJohn, Vice President of Innovation and CIO, received an Outstanding Achievement trophy for leading the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) in the future.

YVR has become the first airport in the world to develop an accurate digital twin of the airport. The YVR digital twin is a replica of physical assets, processes, or services, and presents a broad range of future possibilities.

Paul Puopolo, EVP of Innovation, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport



Photo credit: FTE

Paul Puopolo, Executive Vice President of Innovation at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), received an Outstanding Achievement trophy for his passion in delivering new products and services that exceed consumer expectations.

DFW introduced its new “Travel. Transformed” strategic plan, focusing on innovation with a collective goal to continuously reinvent the way it operates and to deliver new solutions to the airport’s customers and business partners.

DFW has introduced numerous innovation projects from a digital human concierge and food and beverage pre-order solutions to biometrics and touchless tech.

The Power List judges were looking for individuals who are pioneering new approaches that have the potential to improve travel for passengers and make the industry safer, more efficient and commercially successful.

Almost 750 leaders from across the air transport industry gathered for the three-day show, which had the theme ‘New approaches for a new world’.