Lufthansa Travel Forum highlights Canadian demand and premium investment

Flight crew welcomes guests to the second annual Lufthansa Travel Forum in Toronto, Canada this week

Lufthansa Group brought together approximately 100 travel agents, journalists and industry guests in Toronto, Canada this week for its second annual Lufthansa Travel Forum, where discussions highlighted resilient Canadian travel demand and continued investment in premium passenger experiences.

Held on the 17th floor of The Globe and Mail Centre, the event combined presentations and an Atlantic Joint Venture panel with tourism partner exhibits and onboard product displays. Nearly panoramic views took in the CN Tower and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Partnership formed the central theme of the forum, with Lufthansa Group's Canadian account management team emphasizing the importance of collaboration in an industry facing continual change.

The second annual Lufthansa Travel Forum took place at the Globe and Mail Centre in Toronto, Canada, offering nearly panoramic views of the city

Fueling travel appetite

That message carried into the Atlantic Joint Venture discussion featuring Christina Meakin, Director of Sales, Lufthansa Group; John Holt, Director, Global Corporate Sales, United Airlines; and Ana Paula de Souza, Director, Corporate Sales, Air Canada.

Fuel costs dominated the discussion of operating pressures. Panelists identified rising prices as one of the most significant challenges facing their airlines over the past year.

“I check fuel prices every morning and that basically tells me how my day is going to go,” said de Souza.

Holt likewise described fuel as United’s “biggest fear and our biggest risk right now.”

Meakin said Lufthansa had hedged approximately 80 percent of its fuel for this year, with approximately 50 percent planned for 2027.

Despite those pressures and the wider cost of living, panelists reported continued Canadian demand for international travel. De Souza said Canadians remain interested in long-haul trips, although they are booking closer to departure than they have historically.

“We can offer connectivity and flexibility, which is really important right now,” she said.

Meakin also pointed to sustained interest in Europe, with the geopolitical environment influencing destination choices. Her assessment of the Canadian market remained clear: “despite uncertainty, Canadians continue to travel.”

Panelists on the Atlantic Joint Venture panel included (from left to right) Christina Meakin, Director of Sales, Lufthansa Group; John Holt, Director, Global Corporate Sales, United Airlines; and Ana Paula de Souza, Director, Corporate Sales, Air Canada, with a member of Lufthansa Group as the moderator

Premium is here to stay

The discussion then turned to premium demand and the investments airlines are making to serve it. Across the three carriers, panelists described passengers’ willingness to pay for more space, greater comfort and an enhanced experience throughout the journey.

“People want personal space, customization,” said Meakin, adding that “personalization and digital gadgets are here to stay.”

For Lufthansa Group, that outlook supports continued lounge investment in Europe and an upcoming flagship lounge at New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport.

“These are big investments that will set us up for the future,” Meakin said.

Holt highlighted United’s lounge development, pointing to a recent Chicago opening and projects in Houston and San Francisco. He identified lounge access for premium leisure and corporate customers as a priority.

De Souza reported a similar trend at Air Canada, where demand for Signature Class reflects passengers’ willingness to invest in a premium experience. She also highlighted the airline’s investment in lounges, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities.

Products from SWISS's SWISS Senses onboard experience were on display

Partnerships in focus
Outside the panel, the forum gave guests an opportunity to explore the destinations and products behind the Group’s offer. Tourism representatives and vendors, primarily from Switzerland, Austria and Germany, arranged exhibits throughout the venue in a market-style setting. Warm raclette and Swiss wine brought regional food and beverage into the experience, while a Lufthansa photo activation explored the airline through the years.

SWISS displayed amenities and skincare from its new SWISS Senses experience, giving attendees a closer look at elements of its onboard product. Guests also met tourism partners over a buffet lunch before the conference.

The combination of product displays and commercial discussion connected the Group’s passenger experience investments with the travel trade’s role in presenting them to Canadian customers.

Meakin underscored Canada’s importance as one of Lufthansa’s largest markets as the Atlantic Joint Venture partners look ahead to next year.

“All eyes on Canada,” she says.

A photo booth activation invited guests to become part of Lufthansa's 100-year history. Pictured above, Managing Editor Jane Hobson