

Sustainability efforts need stressing, says panel



Left to right: Stefan List of Airbus, Amir Amidi of Plug and Play, Amy Gile of Silverdraft, Jeffrey Got of the Star Alliance and Alex Wilcox of JSX

Long Beach, California — Sustainability and green practices, long a priority of airlines and a subject of scrutiny by the flying public should be a visible part of a positive message delivered forcefully in the future, a group of panelists at this year [APEX/IFSA Expo](#), stressed in a morning session.

In a 45-minute session moderated by Stefan List, Head of Cabin Market insights at [Airbus](#), four panel members learned about some of the sustainability priorities from audience members and discussed what a plague-ravaged industry had undertaken during the past 18-months. The panelists were: Amir Amidi, Managing Director of [Plug and Play](#); [Silverdraft](#) CEO Amy Gile, Star Alliance CEO Jeffrey Goh and [JSX](#) airline CEO and LATAM Board Director Alex Wilcox.

Commercial Aviation has set a goal to become [carbon neutral by 2050](#). But whether the goal is achieved or not, panelists seemed to concur that instead of waiting, a move should begin soon to tell the story of efforts in the past and in the future.

Wilcox, CEO of the startup airline JSX said the industry is fighting a perception problem with a flying public that sees air travel as a massive contributor to global warming and a drain on the world's energy. Neither of which, he says, matches the reality. A user of three percent of the world's fuel, airlines have been able to shut down operations twice in the last 20 years with minimal effect on worldwide fuel usage. And with fuel purchasing costing upwards of a third of an airline's operations "we hate burning fuel more than most anyone on the planet."

But as long as the industry is allowed to be shaped by people's opinions Wilcox said "flight shaming" will continue and grow. "Sometimes public perception is not very nuanced," he added.

Gile, whose firm specializes in computer and artificial intelligence solutions in several industries said the industry needs to take steps in decrease the dense computer footprint in social media and

marketing which uses large amounts of energy.

Amidi, whose firm Plug and Play works with the [International Air Transport Association](#) on its ACCELERATE@IATA program for startup airlines, cited other industries, such as agriculture, concrete and battery production as significant contributors to global warming. Amidi quizzed the audience, asking them how many knew that JetBlue had reached carbon neutrality on its domestic route schedule. Such an achievement should be a more visible part of an airline's message delivered directly to the passenger.

"We have an education problem that we are not addressing," he stressed.