

# Video Clip: Leaders take charge at inaugural ACA Leadership Symposium

Fabio Gamba, ACA Managing Director, reflects on the success of the Association's first Leadership Symposium and goals for future expansion

The inaugural [Airline Catering Association](#) (ACA) Leadership Symposium took place in Amsterdam, The Netherlands in February. According to Fabio Gamba, ACA's Managing Director, the event exceeded expectations both in content and number of attendees.

"We wanted an event where the industry's key stakeholders could come together to brainstorm and identify collective solutions to emerging challenges. I'm really very pleased with the result," Gamba said in a post-event interview with media partner *PAX International*.



Fabio Gamba, ACA Managing Director (left) and Michiel van der Eijk, KLM Catering Services CEO and ACA President

The event engaged executives and CEOs to discuss ways to strengthen teamwork between caterers and airlines. Attendees included representatives from [KLM Catering Services](#), [RwandAir Catering](#), [Newrest](#), [Foodfolk Australia](#), [dnata](#), [Catrion](#), [gategroup](#), [FERIER In-Flight Catering](#), [SATS](#), [LSG Sky Chefs EMEA](#) and Sky Café, among others. The itinerary included networking, a tour of the KLM Catering Services facility at [Schipol Airport](#), an afternoon of conferencing and lots of opportunities for deep discussions and purposeful networking.

Gamba notes that the biggest takeaway is the caterers' request for greater collaboration with airline

partners, the strong demand for association advocacy and the need for industry-wide expansion of the ACA. “We’ll reach out to more potential members because we want to be more legitimate, we want to be more representative and we want to do more,” he says.

The conference sessions included a presentation on the state of the industry by Barry ter Voert, CXO and VP Business Development at KLM, and two panels. In his address, ter Voert underlined the need to adapt to evolving passenger expectations for personalization and sustainable travel experiences.



Panel 1 focused on the need for industry wide standards with panelists including (from left to right) Christoph Schmitz, gategroup, CEO; Robin Padgett, dnata, Divisional SVP Catering; Dr. Rashed Alarfaj, Catrion, EVP - Inflight Catering and Alfred Rigler, LSG, CEO EMEA

The panel discussions provided valuable insights. One focused on projected industry growth, how caterers and airlines can adapt to evolving passenger preferences, leverage AI and technology, and establish industry-wide standards. The second panel emphasized the importance of sustainability and the challenges the sector will face if airlines and caterers fail to adapt.

“We deliberately chose to have only two panels to tackle what is the core of the business: the CEO playbook to understand what they see currently and as future challenges; and sustainability which is something that everybody has to cope with,” Gamba says.

After the successful first event, the ACA announced in Amsterdam that next year’s Leadership Symposium will be hosted by Newrest in Toulouse, France. More details to come.

“Our ambition is to make the symposium the centre of strategic thinking for inflight catering,” says 2



Gamba.



Panel 2 focused on sustainability with panelists including (from left to right) Paweł Litkiewicz, Ferrier CEO; Lucie Lalanne, Deputy CSR Director, Newrest; Céline Hourcade, SATS VP Global Head of ESG; Sam Nkuranga, RwandAir Catering General Manager and Salim Hazife, Foodfolk CEO