

LOW COST & REGIONAL **airline business**

Volume 5 Issue 2 | July 2010



Industry eruption

Disaster or opportunity? Airlines reveal all

Check-in choices



Crisis communications



Schools in the skies

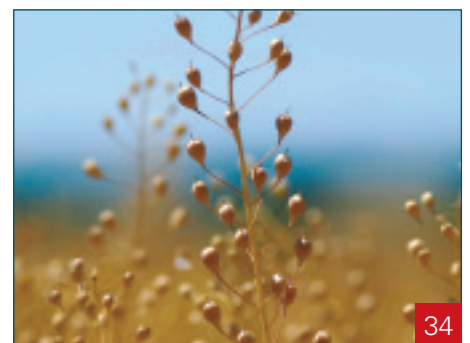


E-jets take off



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The latest IT systems are well equipped to deal with the complex machinations of flight and crew planning. However, human judgment is still the best way to overcome big challenges, as **Marcia MacLeod** discovers

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Aircraft

The rule-makers

As the downturn forces airlines to rethink their fleets, Embraer is keen to prove there is a gap in the market for 70- to 110-seaters, says **Richard Bowen**

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Ancillary revenues

Sales of the century

As legacy carriers take up the e-commerce mantle, pioneering low-cost and regional carriers need to find new sustainable revenue streams, says **Raphael Bejar**, CEO of Airsavings

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What's new?

The mobile check-in kiosk; onboard retail goes global; paperless pilots cut costs; green fuelling takes off; and more



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Cover image: Erling Aspelund, Iceland Encounter
Cover tiles: Sita, Cimber Air, FTE Jerez, Embraer
Contents images: Sita, Lufthansa Flight Training GmbH, Boeing, Embraer, Amadeus

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PRINTED BY:
Pensord, UK, www.pensord.co.uk

DIGITAL PLATFORM BY:
PageSuite, UK, www.pagesuite.co.uk

PUBLISHED BY:
Air Transport Publications Ltd,
16 Hampden Gurney Street,
London W1H 5AL, UK
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Low Cost & Regional Airline Business is published quarterly in April, July, October and December.

Low Cost & Regional Airline Business is available on a free, controlled basis to senior management within airlines, aircraft and engine manufacturers, airports, airport and airline service providers, ground handling companies, MRO contractors, leasing companies and regulatory bodies. Non-qualifiers may subscribe at £140/US\$255/€190 p.a.

Low Cost & Regional Airline Business (ISSN 1755-1242) is published quarterly by Air Transport Publications Ltd, 16 Hampden Gurney Street, London W1H 5AL, United Kingdom, and is distributed in the US by Mercury Airfreight International Ltd, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001. Periodicals postage paid at Rahway, NJ. POSTMASTER: send US address changes to *Low Cost & Regional Airline Business*, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001.

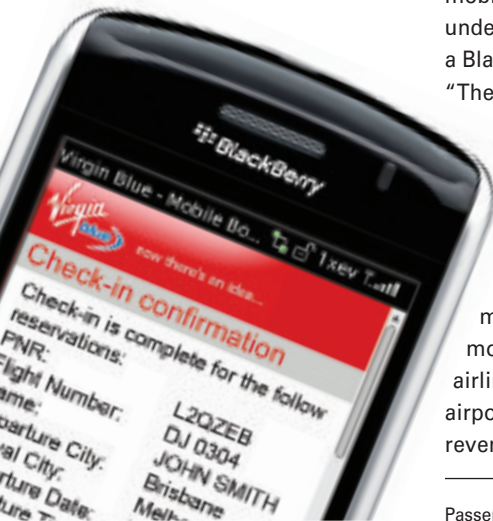
© 2010 Air Transport Publications Ltd ISSN 1755-1242

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A kiosk in your pocket...

Mobile technology – and its users – are ready to take air travel to the next step of self-service, according to MobileTravelTechnologies' (MMT) executive director, Gerry Samuels.



The company has recently launched a BlackBerry app and other mobile services for Virgin Blue – the first of its kind in Asia Pacific.

“Business travellers want a mobile airline service, but the mobile web can be a rather underwhelming experience on a BlackBerry,” said Samuels.

“The way round that is to enable users to download an app, giving them a faster and easier way to use the services.”

Samuels claimed the market is now ripe for mobile technology that airlines can use to speed up airport processes and boost revenues. “There are a

number of compelling reasons to use mobile services,” he said. “Airport kiosks are expensive and require maintenance. As customers can be encouraged to check in and get boarding passes on a mobile, it becomes a personal kiosk.”

He pointed to another customer, AirAsia, which in March achieved record-breaking sales from its new mobile service. Passengers can receive booking confirmations or pay to choose their seat on all mobile devices, including an iPhone web app version.

“Most customers see more revenue in a week from this mobile technology than the

entire cost of the product,” claimed Samuels. “A year ago, airlines wouldn’t have seen such an uptake. People are really receptive to it.”

Jetstar, which is currently trialling the iPad for its in-flight entertainment, also has MMT technology, which allows passengers to access the airline’s Navitaire reservation system and change their bookings.

The Virgin Blue application is free to passengers, who can use it to select a seat, check in and get a barcoded boarding pass. Passengers can also get the full range of services on the Virgin Blue mobile website, which can be used on more than 6,000 devices.

Passengers on Virgin Blue can now use their BlackBerries to check in and choose a seat MMT

Onboard retail gets a global boost

Demand for onboard technology that promotes ancillary sales is spreading globally, following a deal between tech company GuestLogix and Asia-based Inflight Sales Group (ISG).

OnTouch is a technology and merchandising platform that allows airlines to create and operate a branded onboard store. It comes pre-configured with travel-relevant, destination-based products and services.

Seven airlines currently use the product, but this is set to grow. ISG, the largest third-party onboard duty-free service provider in Asia, supplies the inflight retail business for 15 airlines. So far, OnTouch’s largest market has been in the US.

“OnTouch is being

deployed in the US today, where the interest in ancillary revenues is the greatest among legacy carriers,” said Josef Zankowicz, VP marketing and communications. “Some deployments have been across the entire airline, while others have been route-specific, such as New York to London. We signed Aer Lingus recently so expect OnTouch products and services to be deployed with that airline soon.”

GuestLogix claims its onboard retail transaction technology is the standard operating environment onboard airlines, collectively representing over one-third of the global annual passenger trips. “Our technology enables airlines to capitalise on a captive

travelling audience and monetise more travel touch points with their customers pre-flight, in-flight and post-flight,” explained Zankowicz. “OnTouch provides airlines with the quickest route to grow and sustain profitable revenues, while providing their

customers an opportunity to get the most out of their trip.”

The majority of customers for the product are airlines, but GuestLogix also has partnerships with caterers, duty-free concessionaires and IFE providers, who sell on the product to their customers.



GuestLogix OnTouch technology and merchandising framework for creating, managing and controlling a branded onboard store GuestLogix