



STAR ALLIANCE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF CONNECTING PEOPLE AND CULTURES NEW STRATEGIC FOCUS UNVEILED

FRANKFURT, Germany – May 13th, 2017 – Star Alliance returned to Frankfurt, the place of its birth, to celebrate 20 years of “Connecting People and Cultures”. For the next decade, the Alliance announced a strategy of harnessing digital technology to further enhance the travel experience of Alliance customers.

The Alliance’s Chief Executive Board, comprising the CEOs of all 28 member airlines, will hold its summer board meeting in Frankfurt on May 14th, during which the CEOs will be briefed on the progress of the Alliance’s current business plan and future strategy. The meeting falls exactly 20 years to the day when its founder members – Air Canada, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, THAI and United – first stunned the aviation industry with the announcement that they would come together to form the world’s first global aviation alliance.

“Our founding fathers had a very forward thinking vision back in 1997,” said Jeffrey Goh, who took over as CEO of Star Alliance in January this year. “From that moment on Star Alliance was destined to drive innovation in the airline industry. We have done this successfully for the last 20 years, constantly striving to meet that original vision of a global network seamlessly integrated for international travel.”

The Alliance enters its third decade with a strong and comprehensive network serving over 1,300 destinations in 191 countries. Connectivity continues to expand by member carriers launching new routes and increasing frequencies, while network reach will grow through the addition of local and regional airlines through the Connecting Partner concept.

Against this background, the Alliance's clear strategic focus has shifted from network expansion, to providing a seamless experience especially to the over 14 million annual customers who connect between member carriers on their journeys. Going forward, digital technologies will lie at the heart of this strategy.

"Access to instant information updates online from more or less anywhere has irrevocably changed the expectations of customers as they travel," said Pedro Heilbron, CEO of Copa Airlines and current chairman of the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board. "Passengers want to have control over their journey at their fingertips. That means having full access to a wealth of information, but also being able to personalise it to their own particular requirements. Providing such services to today's 'digital' traveller on an alliance level is the central pillar of our new strategic focus."

The IT hub infrastructure which the Alliance has put in place in recent years has allowed for the better integration of back-end services between the member airlines. With this now in place, we can start building and offering digital applications. The new IT hub infrastructure has already enabled the Alliance to, for example, improve the reliability of such processes as through-check in for multi-carrier itineraries or ensuring fast crediting of accrued frequent flyer miles into the correct customer account.

In another Alliance first, in the unlikely case of missing miles, members in any Star Alliance frequent flyer programme (FFP) can now claim these online, through their own FFP website, even when the miles were collected on another Star Alliance member carrier flight.

The baggage hub, the most recent IT hub project, went live at the end of 2016, and facilitates baggage message transfer between the member airlines, their ground handlers and the baggage handling systems at the airports. Today it processes on average five million baggage messages a day. This allows the airlines to better steer baggage operations and to keep customers informed on the status of their bag. Once implemented across the entire network, it will become easier to give customers proactive updates on their baggage delivery status.

Using the existing IT Hub, Star Alliance has now introduced a new functionality which allows front line employees to better assist customers in case of irregularities. Should their feeder flight be delayed, the connecting boarding pass information can now be access by the airline operating the feeder flight, thus enabling a faster and simpler rebooking process. Up to now, such transactions at times still required calling the other airline involved.

"Our strategy is to develop digital capabilities centrally, which can then be used by our member carriers to enhance their own products, so that they can offer extended care to their regular

customers even when they are travelling elsewhere on the network”, said Jeffrey Goh. “Over the next few years we will be launching many such enhancements. Individually, these will offer an incremental improvement. Taken together, they will offer customers a completely new level of information and control of their journey.”

To support the implementation of the new strategy, Star Alliance has restructured its Frankfurt-based headquarters operation and reorganised the Alliance’s management team, which now is made up of:

Janice Antonson, Vice President Commercial and Communications. With a strong background in airport senior management, her career spans leadership roles in five countries, most recently at privately owned Northern Queensland Airports Inc. in Australia.

Christian Draeger, Vice President Customer Experience. He had joined Star Alliance as Director Customer Experience, having previously worked for Swissport International, As Managing Director he was in charge of business units at various locations in the worldwide network. He brings with him over 25 years of aviation experience.

Dr. Martin Mueller, now Director Finance and Strategy joined Star Alliance in 2009 as Director Alliance Development, having previously worked for such companies as LSG Sky Chefs, Thomas Cook and Lufthansa eCommerce.

Alska Scherer, now General Counsel & Director Human Resources, joined Star Alliance in 2005 as legal manager.

Mileage Millionaire Competition

As part of its customer interaction for its 20th Anniversary, Star Alliance will be running a global competition, inspired by the theme of “Connecting People and Cultures”, which will offer winners the chance to become a mileage millionaire. Each of the Alliance’s 21 FFPs is offering one million miles (or equivalent) to one competition winner.

Entrants are asked to upload a picture of themselves and to share a cultural experience they enjoyed at www.staralliance.com/mileagemillionaire. The cultural experiences will be shown on an interactive world map. The competition runs from May 14th to July 31st, 2017.

The Star Alliance FFPs are also providing some inspiration on what can be done with a million miles and are presenting some unique travel experiences at www.staralliance.com/mileagemillionaire.

NEWS RELEASE

In support of the 20th anniversary campaign, each of the 28 Star Alliance member carriers has come up with their own local cultural experience idea. The five founding carriers, Air Canada, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, THAI and United, have gone one step further by challenging National Geographic's Travel Nomad, Robert Reid, to test their recommendations personally and report back to travellers on his experience.

A further 23 unique cultural experiences selected by our member carriers can also be found at www.staralliance.com/mileagemillionaire and range from tile painting in Portugal to home cooking in Shenzhen, China, to joining the locals in Bogota turn major roads in the city into cycle paths on Sundays.

The world-wide campaign will be supported by many local activities at many locations around the world. For example, customers visiting one of the six Star Alliance Branded Lounges on or around 14 May will receive special locally inspired gifts and enjoy special menu items celebrating the cultures and flavours of the world throughout the month of May. Many airline lounges in our larger hubs will also mark the occasion. There will also be pop-up events in several airports world-wide.

About Star Alliance:

The Star Alliance network was established in 1997 as the first truly global airline alliance to offer worldwide reach, recognition and seamless service to the international traveller. Its acceptance by the market has been recognized by numerous awards, including the Air Transport World Market Leadership Award and Best Airline Alliance by both Business Traveller Magazine and Skytrax. The member airlines are: Adria Airways, Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, Avianca Brazil, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EGYPTAIR, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, THAI and United. Overall, the Star Alliance network currently offers more than 18,400 daily flights to 1,300 airports in 191 countries.

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