Boeing Highlights "Breathtaking" Opportunities In 21st Century

Opportunities for manufacturing jetliners in the 21st century are "simply breathtaking," Dick James, president - Boeing Europe told journalists gathered at an annual conference sponsored by The Financial Times.

"Here in Europe, airlines will need almost 5,000 airplanes over the next two decades. When you look at the numbers it's no wonder that we come to this conference looking forward to the future," James said. "But we are also realists. Experience tells us - and in Boeing's case, that is 82 years of experience - that the world's airlines are shopping for value as never before. Value pricing is the name of the game, and it's going to stay that way."

During his 20-minute presentation, James said the breadth and balance of the new Boeing Company bodes well for the company's future.

"Before the merger, the commercial side of our business accounted for the bulk of revenues - about 75 percent. That's changed substantially. Today, the ratio is about 60 percent commercial, and 40 percent space, communications, military aircraft and missile systems. Each segment has an amazing range of products. In a cyclical business like ours, breadth and balance is the right stuff."

Speaking of the right stuff, James said Boeing has developed and launched ten airplanes in the last five years, each one meeting a 21st century market need and focused on economic viability.

According to James, the industry must take a long-term view, focus on common interests, and build strong, capable industrial teams to successfully meet the challenges of the next century.

"I believe it is fundamentally important to remove every obstacle that prevents understanding and break down every wall and barrier that hinders a robust, capable and efficient supplier base. It's good for all of us on both sides of the Atlantic."

James pointed out that many of the company's industrial partners are located in Europe, where Boeing airplanes have generated almost $4 billion in jet engine sales for Rolls Royce. In France, Snecma builds engines for Boeing's Next-Generation 737 - a program expected to generate about $9 billion in revenue for Snecma during the next eight years. European companies build about half of Boeing's newest jetliner, the 100-passenger 717. Boeing Commercial Airplane Group alone expects to spend almost $14 billion with European suppliers over the next five years, supporting more than 90,000 jobs in Europe annually.

In order to excel in the next century, James said everyone in the industry must do the right things: build the right products for the marketplace; maintain strong, capable industrial teams; and use lean and efficient design and production systems to keep costs down and quality up.

"The result will be sharper competition and a more capable aircraft manufacturing industry that will be better able to give operators the jetliners they need to win in their marketplace," James said. "When our customers win, we win."

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