Boeing 777 Celebrates Five Years Of World-Class Service

Five years ago today, a United Airlines (UAL) Boeing 777 departed London on a flight to Washington, D.C., marking a new era in air travel.

The passengers who boarded UAL Flight 921 that morning for the first commercial flight of the Boeing 777 entered the newest, most technologically advanced and most comfortable jetliner ever built. Flying at 84 percent of the speed of sound, the Boeing 777 got them to their destination more quickly than any jetliner in its class. During the flight, they enjoyed their choice of entertainment on the seat-back in-flight entertainment system.

Since that flight, the Boeing 777 has established itself as the world's leading intermediate- and long-range jetliner.

In a recent assessment of the 777s in its fleet, United Airlines said that Boeing had built a truly great airplane.

"During the past five years, the 777 has been consistently voted best in show by our passengers, our pilots, flight attendants, mechanics and - not to be forgotten - our accountants. It is the current benchmark against which all other commercial transports are measured, and has become the industry standard for all future designs," said Gordon McKinzie, United's manager of New Aircraft Development.

Since the 777 Program was launched in 1990, the airplane has logged more than 460 orders, about 62 percent of the total market.

The Boeing 777 comes in three models, capable of flying a variety of ranges. In a typical three-class configuration, the 777-200 carries 305 passengers up to 5,150 nautical miles (9,525 kilometers). The 777-200ER (extended range) carries the same number of passengers up to 7,700 nautical miles (14,260 kilometers) - the greatest range of any commercial jetliner. A similarly configured 777-300 carries 368 passengers up to 5,960 nautical miles (11,030 kilometers).

New, even longer range versions of the Boeing 777 will be delivered beginning in late 2003, linking cities as far as 8,860 nautical miles (16,408 kilometers) apart. For passengers, that range will make it possible to fly non-stop to almost any destination in the world.

The Boeing 777 worldwide fleet, consisting of more than 280 airplanes, has flown a total of more than 2 million hours, with each airplane flying an average of 10 hours a day. With this rigorous workout, the fleet has achieved an impressive schedule reliability rate of 99 percent - the best in its class. This is an unprecedented rate for an airplane of this size and complexity at this point in its commercial service.

"After five years in service, this remarkable airplane speaks for itself as a preferred product to our customers, the airlines, as well as to their customers, the passenger," said Ron Ostrowski, vice president and program manager of the Boeing 777 Program.

Ostrowski also observed that the airplane's exceptional performance in service speaks well for its guiding principle, "Working Together."

"With the airlines' participation early on in the program, we were able to design an airplane that beats the competition hands down on reliability, performance, economical operation and comfort," Ostrowski said.

With its twin-engine efficiencies, the 777 offers airlines superior economic performance. The 777 has seven to 13 percent lower seat-mile costs and four to 12 percent lower fuel burn per seat when compared to its competitors.

The 777's speed advantage over the competition saves passengers 30 minutes or more on long flights such as between London and Singapore, which minimizes traveler fatigue and reduces anxiety for passengers making a connecting flight to their final destinations.

From the beginning, the 777 has been recognized for its award-winning spacious interior - the first airline interior to be honored by the Industrial Designers Society of America. The 777 has set a new standard for comfort in airline travel with the widest seats, more headroom, more efficient stowage and a more spacious environment.

When six airlines - five European and one Middle Eastern - surveyed thousands of experienced travelers last year, three out of four passengers told them that they preferred the Boeing 777 over the Airbus A330 and A340. The results are consistent with independent and proprietary surveys in other regions.

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