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British Airways customer service employees gathered at Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group headquarters in Renton, Wash., Dec. 8 to commemorate their first year of operations at Seattle/Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac).

Until Nov. 1, 1999, ground services at SeaTac were handled on a contract basis by Alaska Airlines. Currently, there are 33 people employed by British Airways at SeaTac.

At Boeing, the airline employees viewed a large model of British Airways' 777-200ERs in its new four-class configuration, known as *Dusk*. It was the first look at the new configuration for most of them, since *Dusk* 777s are not flying into SeaTac as yet. This configuration features an updated First Class section with private sleeper seats; and an all-new business class known as *Club World* with full sleeper seats in opposing configuration, which offer optimal privacy. It also features a new section called *World Traveller Plus* featuring seats one inch wider than economy with an increased seven inches of pitch at 38 inches as well as individual seat-back entertainment systems; and *WorldTraveller* Class.

Jeff VerWey, business director, European Sales, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group, spoke to the group and noted how many hundreds of Boeing employees fly on British Airways' direct flight from Seattle to London.

"Our success is dependent on the reliable service we receive from the employees of British Airways who help me and my Boeing colleagues fly safely to Europe to meet with our customers there," VerWey said.

According to British Airways Service Delivery Manager Nick Harrison, the airline decided to revert to self-handling at SeaTac because "customer service is the most important part of our product. Alaska did a great job for us, but there's nothing like having your own folks."

British Airways currently operates Boeing 747s from Seattle to London.

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