Boeing Focuses on Passengers for Long-Haul, Twin-Aisle Jetliner Strategy

Future of flight is seen in 777, 7E7 models

Boeing [NYSE: BA] today emphasized the passenger's needs as a key element of its commercial airplane strategy.

Boeing Commercial Airplanes Marketing Vice President Randy Baseler told local reporters that airline passengers want to arrive at their destinations using the most direct routes, in the fastest time and at reasonable cost.

"Passengers are the foundation of air travel, and in a competitive market the airlines will continue meeting passenger demand for more nonstop service to destinations around the world with longer-range, efficient and comfortable airplanes, not very large ones," Baseler said. "By providing airplanes that offer long range, are appropriately sized to demand and operate efficiently, Boeing best meets the requirements of both passengers and airlines."

The all-new Boeing 7E7 Dreamliner along with the 777 and 747 families are excellent examples of providing what passengers and airlines want. Boeing's twin-aisle airplanes range from about 200 seats to over 400 -- a variety in size and range capability that allows airlines to effectively match airplanes to route demand.

"On transoceanic routes and long transcontinental routes, the Boeing 777s and 7E7s provide the versatility to serve major and secondary city pairs," Baseler added. "The 747-400 will maintain a key role in hub operations for many years. In addition, we are studying the 747 Advanced, which will improve upon the current version."

The long-range Boeing 7E7-8 and -9 models complement the existing 777-200ER, -300ER and the -200LR. The 777-200LR, which will have first flight in 2005, will be the world's longest-range jetliner when it enters service in 2006. These Boeing twin-aisle models are consistently more fuel efficient than competing models, helping airlines to mitigate the recent trend of rising fuel costs.

Passenger needs, coupled with improved airplane capabilities and reduced airline industry regulation (such as "open skies" agreements), are changing commercial aviation. The evolution takes place at differing rates, depending on specific conditions within various regions.

Boeing research also shows that average airplane size on many of the world's primary routes has actually decreased over the last 10 to 20 years, despite considerable air traffic growth. Increases in the number of flights and the nonstop markets being served, using smaller planes in many cases, are accommodating the increase in travel.

These changes result in an increasing reliance by airlines on 200- to 350-seat jetliners, most of them twin-engine airplanes, on long-range flights, coupled with a decreasing reliance on the largest airplanes in service. This is true even in the world's major "hub" airports, such as Tokyo-Narita, Hong Kong and New York-JFK.

"We're developing the new products and technologies that will meet future needs of the world's airlines," said Baseler. "Boeing studies the marketplace very diligently to allow the market to help us determine the right products that will please both passengers and carriers."

Worldwide, Boeing projects that operators will invest $2.0 trillion for approximately 25,000 new commercial airplanes during the next 20 years.

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