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Oman Air, Niche Player, Boutique Airline at Pillars of Aviation Summit Make Oman Air Your Airline Partner for Life

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Oman Air, the national carrier for the Sultanate of Oman believes its route towards aviation success lies in being a niche player in a globally and regionally competitive market. Its chief executive officer Peter Hill, who was one of the speakers at the two-day Pillars of Aviation Summit held at the Palace of the Golden Horses in Malaysia, described Oman Air as a niche player looking for niche growth.

Commenting during the panel session, Peter Hill said “Historically Oman Air was a regional carrier for 15 years but now we are reaching for the world. And right from day one, Oman Air’s aim is to be a niche player offering point-to-point services and developing high frequency operations that will in turn generate high yield traffic.

“Our point-to-point service has delivered relatively high yields and historically we have relied on it to get good returns as we chase down every last customer. That has enabled us to get good yields and with the coming month of Ramadan, more people will want to travel home. During the out-of-season periods, we will look at network routes not operated by other carriers to see if we can operate a non-stop service,” he says.

Hill also urged his attentive listeners to regard Oman Air as their airline partner for sustained repeat travel, and not to view it just for today! “Oman Air has great products where other airlines are also talking about them and we are developing even as many rival carriers are downsizing. Not many people realize that when an airline goes to fresh airports, the potential passengers can actually get great deals and when the market rebounds they would have locked in the great deals. So don’t think just for today instead be a partner with Oman Air for life,” he said. Oman Air’s entry into a new market during a downturn has also proven to be a blessing in disguise because now you get to choose the cabin crew you really want and not the opposite, he adds.

“Oman Air’s differentiating factor lies in the fact that its A330-300 aircraft boasts state-of-the-art products on board, from the first wide bodied seats to broadband WiFi and even a service for mobile phones, audio video on demand and live television which not many airlines are offering,” Hill says.

Even fellow speakers at the summit complimented Hill and Oman Air on its A330-300 aircraft which boasts straight out flat seats, direct aisle access, a la carte meals in business and first class and roomy economy seats among others.

Interestingly, Oman Air is not just into improving its airline services but it is also involved in complementary services such as airport management, food catering, engineering etc, all of which are set to go well for Oman Air in the 3, 5 or 10 years that it may take for the market to rebound, predicts Hill.

On the issue of alliances, Hill’s views were against alliances. “We invest heavily in our products and Oman Air’s products have proven to be unique. We have managed to build up loyalty to the brand. Unfortunately, alliances do not allow brand loyalty, so we don’t believe in alliances but we do have code-sharing. In fact, Oman Air will be signing a code sharing agreement with Malaysia Airlines on June 29th,” Hill added.



To a question from the floor on how the next generation airports’ design should be so that airports can differentiate themselves, Hill says Oman has a fairly compact airport in Muscat that was built 20 years and the benefit is that he can get through the airport and into his car in less than 5 minutes. “What will be great is to have innovative designs for the airport that will get airline passengers from the airline to the airport and into their cars in double quick time. “There should be less hassle at the airport so there must be lots of creative thinking on the design aspects and to cut down on the current tedious process is what he’d like to see, Hill told his listeners.

Earlier when asked why Oman Air a relatively young airline would want to participate in the Pillars of Aviation summit with matured players, Hill said the idea was to spread the awareness of this new kid on the aviation block. “We bring a refreshing change with our innovative technologies and ideas and we are pleasantly surprised by the word of mouth endorsement we’ve obtained these days.”

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