

Marketing



Presented to

Singapore Airlines



The new Singapore Airlines business class seat

Singapore Airlines is an airline of firsts when it comes to marketing and new products. The introduction of new economy, business- and first-class seats late last year on its fleet of Boeing 777-300ERs was no exception.

The first-class seat is the envy of airline chief executives everywhere. At 35in it "is literally as wide as a sofa", says SIA senior vice-president products and services Yap Kim Wah. The seat is the widest in the sky, comes with the largest video screen and turns into the largest bed.

The business-class seat too is the widest in its class. Even economy class has several firsts, including a private reading light at the front of the seat and the disappearance of in-flight entertainment boxes, which until now had always eaten up floor space.

SIA does not seek to be the first for marketing or publicity purposes but "we do it principally to keep ahead of the curve", Yap says. "By going first we have a longer product life cycle than others. By the time others match us we're ready to move onto another product," he adds.

These firsts captured our judges' attention: "SIA has once again demonstrated how an unwavering focus on a premium, customer-centric in-flight offering can, when combined with other powerful features such as modern aircraft and a strong route network, allow an airline to maintain its positioning as the best product in the sky, despite intensifying competition."

Most importantly, as one judge pointed out, SIA's investment has paid off: "The ultimate test is that they turn marketing into great profits."

SIA raised fares by 15-20% on flights offering the new products, and the increase has been supported on all seven routes its nine 777-300ERs serve. "We are pleased the customer values the importance and is willing to pay for the improvement," Yap says. "The key is introducing products our customers are willing to pay for."

The passenger uptake proves "we're on the right track for the premium market", Yap says. "This is the direction we'll take for the premium product in the future."

It is not only the product itself that the judges took into account in choosing SIA for this award. "They are at the leading edge in all disciplines of marketing," commented one judge. While another said: "At the strategic and tactical level they get their marketing right."

The next step is the Airbus A380, another SIA first as the carrier in November will become the first operator of the new extra large widebody. The A380's premium cabins will incorporate some of the products introduced last year in the 777-300ER, but will also include some new offerings. Yap says the details will be revealed in October at a product launch ceremony that airline executives and frequent business travellers will be monitoring very closely.

Yap says SIA is also planning a refresh for its older Boeings, and is constantly looking to make sure it stays one step ahead of the competition. "In the future it will be [matched] but we're constantly looking at new things," says Yap of its new first-class seat. "It's a continuous investment."

Brendan Sobie



Yap Kim Wah

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"We're on the right track for the premium market"

Yap Kim Wah, senior vice-president products & services, Singapore Airlines