

Media release



ETIHAD AIRWAYS PRESENTED WITH AIR TRANSPORT WORLD'S AIRLINE OF THE YEAR 2016 AWARD

Leading Aviation Title Honours UAE National Carrier For Strong Leadership In Developing Unique Growth Strategy And Setting Global Industry Benchmarks

Etihad Airways, the Abu Dhabi-based national airline of the United Arab Emirates, was this evening (Feb 15) presented with the coveted Airline of the Year 2016 award by the prestigious US-based aviation industry publication Air Transport World (ATW).

The accolade acknowledged Etihad Airways' strong executive leadership team in developing a profitable strategy of organic growth and unique equity partnerships; introducing ground-breaking products and services; creating the foundations for building a motivated workforce; and engaging in a diplomatic, dignified defence of its business model in the wake of fierce opposition by US carriers.

Etihad Airways was chosen for the top honour by ATW's distinguished editorial board in a highly contested competition, with entries from more than 100 airlines around the world.

The award was presented at a Gala Dinner attended by industry peers at the 42nd edition of the annual ATW Airline Industry Achievement Awards on the eve of the Singapore Air Show.

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "This award recognises what we set out to do as an airline 13 years ago – to be safe, profitable and simply the best.

"It is a reflection of our strengths – a robust business model and innovative products and superior service delivered by our 27,000 dedicated employees. I am delighted to accept this award on their behalf. As an airline, we have offered a unique proposition to the travelling public and expanded our business to help shape the changing global aviation landscape."

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To earn the top accolade, ATW said an airline must demonstrate exceptional achievements and capabilities across its operations, financial performance, customer service, safety and employee relations. The executive leadership team must also clearly show innovation and strategic thinking that sets the company apart.

Karen Walker, Air Transport World Editor-in-Chief, said: “Etihad Airways is clearly an airline apart from the pack and one that sets its own course. It is a pleasure to celebrate the achievements of the Etihad Airways team at the 2016 ATW Airline Achievement Awards in Singapore. Etihad is highly deserving of our top award, Airline of the Year. James Hogan puts it best - it's not about being the biggest, it's about being the best.”

- On products and customer service, Etihad Airways was described by ATW as being bold and innovative, highlighting the introduction of unique Airbus A380 and Boeing 787 cabin interiors as setting industry benchmarks. These include The Residence – the world’s first three-room on board apartment comprising a bedroom, lounge and ensuite shower.
- On airline tie-ups, ATW noted Etihad Airways’ equity stakes in selected airlines around the world as being the foundation of its business model. Equity stakes in airberlin, Swiss-based Darwin Airline, Air Serbia, Alitalia, Jet Airways, Air Seychelles and Virgin Australia helped Etihad Airways create a unique proposition of more passenger choice, greater scale for negotiation with key suppliers, enhanced shared training resources for crew and other employees, and heightened network integration.
- On US carriers’ accusing Gulf carriers of anti-competitive practices, ATW said James Hogan and his team maintained dignity by consistently defending Etihad Airways’ business model focusing on the facts rather than personal attacks. ATW editors showered particular praise on Etihad Airways on this issue in which James Hogan said: “Many stones were thrown at us, but we responded calmly and with facts, showing that we bring new competition to markets.”

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- On employees, ATW defined Etihad Airways as a ‘good citizen’ describing its workforce as ‘our family’ and for embarking on aggressive plans to grow its local workforce and offer UAE nationals, now numbering 3,000 within the group, with career paths through various programmes and initiatives. Staff are supported with a 24/7 HR number, a dedicated welfare team, onsite medical centre, gyms to promote wellness and healthy living, top of the range staff accommodation and an onsite nursery.
- On sustainability, ATW commended Etihad Airways for a number of initiatives focused on fuel-saving, pioneering alternative fuel research with key partners, and engaging employees in recycling programmes.

During 2015, Etihad Airways launched six new routes on three continents taking its global network of destinations to 116 with a fleet of 121 aircraft. More than 17 million guests flew on Etihad Airways last year, up from almost 15 million in 2014. Etihad Airways also launched its new Boeing 787 Dreamliner – the first of 71 on order – and phased in the first of 10 Airbus A380 aircraft into its fleet.

Etihad Airways was recognised by ATW’s editorial board for “fast but thoughtful growth, consistently delivering against its targets and always thinking ahead.” The airline was also applauded for its “excellent numbers on financials, cargo and safety.”

Air Transport World is an authoritative monthly magazine serving the needs of the global airline and commercial air transport manufacturing communities. Its renowned editors have been nominated for nearly every major aviation journalism award available thanks to their balanced coverage of the airline industry and incisive reports on trends.

ATW’s Airline Industry Achievement Awards were created in 1974 to recognise excellence across a broad range of airline operations and are widely considered as the most coveted in the aviation industry. The magazine is based in the United States with an editorial team that reaches across the world.

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About Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways began operations in 2003, and in 2015 carried 17.4 million passengers. From its Abu Dhabi base, Etihad Airways flies to, or has announced plans to serve, 116 passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The airline has a fleet of around 120 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, with approximately 200 aircraft on firm order, including 66 Boeing 787s, 25 Boeing 777Xs, 62 Airbus A350s and five Airbus A380s.

Etihad Airways holds equity investments in airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia, and Swiss-based Darwin Airline, trading as Etihad Regional. Etihad Airways, along with airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Etihad Regional, Jet Airways and NIKI, also participate in Etihad Airways Partners, a new brand that brings together like-minded airlines to offer customers more choice through improved networks and schedules and enhanced frequent flyer benefits. For more information, please visit: www.etihad.com