

## A New Way To Fly for Alitalia

Francesca Pili (December 13, 2018)



Alitalia Relaunch. Fabio Maria Lazzerini, Chief Business Officer, met the press at ENIT-Italian National Tourist Board in New York. Talking about the present situation of the Italian airline company and future business developments, the key words are: heading in the right direction. One of the news: Alitalia is launching Washington-Rome route

Some good news about Alitalia, Italy's flag carrier airline company.

Fabio Maria Lazzerini, the Chief Business Officer of Alitalia, met with the press in New York at a very special moment for Alitalia. That same day, December 12th, the Italian government approved the extension of a loan they granted the company a year earlier.

The Chief Business Officer had his previous press briefing in New York almost one year ago, when he had just joined Alitalia.



The Italian airline company's current motto is "Heading in the right direction." "We traveled a lot, we worked a lot over the past year, and our numbers are constantly growing," explained Mr. Lazzerini, who has overseen all of the company's business functions for the last fourteen months.

According to Lazzerini, "All the changes and all the strategies implemented in the first months of the year are now paying off and we are now on quite a stable track of growth." A few numbers that reflect his statement: + 7.1% Pax Revenues YTD, + 9.7% Cargo Revenues YTD, and 1st in the world for punctuality in January 2018.

The numbers are the result of carefully coordinating multiple elements, such as digitalizing customers, which allows over 50% of flyers to check-in with an app, a percentage that shows higher efficiency. Nonetheless, the Alitalia Board wants to improve.

There is also interesting news about the company's flight routes. Most exciting is that for the first time Alitalia will offer a direct flight connecting the two capitals, Rome and Washington.

Another sign of the company's health is the increase of passengers on medium-haul flights, a sector where the competition of low-cost airline companies is particularly strong. As Lazzerini reminded people, the most important low-cost companies in the world are based in Europe.

Alitalia also wants to strike a better balance among the makeup of its clients by combining business travelers and leisure travelers, because, according to Lazzerini, that is "the only way to get the company to be profitable again." To achieve this goal, they have created two major sales units, Business Travel Sales and Leisure Travel Sales, aimed at increasing business awareness and expanding Italy as a destination, with Alitalia as the natural carrier of choice for high-value customers.

There is also good news about services provided by Alitalia. The company is renewing its Magnifica (Magnificent) seating class, which combines Business and First Class amenities. "Utterly Italian, the seats are designed by Poltrona Frau," says Lazzerini. "It has been nominated the best business class seat by the American magazine Global Traveler. Ferragamo designed the amenity kit. Also, for the ninth time [Alitalia] won Best Airlines Cuisine. But we don't want to rest on our laurels, so last November 15th we partnered with Gambero Rosso (the famous Italian restaurant guide) to completely recreate our menus."

Last but not least, Lazzerini revealed the trendiest addition to Alitalia, the new crew uniforms designed by Alberta Ferretti, one of the most prestigious Italian names in the fashion world.

"Thanks to the team, we have been able to re-right and relaunch a company which has been too sleepy in the past year. We are halfway there. Our work isn't done yet, not completely. Alitalia is still a little bit too much like a local grocer. We're nice, you can spend a little time chatting with us, but we need to increase the options for our customers, otherwise they will opt for big supermarkets where they can find two hundred routes. And they'll continue to fly with them even when you operate the same routes."

Lazzerini concluded the press conference by mentioning the attention that the company is giving to the Customer Care Center. Improving customer care is an important step toward realizing the company's efforts to remaking itself.



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