

Star Alliance named as world's best airline alliance

FRANKFURT June 15, 2005 In a recent passenger survey conducted by Skytrax, the specialist air transport research organisation, Star Alliance, the airline network for Earth[®], has been named the world's[™] best airline alliance. This honour for Star Alliance comes as part of the 2005 World Airline Awards and is also the second time in three years that the alliance has been given this accolade.

“Obtaining this award is a clear endorsement from our customers that our product delivery works. After all, the quality of an alliance is not only measured by the performance of individual carriers, but more importantly by ensuring that customer benefits promised under the Star Alliance brand are delivered in a consistent and reliable fashion throughout our network”, said Jaan Albrecht, CEO Star Alliance.

Star Alliance's[™] vision is to be the leading global airline alliance for the high value international traveller. In order to achieve this, the alliance has in the eight years since its inception been working at better meeting the requirements of the international traveller.

One such need is global reach. With its 16 member carriers presently serving 795 destinations in 139 countries, Star Alliance offers the most comprehensive network of any airline alliance. In order to provide optimal connections, the alliance has been working on improving facilities at its key hubs. “We are very pleased that five of our major hubs have actually been voted into the Top 10 airports category at the Skytrax awards”, commented Albrecht.

Additionally, research has shown that access to lounges is extremely important to frequent travellers. Star Alliance is in a position to offer its Gold Card holders (top tier customers in the individual carriers' frequent flyer programmes) access to more than 620 lounges, again more than any other airline alliance. “Even though as an alliance we do not influence the actual lounge product of the member carriers, it makes us proud to see that out of the Top 10 First Class Lounges, four are operated by current member carriers, with a further two belonging to our future member carriers. Needless to say that in the rankings for Business Class Lounges, five of the Top 10 positions are also held by either current or future Star Alliance member carriers”, added Albrecht.

Winning this award strengthens Star Alliance's[™] commitment in further improving the travel experience for customers. Examples of this are for instance the expansion of the network to 846 destinations in 151 countries, through the future integration

of both South African Airways and SWISS; on the products side, interline electronic ticketing links are in place between all member carriers with product implementation due to be completed by August 2005; on airport facilities, the alliance is implementing more co-location projects at key airports such as the new Bangkok airport, London " Heathrow, Miami, Paris " CDG, Tokyo " Narita, just to name a few.

About Star Alliance:

Star Alliance was established in 1997 as the first truly global airline alliance to offer customers global reach and a smooth travel experience. The members are Air Canada, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, bmi, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Spanair, TAP Portugal, Thai Airways International, United, US Airways and VARIG Brazilian Airlines. South African Airways and SWISS will be integrated during the course of the next 12 months. Overall, the member carriers offer more than 15,000 daily flights to 795 destinations in 139 countries.

About the survey:

The Best Airline Alliance award results from an annual poll of Skytrax readers, and its influential Business Research Group (BRG). The BRG has over 35,000 frequent flyers worldwide, and includes some of the most widely travelled passengers in the world. During the survey period (August 2004 – April 2005), a total of 1,627,440 interviews were completed for the Best Airline Alliance survey.

All interviewees were asked to nominate a Best Airline Alliance, and rank the following alliance attributes for their selected Alliance.

- Ease of collecting & using FFP miles across different airlines in the alliance
- Cross-member airport services, check-in, ticketing, transit etc
- Corporate branding for airline alliance in airport environments
- Ability to use airport lounges for different airlines in airline alliance
- Quality of airport lounge facilities available for alliance members
- Member recognition & assistance amongst the different alliance member airlines
- Consistency of the seating product amongst member airlines
- Consistency of onboard service between the member airlines
- Quality of Inflight Entertainment facilities between the member airlines
- Ability for top tier members to gain upgrades on member airline flights

- Allocation of preferred seating for top tier alliance members