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### **On Your Flight Today – Season 1, Episode 3**

**Recorded: Dec 2022 | Live Date: Feb 2023**

**Host:** Corinne Streichert

**Guest:** David Kondo, Head of Customer Experience and Product Design, Finnair

[Corinne]: David Kondo, thank you for joining us. How are you today?

[David]: Good thank you thanks for having me.

[Corinne]: My pleasure, my pleasure. So you're coming to us now from Helsinki in Finland is that correct?

[David]: I am yes just about to fly out for the holidays.

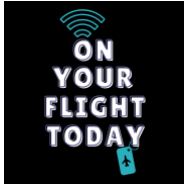
[Corinne]: Wow! Are you joining the same flight as Santa? (chuckles)

[David]: Not sure if he's on my flight. I think he's already done his flights for this year. We did a into tour earlier in the year but ...Yeah.

[Corinne]: I saw him snoring on a video on LinkedIn in the AirLounge {laughing}

[David]: Yep we are the official airline of Santa.

[Corinne]: It looks fantastic and if he loves it you know... it's magnificent. Finnair has done some great stuff this year, award winning innovation and it's an honour to have you on the show to share more about those experiences and that's what I'm hoping to be able to do over the next hour or so and getting some insights and behind-the-scenes and customer experience. I know you've done a lot of interviews and there's a lot of material out there about the actual Airlounge and the whole long-haul experience. I'm not gonna cover that ground again because I know there's a lot out there already. But what I do want to do is take a little bit of behind-the-scenes if we can whatever you're comfortable sharing, and also talking more about your customer feedback. The new long-haul cabin experience obviously kicked off in May 2022, of this year on your A350 it's been almost a year are you able to share some of the customers feedback that you've had so far?



[David]: Yeah I mean the feedback for us has been overwhelmingly positive I would say.

[Corinne]: Oh good.

[David]: Ah, quite surprisingly positive actually. You know we've seen a significant increase on the NPS for the routes that have that aircraft.

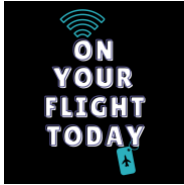
[Corinne]: Oh fantastic.

[David]: We've been able to see the difference between cabins because we have, you know as you know we're still in the retrofit process. So, we have a mixed fleet at the moment and it's an interesting way we can kind of do some A/B testing on the two cabins and see and there with the new cabins we do see a significant increase on the NPS. Yeah, so there's the NPS piece that's there and then of course you know verbatim feedback we get a lot of feedback through our customers through other channels. Also you know just through social media for example. It's been very well received by customers.

[Corinne]: Unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to fly the product yet but I did get to sitting at AIX in Hamburg in June and it was magnificent and I thought great I can't wait to try this in flight. However, what was really interesting I know Richard Quest, the journalist flew the AirLounge a few months ago and he made an interesting comment. He said 'if you can get over the fact that it doesn't recline, it's great but some people can't' so I guess I'm curious have you had have you had feedback from people who haven't been able to get used to not being able to recline in and how has that been?

[David]: Yeah, it's been a big shift because I think a lot of customers you know, a lot of airline seats that they're pretty standard right. They all recline, and I think everyone kind of expects a recline button especially in business class you expect to recline, you know as a button and motors and gadgets to wear away. So, it's been a big mind shift for our customers and there has been, you know, it has been challenging for some just because you know it is a very different way of how you use the seat. So instead of the seat kind of adapting or changing to how you want it you kind of need to shift how you sit within the seat. So, we have like a much larger space and you can you're kind of free to move within that. Yeah, it's been interesting to see how people use it because everyone uses a bit differently. So, we do have a video at boarding that shows you kind of how to use the seat and kind of gives you some tips and how to use the different pillows and that kind of thing but it's definitely a bit of learning curve and we're still kind of working on, on how do we communicate that better to customers.

[Corinne]: Okay so it's like kind of part of the welcome video in that particular cabin? Things about the cabin and what to expect and how to kind of get by in there?



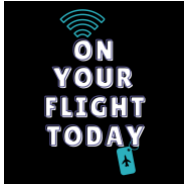
[David]: Exactly so, there's a video that's on the Home screen of the IFE so when you sit immediately, and the idea is that the crew will kind of gesture to that video if you're new to the seat just to sort of explain the concept around it.

[Corinne]: As you've said you've had a lot of great feedback and it's really well received and it's won a tonne of awards. Congratulations on all those awards obviously a lot of hard work and I know that these new programs, you know when you're getting in there the desire is just to deliver a great product. You're not thinking of the accolades or anything like that. The reward comes when the customers go wow this is great. I guess from a customer perspective again, I'm curious has the feedback been different from Finland flyers versus say USA or other? I think you're flying to Singapore, so Singaporean? Do you find a difference in feedback based on the demographic of the customer?

[David]: Yeah, we do find differences and demographics but I think that's kind of not really driven so much by the product in that I think different demographics just rate and use NPS differently regardless of the product. So, in the case of the AirLounge I mean that product was very squarely targeted towards the Asian market. So, prior to Covid, prior to Russian air space closure you know Asia was very much the heart of our strategy at Finnair. So, it was very much targeted to that market. However, with the closure of Russian air space we have pivoted west and we are flying a lot more to America than we have in the past. Which kind of makes a bit interesting to see how AirLounge fares in that market but we've found again that it's worked really quite well in that market as well.

[Corinne]: I guess because everybody is used to like I said fully reclining you know when you get a seat that doesn't recline in America, it means you are on a low-cost carrier. It's a whole new concept probably takes a lot of getting use to, but interesting to see how that that feedback does differ. You know you can't please everybody, but it sounds like you guys have done a really great job of you know getting it right which I think is fantastic. Were there any key features, any particular amenities or service items or parts of the service that have proven to be more popular than what had been anticipated? Like feedback that surprised you like 'oh customers really liked this'?

[David]: So, I think we have have some really long standing partnerships with some really iconic design houses here in Finland. So the first one is probably with iittala so iittala is a glassware company in Finland. I think that's actually the oldest company in Finland. We have glassware from them still onboard the 'Ultima Thule' glass which was designed back in 1968 I believe for the launch our New York services. Those glasses are still onboard to this day, they are quite an icon. And we kind of extended that partnership through this this project where we created a new dining collection with them. So we worked with one of Finland's top industrial designers and with iittala to create a new collection of tableware. The other partnership we have is with Marimekko, hugely popular in Asia especially also and quite well known through the world and

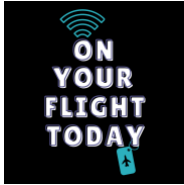


we developed a new sort of sleep wear and textile range with them. We had had Marimekko with us previously but i think we've kind of evolved the partnership somewhat and made it a bit more - we kind of muted the colors a bit more made it more on brand with Finnair kind of made it a bit more more subtle as well and I think in a way made it a lot more premium that way as well. So one of the most popular products for example in Premium Economy, we actually have like a neck pillow like a travel neck pillow that you kind of see in a sort of retail space and that we provide to our Premium Economy customers and that combined with the head rest of the seat creates a really nice sort of cradle sleep position.

[Corinne]: Great, I suppose everybody's kind of focused on the AirLounge you know but you guys have a very competitive Premium Economy product as well.

[David]: We are the launch customer of the Haeco vector premium seat. So we get nice commonality between the Economy class seat and Premium Economy which is based on the same platform but with our Premium Economy seat we we really customised a lot of features of it's kind of taking advantage being the launch customer. So, the width of the seat are very much custom, so a lot of platform products you see out there kind of work across multiple aircraft platforms and you see compromises and in the width of the seat. We really kind of adapted it specifically for 330 and 350 so you get really nice kind of shoulder clearance in Premium Economy which has been a bit of a challenge on 350 for some of the other carriers because you'll see some doing 7 abreast some do 8 abreast and 8 abreast can be a bit of a squeeze but when we you know optimised our widths, we were able to get like a really nice level of comfort. There's an 8 inch recline, there's a nice waterfall leg rest that kind of supports the whole leg, so a lot of work went into the comfort and ergonomics of memory foam has been integrated into the cushions, as well. Lots of storage features as well, so we kind of really thought about, similar to Business class, how do you kind of create this, this you're going to be living in the space effectively for you know 10-12 how many hours, how do you kind of create that that sense of home or a sense of your own space. A storage really becomes really important part of that. And particularly in Premium Economy where it can be kind of tricky you know if you're in a window seat, if you're not in an aisle seat it can be a bit difficult to get in and out and you don't want to disrupt the person next to you. So, thinking about how do we maximize that storage so you can put a laptop in the seat for example, which can be there for taxi, take off, landing. There's a pocket for your phone, wallet watch all your kind of personal effects so there's lots of storage built in as well.

[Corinne]: So, you had a clean slate you basically custom designed the seats in the Premium cabins when you first approach that kind of undertaking, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Is it like the skies the limit? I mean how did you approach, okay we've got to clean slate we're going to build something that hasn't been done before?



[David]: Yeah, so I think in the in the earlier days the ambition was big but we weren't necessarily going for like a full on custom product. So it kind of just ended up that way. When we started the product we knew we wanted you know a really great new long whole product and we started looking in market and we really looked it now really everything that was out there. We left no stone unturned. We talked to everybody, you know we did the rounds at Hamburg and different sites of different vendors to look at what they had. And we kind of felt that it was all kind of a bit same-same. You know we must have looked at about 20 different seats but they were all kind of nothing that new really. And we stumbled across AirLounge and then and then that's when we got really excited about okay well this is this pretty cool. This is something different. Um and that's kind of where it started. So, I think had there been an off the shelf product that that we would have loved, we probably would have gone for that. But then seeing what what the art of possible was, I think that's what kind of triggered us to kind of think even bigger and go for it.

[Corinne]: So I guess I think you've been quoted as saying that you saw it somewhere and so you were tasked with going back to your leadership saying 'hey new business seat but it doesn't recline', how did you sell that concept? {Chuckles} I guess you know how did you pitch it to them?

[David]: Yeah, I remember going into our Executive board and showing some renderings and a lot of confused puzzled faces {laughing} and a lot of questions "Really, are you serious?" {Chuckles} and I think that's been one of the challenges with the marketing as well right. That unless you kind of get into the seat and kind of feel the space. you don't really get the concept. So we actually brought the seat, the exact sort of mock-up that we saw, we actually shipped it to Helsinki for our senior leadership check out and we ran a bunch of tests with with our staff as well to have a look at and vet it, and there I think a lot of people really just just fell in love with the concept.

[Corinne]: Yeah, and I must admit I was probably in that kind of group as well you know obviously a lot of news watching it and learning it and trying to really understand how does this work? It wasn't until I sat in it in Hamburg, and it was like 'oh wow', because how do you lie down but you're just like you know once you understand how it works and everything like it's fantastic. I think it's very smart and obviously there's huge weight savings.

[David]: Yeah, so the original aim was for it to be a lot lighter than it was. But it did kind of get a bit heavier through the program, So so there are some weight savings in it probably not as much as we would have would have liked to be honest. It did kind of creep up through the program but I think that's part of any new program there's always that kind of unknown and there's that risk of that happening. I think future generations of that seat will get lighter and there are a lot of lessons learned through this program um yeah.



[Corinne]: Yeah, and I totally understand. You've got the vision for the product and you start out at the beginning of the program, here's how we're going to do it and then you're compromising the whole way through. You know, and that can be over 2-3 years and should your leadership change in between that, I don't know if that happened to you, then you

[David]: It did yep.

[Corinne]: Yep, it did, so okay. I know {laughing} I think we know what we're talking about and I think our audience will work that out as well. But then you know obviously potential change direction and then the changes, so whatever you set out to do, I don't think it ever comes out that way but it still comes out great, but it does go on quite a journey to develop product in this space.

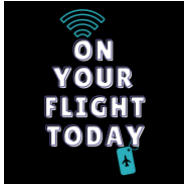
[David]: Lots of compromises with engineering and manufacturing and there's always hiccups through the whole program. So knowing what we know now, the seat would probably look a little bit different compared to where we started out, that's how it goes.

[Corinne]: You know I totally get it. You know I did a massive program a few years ago for IFE and it's not until afterwards that you think okay, and i've been asked the question, would you do anything differently. Absolutely! You know but it would only be an improvement on whatever was delivered. But you do look back and it's the learnings you get along the way and they think well next time I'll get it right, so I totally totally understand that experience and I think you know sometimes we're a bit hard on ourselves, you just want it to be perfect. It's just it's the nature of the business.

[David]: I don't think perfect really exists doesn't it. You get it as good as it can be but i don't think you'll ever get to perfect unfortunately.

[Corinne]: Yeah we'll never get there, but I think, you know, I always accepted that but I like to kind of have that as a goal and try and get as close to it as possible. Knowing you never reach it but for sure it's true. Can you share did you do a lot of sleep studies with this seat when you were testing throughout the development? Like getting actual customers in and going through that whole sleep study process?

[David]: Yep so in the earlier days when we're still looking for seats we actually shipped a number of seats to Finland, and there we did a series of workshops both with our frequent flyers and our staff to look at you know how they scored. So we kind of got them to try them out and evaluate them on different metrics. Um, and there also we could see where AirLounge was kind of hitting above the others. That kind of informed it. Then throughout development of AirLounge once we have selected it once we were in program, you know there the testing continued so we had ergonomic trials for example. So we had sessions where, you know just



regular people were coming in and we would have them in for several hours in the seat to kind of observe and get them to evaluate. Okay what's how's the comfort here? What do we need to change? And that really helped inform the design also of how we made AirLounge and some of the features, and particularly some of the soft product as well. You know because the seat doesn't recline the pillows and you know the ancillary products around it become ever more important so how do we kind of design that piece of it as well.

[Corinne]: Unless you work in this space, people don't realise how much research goes into it. you know it's so easy for these Aviation enthusiasts that get online and go "oh they should have done this, they should have done that" you know, but they don't realise that a lot of testing has already been done to get to where it is. Majority rules most of the time you know. And thank you for sharing this insight because hopefully that kind of educates people that this isn't easy and it's not like it's not a guessing game either. There's a lot of science and a lot of study behind those decisions that go into cabin interiors. As you mentioned you're currently still going through the retrofit program, and we know that that can go on for a couple of years. As you're going through this retrofit program, are you getting the opportunity to iron out any wrinkles that you may have found? Because you know EIS (Entry into service), I don't know anyone that's going into EIS with a perfect product. So I there's some stuff you can't share but what you can share, is there the opportunity to iron out some of those wrinkles? Is there anything kind of slightly improved that we could see on the future aircraft that are going to undergo retrofit?

[David]: Yeah a lot of that activity has already started. So for sure we had wrinkles at entry into service i think every product does. So there's kind of a long list and backlog of stuff we're trying to work through to kind of constantly improve. Nothing majorly obvious to the customer I would say you know like if we kind of took a frequent flyer and said it you know what what have we change in this i think they would even struggle to pick up what we've done with it. But for example, you know the table on the AirLounge, the table has been redesigned probably about four times through this program. It's been a real child just because it's got a lot of movement in the table and it's it's quite a long arm on it to come across from the console over to the comfortable sort of dining position. So that table is what kind of been constantly tweak to kind of improve it even when when we delivery of the aircraft it was actually a different table that was on there and we had to swap the table prior to entry of service after delivery as well.

[Corinne]: Okay so you'll be cutting in this new table throughout and going back to um update?

[David]: Yeah, so now it's pretty much done. You'll see the new standard table pretty much everywhere now it's i think it's pretty much done it was kind of in the earlier phase of aircraft. But yeah there'll be tons of other small minor improvements moving forward i think. Just to improve little bits of, we're all chasing for better reliability and durability of course also.



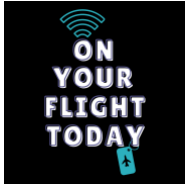
[Corinne]: Absolutely, because i know you have seen in the past that you took a modular approach for this very reason to be able to continuously innovate and enhance the product. So that modular approach, are you able to kind of shed some light on how that approach has been different to approaches that you've taken in the past?

[David]: So aircraft seats tend to be like really kind of integrated, it's almost like the whole thing is glued together and you can't touch a single bit of it (chuckles ) is usually how it goes or how it seems anyway. A table, is the, the table on the AirLounge is probably a good example of that that modular approach. So that whole table that consists of the cocktail table, the tray table, the console button, it all lifts as one sort of cassette basically as one entity. So they're like replacing the whole table then is not you know as huge task as it might be in some other other seats because it's it is kind of modular. The other reason we really were keen to push modularity, is that typical hard product on aircraft these days last 8 maybe 10 years if you're lucky, but you want that opportunity to refresh mid-cycle and the opportunity of refreshment mid-cycle can often be like horrendously expensive. Whereas with our seat we've kind of made it so that you can, you know, change out all the dress covers change the decorative laminate shells on the outside, change some of the other trimming features, aspects of it that will give them a totally different look and quite a refreshed new look for relatively minimal cost.

[Corinne]: So I guess in terms of sustainability, obviously an industry buzzword at the moment more from a decarbonization perspective, but you know it applies to all aspects of the aircraft, can you share some insight into how the compromise was made between weight and experience and also how sustainability factored into that?

[David]: Yeah, so I think one of the big trade-offs with with I mean there's a lot weight versus privacy, that's a really big one, and there for example, you know as an example, the AirLounge seat, it sits higher than what most other seats sit at. So, the shell height is actually a bit higher than most other seats, and and that was really for privacy. And of course, that adds weight and it adds bulk but we felt that need for privacy. We don't have a door on the seat. A lot of seats these days have doors, kind of the new kind of almost like becoming hygiene factor in business class that like tick you have to have door. Which also adds a tremendous amount of weight, which is really interesting to the sustainability piece. If you have a hard fixed door, you're probably adding you know back when we were looking at it you're adding sort of between 10 - 15 kilos potentially, to every seat, just to have a door. So, we kind of approached it a bit differently but how do we kind of create that sense of privacy without the door. Yeah I mean adding bulk and height and adding that privacy there is weight there. Similar with Premium Economy, the shells are quite vertical so and a lot of other Premium Economy seats you'll see the seat back is kind of narrow and kind of sculptured to take into account the sidewall curvature. The idea is that you have one seat that kind of fits in all positions. Whereas we actually had seats specifically for the side walls, and then we had centre seats that kind of we're wider than the standard to kind of create that effect in privacy. That also adds weight but





we felt that it was it was worth it in that case. Everywhere else, I mean we you know when when we're looking at all these kind of different factors and all and all the decisions we're making, weight is constantly front of mind. So I think know every decision we made got very heavily scrutinised from a weight perspective and how do we minimise it as much as possible. But I think it's, it's important to recognize also that it's not a seat that doesn't weigh anything is not possible either right, it has got to weight something, so it's how do you best find that balance.

[Corinne]: There is definitely a trade-off but then you've got to think okay, how is this going to affect the experience, whether it be privacy, comfort and all of that. So I think especially for a full service airline you can only go so cheap, and you can only compromise up to a certain point before you start to look like a low cost carrier I think.

[David]: Yeah, yep. We did a lot also in terms of where else can we take weight away right like how, how do you, how do you not compromise a passenger experience but what weight can you take a way that the customer doesn't see? So for example in the catering equipment with the new iittala tableware that we talked about, you know that's 20% lighter than the previous generation of tableware that it replaced. Potable water, huge weight source on the aircraft. How do you optimise the water on board the aircraft? You know so there is a lot of savings you can do in other ways, and for sure cabin contributes to it, but I think you need to see the overall bigger picture.

[Corinne]: I know Eerika and Harri know the key points of contact for IFE, but on that comment that you made, how much do you feel digitization I mean I haven't had a chance to fly to see the full product but how much is you know leveraging technology in the cabin to gain benefits in weight reduction?

[David]: I think digitization has has a lot to contribute in terms of weight saving. But I think we're only starting to scratch the surface. I mean at least a lot of the manuals and that kind of stuff have been digitized that that helps a lot. Inflight magazine we no longer have, I mean that I think many Airlines we got rid of that during the Covid years. But i think yeah i think it has a long way to go especially in terms of weight of the system itself as well right, I mean if you install a IFE system these days it's it's incredibly heavy.

[Corinne]: They're getting lighter though over time. They've been getting lighter, yeah.

[David]: Yeah but it's still pretty hefty. I think we still have a long way to go.

[Corinne]: And on that note of inflight entertainment in terms of the overall cabin design and experience, how did that play into it? I mean obviously you were taking a step back you're looking at the seat the service and how did you see the IFE, how did you envisage it at a high



level, fitting into the overall experience? How does it tie into the Nordic magic and also with the lighting as well?

[David]: Yeah so I think one of the key aims of this this whole project is really how do we create a sort of seamless and integrated environment, because a lot of cabins tend to get design kind of in silos. That the seat is designed this in this department and the soft product design there and then IFE is done in that department and then lighting is somebody else over there. We really wanted to tie this all together so the IFE was very much part of the overall design scheme of the aircraft, so much so that the visuality of the IFE was even built to tie in with the overall cabin.

[Corinne]: The branding and the themes and reflecting the signature elements.

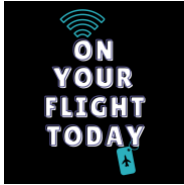
[David]: Yeah, exactly so we have sort of Nordic imagery as the home screens for example. Overall the IFE is kept quite dark I would say, because the lighting is a really important aspect of the cabin experience especially on a night departure, the cabin will be already quite dim to kind of create that calming relaxed atmosphere and then kind of translating that to the IFE experience that how do we kind of create that you know, it drives me nuts when you get like a full on white screen and an IFE and it's kind of blinding right so, how do you kind of tone that down and make it you know nice and dark so that it's nice and easy on the eyes and it's kind of helping to create that overall experience within cabin.

[Corinne]: Were you able to tie in the IFE screen with the actual mood lighting on the aircraft?

[David]: At least with the seat, we have integrated like a day and night, and there is some connection with the IFE there that's how we actually trigger control it. They will actually cap the lighting levels of the seat depending on day flight, night flight. Yeah, because you know how some sometimes you're in the middle of the night and there's always one that wants all the light in the world and it just lights up the whole cabin it seems, so we actually went and how do we kind of limit to some extent.

[Corinne]: But i do hope one day I can have Eerika and Harri on to do a deep dive of the IFE but I would like to try it out and I know Harri recently said 'it's just the beginning' so it's going to be very exciting to see you know what they come out with next.

[David]: At Finnair one of our core values is simplicity and I think that's really exemplified in this GUI that it's, you know everything just works. It's really clear, simple it's really relevant to the flight as well because there's a journey map that shows you you know what's what's happening on your flight and the times of you know when the next service is and what's happening when so and also when you transfer Helsinki for example, it will give you gate information about your transfer etc.



[Corinne]: You got the connecting gate features.

[David]: Yeah, but as you mentioned this is just the beginning, so it's kind of you know, we want, we launched with kind of the basic product but it will be continuously developed and it continuously does. There's constant kind of development updates for it.

[Corinne]: Getting back to the experience. So there's always learning after every project we touched on this earlier. Looking back with the benefit of hindsight is there anything you would do differently?

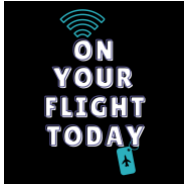
[David]: If we are thinking about Business class i guess, there as i mentioned before, i think with the benefit of hindsight, i think that seat would look quite different to what it does now had we known what we do know. The panels for the bed for example, you know you mentioned before how do i make it into a bed, you know there are these two panels that come up and meet and create the bed surface. So that that whole interface and how that comes together i think we would have, would have re-thought. The original sort of design of that system was actually quite different in the program, but you know, as you know you go through the program and you find that that doesn't quite work so you need to rethink but i think that's one piece that the kind caught us out a few times that we had to rethink a few times through the program. So i think that would be the biggest one that would probably go back maybe change. There's also just small things like some of the finishes maybe, that we would have, some of the like the buttons that we do have for the lighting, etc and the control PCU, little touches like that we probably would have done differently. So there's lots of little things that kind of come together to create that experience that we probably would have done a little bit differently. I think if someone comes on to take on the next iteration of that product, I think it ill kind of it would be even better because I think there's a lot of potential in that that product and it is a platform product thats offered by Collins so hopefully we'll see it flying with someone else, but yeah lots of potential in it I think.

[Corinne]: Do you know if anyone else has signed up for it? I've heard there's been a lot of interest.

[David]: There has been a lot of interest, a lot of inquiries, but to my understanding, no-one has signed yet, is my understanding yeah.

[Corinne]: Okay interesting, they're probably testing it out and flying back and forth from Helsinki to make their mind up.

[David]: It's interesting to get a lot of airlines flying us and get a note afterwards saying 'oh flew your product, loved it, fantastic'. {Chuckles}

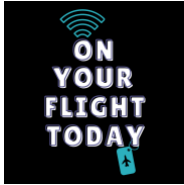


[Corinne]: You know I'm not surprised. It is very very innovative and looks fantastic and like I said, when I sat in it, I thought I can't wait to try this out in the air. So, you guys deserve all the success you know for taking a chance, coming up with something completely different that people, you know that fly these premium cabins are not used to and it has paid off. So congratulations on that. Since all the success of the long-haul cabins you've now transitioned to a similar role focused on the ground. Having read that the long-haul cabin experience was a continuation of what had been planned for the ground, so it really kind of all started off on the ground beforehand didn't it? Before it made it into the cabin?

[David]: Yeah, so we actually designed the lounges and the aircraft at the same time. So this was all kind of part of program to kind of renew the look and feel of Finnair. So it was really nice to have that opportunity to kind of really rethink and kind of be able to touch all of our touchpoints. Yeah, the Non-Schengen lounges which are really kind of our international long-haul, they were the first to kind of sport this new look, that we have at Finnair. And there we developed that that look with Tangerine who you know was focused on the aircraft side but then we had Coco3 who was doing our lounges. But in those early phases of design and defining that look and feel, we actually collaborate with both of them. So we actually had workshops where both parties were working together on this new look.

[Corinne]: So now that you have transitioned to a airport experience on the ground, what can we expect to say? Can you give us any hints?

[David]: Yeah so I think one of one of the key drivers in the new long-haul product was really around how do we challenge what aircraft is, Right like we really kind of rethought what an aircraft could be, and I've kind of taken that that thinking word or challenge mindset to the airport space as well. Because a lot of airports are really same-same right. So we have the fantastic new departure hall in Helsinki think that's just opened and it's still kind of getting you know, the there's kind of constant tweaking going on in there, to kind of finish off the build but how do we how do we make it seem less airport-like? So for example, in the in the priority area for or our business class customers and frequent flyers you know we've tried to make that more like a sort of hotel lobby, sort of, rather than a typical checking. So there's no monitors or screens above each desk position saying 'Business' you know, for example, there's no monitors there. We've created these oak desks that are kind of similar to the galley on the A350 so when you walk in there's kind of this oak credenza so kind of mirroring that design language in the airports as well. The back wall of the check in is this grey felt curtain that's again similar to what you would see on the aircraft so kind of lots of visual clues that that really tie air and ground together.



[Corinne]: Okay, so kinda happy with the lounges where it is now and now focusing on connecting the whole Check-in and airport experience to make it more consistent, would that be correct?

[David]: Yeah, so the lounge for the long-haul Non-Schengen lounges that was refurbished in 2018, I believe. So that's very much sporting the new look already of the new cabins because they were designed at the same time. Yeah so that piece is kind of done and aligned with the long-haul product. And now the check-in hall and departure experience is kind of tied in with that new look. I think what we still need to do in the future and have a think about is really the short-haul experience. So the Schengen lounge, which is kind of your European lounge, plus a lot of the short-haul product is probably next up to be kind of renewed.

[Corinne]: Thank you so much for sharing that insight some behind-the-scenes, what's working what's exciting stuff that's coming and some of the projects and just sharing your overall experience and how you've created with your team and all your partners an award-winning new long-haul cabin experience that everybody is talking about. Again, congratulations on that. But what I like to do now is kind of pivot a little bit to what I think is quite a fun part. It gives the audience a chance to get to know you a little bit better and get to know a little bit about Finland. So I haven't had the pleasure of visiting and I know we were talking before i know you've pretty much raised in Australia, so we've got all that in common and you know what life is like down there. So I guess for Helsinki where you're based, for someone that has never been there what would probably be something that they would have to see, and what would be something they would have to eat?

[David]: So I think sauna would be a must do . There's more saunas than cars in Finland, so it's a huge part of our culture.

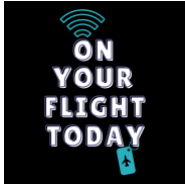
[Corinne]: Sauna? S-a-u-n-a?

[David]: Yeah.

[David]: So the sauna culture is huge. So, I definitely recommend doing that. There's quite a few sort of public saunas as well where you can sauna and then you can have a dip into the water as well. So you can kind of cycle that. It's really nice. There's one that I go to near my house and it it's right on the water and if it's the water is frozen they will break the ice open so you can access the water.

[Dorinne]: Wow, so everybody is essentially getting into this hot room, sweating it out and then diving into a freezing cold lake?

[David]: Yep, and then doing it over and over again.



[Corinne]: Really is that's why everybody has such great skin I've noticed.

[David]: Probably.

[David]: Yeah, that and maybe because everyone's frozen but yeah. (chuckles)

[Corinne]: Wow, so I did not realise that you know that's that's, that's quite a thing, you know.

[David]: Yeah.

[Corinne]: Wow.

[David]: Huge yeah.

[Corinne]: Gymnasiums and kind of health clubs and leisure clubs theres a sauna?

[David]: Everywhere and most people have one in their homes also you know.

[Corinne]: Well there are showers now I know that can have that feature in it is.

[David]: Yeah.

[Corinne]: Really? I never would have thought that was a thing? And so I'm imagining there in all the hotels that's everywhere.

[David]: Oh yeah yeah, even most office buildings will have a sauna in Finland.

[Corinne]: So when you go to work you take your swimmers with you and a towel and then you just go like heat up at lunchtime ?

[David]: Yeah, we might have a team meeting in the sauna. A lot of decisions get made in saunas in Finland.

[Corinne]: Really {laughing}

[David]: Yeah

[Corinne]: Wow I had no idea . So aside from the sauna what would be I guess a sight to see in Helsinki?



[David]: Oh, that's a tricky one because it's kind of ...Helsinki. I don't know that it's not such a sightseeing city, it's more lifestyle city.

[Corinne]: Yeah.

[David]: It's kind of like Melbourne right. Like Melbourne's not there's nothing. It's like Melbourne versus Sydney. Sydney has got all the sites but Melbourne doesn't really have much.

[Corinne]: Don't let the Melbourners hear you say that (laughing)

[David]: Uh but it's it's it's like Melbourne a lot, and that it's just a really nice city to live in and be in.

[Corinne]: Four seasons in one day, very cosmopolitan and ..

[David]: Yeah cold and dark in the winter.

[Corinne]: Different climate yeah, melbourne's kind of you know, I love melbourne but yeah.

[David]: The seasonality here is great because in Finland we've got winter, it is really short dark days, lots of snow but then in summer, the sun doesn't go down and it's nice and warm so very very different kind of seasonality to Melbourne.

[Corinne]: For sure, so I guess I have to ask you, I know you've spent some time in Brisbane one of my favourite places is Queensland, particularly tropical north Queensland I really love. How have you adapted to the climate in Finland coming out of kind of a Australia, Melbourne still quite warm relatively warm Brisbane as well. How did you adapt to that? Because I know coming from Sydney to Chicago, everybody that knows me, it was the first time I saw snow in Chicago and after I saw it for a day I was like, that's enough, but then it continued for six months and I think six years in Chicago lovely place fantastic food the people and everything but I'm not used to that climate. So how did you adapt?

[David]: Yeah overall pretty well but I remember when I when I first got here you know I left Melbourne on it was like 30 or 35 degrees or something and I landed in Helsinki was like -10. I was like oohh, so that was a bit of a shock but I got used to it pretty quickly and like I mentioned that the seasonality of it all is really nice so you kind of have winter where you you hibernate and I agree snow it's kind of it's nice to look at but not nice to be in. { Laughing } But then you've got the summer months which are really lovely, you know long long warm days.



[Corinne]: Yeah 'cause you've got sunlight till it's a bit like when I was in Hamburg it was daylight 11 o'clock at night so it's pretty much the same in Helsinki and you get the whole northern lights as well.

[David]: Not in Helsinki itself. I mean it does, you can see it here occasionally quite rare though, but you really have to go up north for that.

[Corinne]: And in terms of typical Finland food, is there like a cuisine, anything have to try eat some of this?

[David]: There's quite a quite a huge food scene here in Helsinki. I think the most sort of dish that would kind of sum up Finland to me really is traditional salmon soup. So it's very like creamy salmon and potato soup, it's delicious.

[Corinne]: And that's traditional Finland cuisine?

[David]: I would say so yeah, or at least it kind of to me epitomises Finnish cuisine, its one of the favourites.

[Corinne]: I've never visited. I know some that have and absolutely love it but I guess it's a great opportunity to share with the audience because I don't know how many people are listening have been up to Helsinki and been to Finland. And it's always great to hear from a local in terms of the places to go and the place to see so you know it's definitely the place you've got to bring your swimmers and your towel, so you can get in the sauna. I've actually got some seafood allergies but for those that don't, Salmon soup sounds like it's on the menu.

[David]: Yep

[Corinne]: And I know you've got quite a fantastic background in aviation and you know I know it's not on the list but I just want to quickly touch on that. So I know you've done a stint at Jetstar you've done a stint at Qatar Airlines and you've also done Virgin Australia and Finnair obviously. So you've been to 4 airlines. Is there anyone particular thing that stands out as being so significantly different?

[David]: Ooh um, I said the biggest difference is probably like leadership styles. So, Finland is very democratic very egalitarian. Very consensus based. So any kind of decision needs to be really made as a collective and that contrasts quite sharply on the other end of that spectrum, it's quite a different sort of culture in that respect. The most similar things I think, despite their the glossy kind of image all airlines have from the outside, I think they are all a chaotic mess. {laughing}





[Corinne]: You're spot on, spot on. That is, I don't know there's probably going to be people going on LinkedIn or Twitter going oh my gosh I can't believe you said that blah blah... but it's true. It's true. I've worked at a couple of airlines and you're right it's chaotic, it's messy but somehow like ....

[David]: it all comes together somehow but yeah.

[Corinne]: Yeah, you know I used to sit, I remember sitting very clearly at my desk at Mascot many years ago, when I first really started getting into aviation thinking "how do they get these planes off the ground?" You know, and I remember going home telling my Dad at the time, you just buy the ticket you have no idea what's behind that. How do we do this, and do it so well and do it so often, day in and day out.

[David]: Exactly yeah

[Corinne]: Yeah

[David]: I'm probably being pretty harsh with my words but they are, you know airlines are extremely complex you know, organisations and there's a lot that needs to come together and work together to do what we do.

[Corinne]: Yeah.

[David]: So yeah I think that's probably why I love this industry so much, just because of the complexity in it.

[Corinne]: and the chaos? (laughing)

[David]: Yeah. Well, I mean you have a snow day or you have a baggage melt down. There's constant disruption there. There's always something happening in this industry isn't there?

[Corinne]: Yeah. No 2 days are the same I've found, the years that I've been doing it and even though it might have been in different countries, and I think what brings it all together is the passion of everybody working in it you're in this business because you love it and you love to travel. In closing, I just want to ask you, I'm sure you know, I don't know how much of the social media you read but I do know there's a lot of critics out there and they're pretty harsh. You know and I'm getting out there saying you know 'Fair go', it's not as easy as it looks maybe you make look easy I mean sometimes I find it really demoralising or when you're reading feedback on your product from a customer on Twitter or whatever, that might, it's constructive but sometimes it's just downright nasty sometimes, how does that make you feel?



[David]: Yeah it's not great. You do get it from time to time but you know I think overwhelming you know, most of the commentary we get is by and large positive. So I think we kind of you go back to that, yeah. I think a lot of the of the angry comments where people have seemed to have a bone to pick they have something that that has maybe not gone right for them in the past or something they have a bone to pick. So but we kind of look past those and kind of look at it as a whole and take the good with the bad.

[Corinne]: I guess ultimately you know like you said, there's no such thing as perfection we get out there we do our best every day do the best that we can, and i just hope that this helps to spread the word and the message how hard and challenging it can be. It's a constant compromise , no two days are the same but we do it because we love it and we want people to love what we do and the work and the products and the experiences that we craft for them, i think, you know that that makes it all worthwhile.

[Corinne]: So just some quick questions as well, in terms of what you like and what you don't like, what's your favourite aircraft type?

[David]: So, I have 2 if that's okay, sort of past and present. So, the 747 is definitely the favourite. As I suspect many people's favourite. I feel like I grew up on that plane {laughing} love the 747. I love being upstairs for example, it's just a nice cosy cabin. Um if we go to present, I would say A350 is probably the favourite.

[Corinne]: It's been quite a common one from some of my other guests.

[David]: Yeah, it's an aircraft that I've been since the beginning as well because I was at Qatar when we delivered the very first A350 right and then I've had the opportunity to work with it again at Finnair. So I've kind of seen how the aircraft evolved also from the cabin perspective so it's been really nice to work on that platform.

[Corinne]: Were you involved in the 'Qsuite'?

[David]: I was yes.

[Corinne]: Fantastic, I flown it. It is a great experience so yeah lovely, lovely.

[David]: Thanks.

[corinne]: So were you were you involved in the actual design and experience for that cabin?



[David]: Yes, so I was there and in the very sort of beginning of that project, doing the LOPAs selecting the seats, the basis of that seat basically and then during the initial design development of it on the initial Truman finish.

[Corinne]: What do you like to do, obviously you fly a lot and I know you're flying off later today short-haul or long-haul, what would you like to do? Sleep, eat? Do you watch the IFE? Do you play games, do you get connected to Wi-Fi? What does David do when he's flying?

[David]: Uh, it's getting more and more difficult these days, but I love to disconnect. It seems like every plane these days have a Wi-Fi connection, which you know, it's a bit... but I used to love not being connected. So, reading, just kind of chilling out reading, of course eating. I think food is kind of entertainment when we fly isn't it? Kind the whole kind of experience there and just catching up with movies basically, the usual stuff I would say.

[Corinne]: What's your favourite genre?

[David]: Comedy.

[Corinne]: Yeah, me too {Laughing}.

[David]: Yeah, need a good laugh.

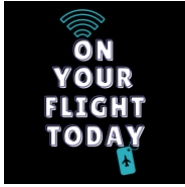
[Corinne]: I actually had someone that said they liked to watch horror inflight because I don't do horror, and I'm like why and it was really funny. He said to me because he knows that there's no monsters under the bed or anywhere on the plane {Laughing}.

[Corinne]: That's going to be one of the episodes i won't name that person here but i thought hey that's quite smart because you know i don't like horrors watching horror at all, but if i do maybe the plane is a place to watch it. So yeah i thought that was a really interesting response to that question.

[David]: Yeah.

[Corinne]: Just in terms of Wi-Fi, I do a lot of research and I do ask all the guests. Have you connected? You don't need to name anyone in particular, but overall, when you have connected, how has the experience been?

[David]: I think for sure there's a lot of improvement that needs to happen in the Wifi space. It is getting better and better but i think you know we're all kind of used to what we get on the ground and its not quite the same as what we get in the air at the moment. So as I said it's getting better and better all the time so.



[Corinne]: And there's a lot of new technology coming out.

[David]: I think the other big challenge we have in the industry is how do we bring the cost down right, because it's horrendously expensive to provide but everyone kind of expects it these days right it's going to be hygiene factor and we're already seeing some airlines that provide it complimentary but the cost of it is tremendous.

[Corinne]: From a customer perspective I've always been challenged with reliability all the guests I've had on the show so far has raised reliability even though i consider it to be kind of mature, it's been about 10, 12 years we've had on a plane but, will it ever get to a ground experience? I don't know, but you who knows, we'll see.

[David]: Yeah.

[Corinne]: We'll see.

[David]: I think we'll get pretty close.

[Corinne]: Yeah, and just finally you know, you obviously fly a lot and you fly different airlines as well. This is an opportunity to give a pat on the back to another airline. And I guess the question is have you experienced something it could be hard products, soft products, service, inflight entertainment, food on another carrier that exceeded your expectation, that you thought 'Wow they did that really well' and I totally understand if you can't say but it's opportunity just recognize the hard work of some other folk at another airline that really surprised you and did something that you didn't expect.

[David]: Yeah, I have been doing a bit of travelling in the US recently and I have to say kind of my recollection of what the typical US experience was versus now has changed quite drastically. There's been a lot of improvement with the US carriers, I think. Much better experience overall, much smoother experience. Maybe a shout out to United and their app. I just found that really easy and simple to use, great communication, lots of info at your fingertips. I thought that was a good experience.

[Corinne]: So, David it has been again congratulations on all the accolades it's been a fantastic new design in long-haul cabin experience, you know won multiple awards. The feedback has been phenomenal, you guys have just really really raised the bar i think in premium cabin and innovation in that space as well, congratulations. Congratulations on your appointment to the Board of Directors for the Airline Passenger Experience and looking forward to seeing you do great things there.



[David]: Thank you very much. I hope to see you in Helsinki soon.

[Corinne]: For sure we'll definitely you know what I'm stopping by and again thank you for your time and for joining us today and if anyone wants to learn more about the product at [www.finnair.com](http://www.finnair.com) ?

[David]: Yep.

[Corinne]: I also assuming Finnair is on all the social media channels, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook.

[David]: We are.

[Corinne]: Great. So, I do encourage everybody if you haven't seen it or haven't flown it to definitely go to have a look at it. Definitely some great innovation happening in that space that Finnair has debuted this year, congratulations again. Thank you again David.

[David]: Thank you.

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