

Pierre Freyssinet
Managing Director
Aeroboutique Inflight Retail

After graduating from Institut d'Etudes Politiques, best known as Sciences Po' Paris, Pierre joined the airlines business and held various Sales & Marketing positions in two airlines. In 1992, he moved to the movie theatre business when French company Pathe Cinema made the first-ever attempts to introduce for the French audience the US concept of multiplexes. Multiplexes derive a large part of their profits from ancillary sales of pop-corn and soft drinks and have developed specific techniques to increase penetration and average spent per head.

With this dual experience, Freyssinet joined Aelia in 1997 to start-up Aeroboutique Inflight Retail (AIR), a pure player in the in-flight concession business. The young company first attempt to bid turned into a winning coup as AIR landed the fiercely disputed Air France contract. Moving from theory to real life with such a large airline was quite a challenge. AIR introduced a totally revamped range, on-board computers and had to organize training sessions for 6,000 crews. On some days remembers Pierre Freyssinet, we had so many training sessions going on that I had to share my own office with 7 crew members and our trainers. Sales per pax quickly soared and AIR got its first industry award the year after from US magazine On-Board Services for Air France's outstanding duty-free service.

The company expanded its customer portfolio in 2000 with Virgin Atlantic Airways, and has since been operating subsidiaries in Morocco, Switzerland and Spain.

Managing large and often complex operations, AIR relies very much on technology to optimize sales or curb down losses and discrepancies. In-flight retailing incurs dealing with multiple flows of highly desirable products and cash envelopes travelling all over the world. Your bright marketing initiatives will ay no dividend if you fail to control pilferage or frauds. Among other initiatives, AIR has developed the SafeTROLLEY, a high security duty-free cart with door-opening tracking and recording capacities. Its effectiveness in curbing down shrinkage and unique design was highlighted by the Mercury Award at the ITCA/IFCA 2005 trade-fair.

Technology also embraces computerized P.O.S. and back-office systems. AIR's new chip-and-pin compliant on-board computer, the SafePOS, enabled AIR to reduce by 70 % credit cards charge-backs on board Air France. New sophisticated promotional tools made possible by the increased processing power of this new generation P.O.S. will also give a new boost to on-board sales.

This, combined with impressive sales per pax growth AIR enjoyed in recent years with Swiss International Air Lines and Royal Air Maroc, won the company a much-coveted "Raven Fox Inflight retailer of the Year 2007" award.