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Economy Class Meals Get an a la Carte Upgrade

Air France, Austrian, Condor, Hawaiian, KLM, and US Airways hope customers will forego free and pay for better food

October 8, 2013, Shorewood, Wisconsin – Consumers and pundits might be surprised, but many managers at traditional airlines don't embrace the zen of frugal inflight fare. It's more glamorous (and easier) to provide fine dining free of charge. But it's economically infeasible. The latest report from IdeaWorksCompany analyzes the efforts by six airlines to create a positive perception of their economy class product by selling upgraded meals and generating some ancillary revenue at the same time.

The airlines reviewed in this report (Air France, Austrian, Condor, Hawaiian, KLM, and US Airways) take a hybrid approach to a la carte. They continue to offer a basic meal service on longer flights. But they also tempt travelers with the opportunity to add a little luxury to the flight experience. The report describes how these airlines strive to create better comfort in the air for those willing to pay a little extra:

- KLM pioneered upgraded economy class dining when it introduced a la carte meals to long haul flights in 2011.
- Air France upgrades its premium offer with a €28 (\$38) signature meal branded by famed restaurateur Maison Lenotre of Paris.
- Austrian disclosed that it sold approximately 600,000 meals during 2012; that's about 6 out of every 100 passengers paying €15 (\$20) for a premium meal.
- Hawaiian offers its \$14 Premium Island Meals for sale in the gate area before the departure of flights between the US mainland and Hawaii.

The a la carte approach is intriguing because its success or failure depends upon the unrelenting economics of the market. Airlines can be expected to quietly shelve their a la carte programs if attractive results are not produced. But in reality, the opposite has occurred – this is a category of ancillary revenue activity that is expanding and attracting the interest of airlines all over the globe.

Economy Class Meals Get an a la Carte Upgrade was released today as a free 16-page report and is available at the IdeaWorksCompany website: www.IdeaWorksCompany.com. The 2013 Ancillary Revenue Report series is sponsored by CarTrawler, one of the most widely distributed car rental booking engines in the world. For information visit www.cartrawler.com.

About IdeaWorksCompany: IdeaWorksCompany was founded in 1996 as a consulting organization building brands through innovation in product, partnership and marketing, and building profits through financial improvement and restructuring. Its international client list includes airlines and other travel industry firms in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. IdeaWorksCompany specializes in ancillary revenue improvement, brand development, customer research, competitive analysis, frequent flier programs, and on-site executive workshops. Learn more at IdeaWorksCompany.com.

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