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Ethiopian completes migration to *SabreSonic* passenger management system

Sabre Airline Solutions warns AFRAA annual meeting of need for other African airlines to become more competitive

Ethiopian Airlines this weekend moved successfully to the *SabreSonic Passenger Solutions* passenger management system. The airline will use *SabreSonic* reservations, online booking, e-ticketing, codesharing and departure control systems to achieve efficiencies and greater coordination in these areas.

The US\$10.5 million contract with Sabre Airline Solutions was announced in February and also involves the airline using the *Sabre Traveller Loyalty System* frequent flyer management system and the *Sabre AirPrice* fares management system.

Speaking at this week's 38th AFRAA (African Airlines Association) Annual General Assembly in Cairo, Murray Smyth, Sabre Airline Solutions' senior vice president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said his company also planned to extend its relationship with Ethiopian to include assistance in such areas as distribution and operations management. He warned that most of the continent's traditional carriers would have to invest in processes and systems to improve business performance in the face of increasing competition from major European and Middle-Eastern carriers that are expanding their networks across the continent, and the likely emergence of low-cost competition.

"Many African carriers need to make urgent improvements across all the core business functions, such as network planning, sales and revenue management, ticketing, customer management, operations, maintenance and engineering, and cargo," Smyth said.

"The real determinant of success is getting business processes, systems and people working together in combination."

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This weekend's migration of Ethiopian to the *SabreSonic* passenger management system forms part of the airline's ambitious expansion programme. Last year, it acquired six Boeing 767-300ERs, five 737-700s. Ethiopian Airlines will be the first African carrier and the second carrier worldwide to introduce the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner. The first of the 10 787s to be delivered to Ethiopian Airlines will be introduced on the carrier's network in 2008.

This fleet upgrade supports Ethiopian's plans for expansion on domestic, regional and international passenger routes as well as cargo transportation. The airline just launched a new route to Brussels, and is considering new routes to the United States and China. It is also considering codesharing and airline alliance options. This expansion is driving a need for Ethiopian to upgrade its marketing, operational and decision-support technology.

"Sabre Airline Solutions has a large portfolio of proven software and decision-support tools that will help us master the current and future growth of our airline," said Ato Girma Wake, Ethiopian Airlines' chief executive officer. "As the IT needs of Ethiopian grow and evolve, we believe Sabre Airline Solutions will be able to accommodate us, both with its products and through its renowned consulting business. We see this new co-operation as a partnership that will allow both our companies to expand their presence in Africa and beyond."

The *SabreSonic* suite uses the broadest array of innovative technology in the industry to help airlines market, sell, serve customers and operate more effectively.

About Sabre Airline Solutions

Sabre Airline Solutions, a Sabre Holdings company, is the world's largest provider of products to help airlines market, sell, serve and operate from planning to execution.

More than 200 airlines use its broad portfolio of decision-support tools to increase revenues and improve operations, while more than 500 use its leading operational technology. More than 100 airlines rely on Sabre Airline Solutions for passenger management solutions, while a similar number have turned to the company's consulting group for strategic, commercial and operational advice.

Sabre Holdings (NYSE: TSG) connects people with the world's greatest travel possibilities by retailing travel products and providing distribution and technology solutions for the travel industry. More information about Sabre Holdings is available at <http://www.sabre-holdings.com>.

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