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Jet Airways becomes an international carrier

Jet Airways: From Domestic to International

After strict government regulations forbidding India's privately owned carriers to serve international routes were lifted, Jet Airways swiftly became a successful international airline.

■ By Apurva Mathur | Ascend Contributor

Anyone growing up in India prior to the 1980s had little choice among locally based airlines. It was either Indian Airlines for domestic travel or Air India for international travel. With a market economy aligned with the Soviet Union, competition was not particularly favored by the Indian government, even though India was the largest democracy in the world.

With the economy not performing to its potential, the government of India decided to privatize some sectors. The airline sector was targeted early on, and a limited number of private airlines were allowed to operate. Initially, they were treated as "air taxis" and not even permitted to publish a schedule.

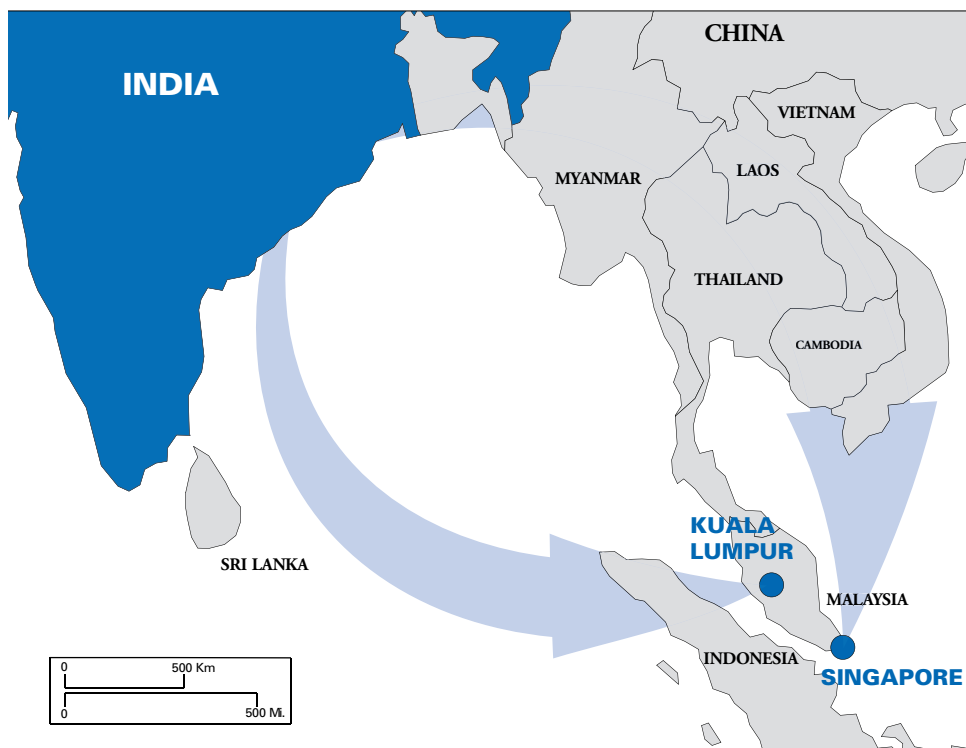
Mumbai, India-based Jet Airways was one of the region's first private airlines to be founded. It began commercial operations on May 5, 1993, with a fleet of four Boeing 737-300s. Since then, the airline has expanded its fleet by 46 aircraft — Boeing 737-400/500/700/800 and ATR 72-500s. Jet Airways has been consistently judged India's best domestic airline, and it was the first Indian airline to receive the World Travel Market Global award.

The airline, which began international operations to Sri Lanka in March 2004, quickly proved that through superior service and efficiency of operations, it could take on the government-giant Indian Airlines on domestic

HIGHlight

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Jet Airways First Routes in Southeast Asia



Initially, destinations outside the Indian subcontinent included Southeast Asia, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. While these destinations could be serviced by Jet Airways' fleet of Boeing 737 aircraft, the carrier deemed it necessary to become familiar with consequential over-water operations and international standards.



routes and be profitable. With a loyal customer following, Jet Airways quickly became the darling of the country's airline industry.

One of the early decisions Jet Airways made to become more efficient was to adopt modern technology to manage its day-to-day operations. The airline hired managers who were experienced in running an airline and dependent on technology, such as the *Flight Operations System*, or *FOS*, from Sabre Airline Solutions, to run its daily operations, which proved pivotal to the airline's success. Jet Airways quickly became known as the "on-time" airline, and business travelers flocked to the airline by the throngs. With a faithful following under its belt, the carrier managed to grow rapidly and become popular in the Indian skies.

Much of making an operationally efficient airline lies in the availability of information and access to data to make well-informed decisions. With the distribution capabilities of *FOS*, the airline was able to send and receive information about flights and passengers throughout its network. In fact, customer service was so important to Jet Airways that it made special modifications to *FOS* to allow more detailed information to be input into the system so every person within the airline who interacted with customers had access to their information in a meaningful and timely manner.

In the early 2000s, the government of India lifted restrictions and allowed private airlines to start limited services to international destinations, which presented a completely new challenge for the region's carriers. Even though India is the second-most populous nation in the world, it is not geographically vast. Flying east to west or north to south can be accomplished by short-haul, single-aisle aircraft. The mainstays of most of the airlines in India were either Boeing 737 or Airbus A320 aircraft. With the initial set of international destinations limited to neighboring countries in the Indian subcontinent, this would not present a problem. Jet Airways was quickly able to adapt to international regulations and fly to these destinations with relative ease.

When government restrictions were further lifted to allow for long-haul international operations, a new set of challenges faced Jet Airways. It needed to quickly transform itself from a domestic airline operating in a relatively known environment into a world dominated by giants such as British Airways, Lufthansa German Airlines and Singapore Airlines. This called for urgent action on the part of Jet Airways and meant the airline needed to not only learn about long-haul operations but also quickly decide on and acquire new aircraft types.

While *FOS* had served Jet Airways well and helped in its success to become the premier domestic airline, the carrier needed something even more advanced to help it become an international airline.

First, destinations outside the Indian subcontinent included Southeast Asia, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. While these destinations could be served by the airline's existing Boeing 737 aircraft, Jet Airways needed to familiarize itself with substantial over-water operations and become familiar with international standards. After doing a thorough search, Jet Airways concluded that it needed to modernize its flight operations system to meet the challenges of international aviation. *FOS* had done its part to make Jet Airways an efficient flying machine, and it was time to turn to something more modern and capable of complying with extended-range twin-engine operations, or ETOPS, and the International

HIGHLIGHT

With an urgency to realize optimal speed and results, the airline once again turned to its trusted information technology partner to help it meet its aggressive schedule of starting international operations.

Air Transport Association messaging standards. A completely different lingua franca existed for international operations, and Jet Airways needed to get well versed in it very quickly.

With an urgency to realize optimal speed and results, the airline once again turned to its trusted information technology partner to help it meet its aggressive schedule of starting international operations. Sabre Airline Solutions consultants, well-versed in international operations, guided Jet Airways as it learned the ropes of its new environment. During the engagement, the airline elected to implement the *Sabre® AirOps™ Suite* to help maximize operational efficiencies.

"There is no doubt flight operations are mission critical," said Peter Luethi, chief oper-

ating officer for Jet Airways. "It's a particularly pertinent issue for Jet Airways as we face the unique challenge of regular fogs in Delhi every year for two months; hence it is imperative that we have the best tools available to manage our flight operations.

"To meet our growing needs — and also for international routes — we realized we required a robust, integrated solution that is proven in the marketplace, and the *AirOps* suite met all our criteria."

The *AirOps* suite of operational products was installed, and Jet Airways' operations controllers and dispatchers were trained on the system in record time. With the deadline met for setting up the systems, Jet Airways' personnel focused their efforts on maximizing the use of the systems to produce the efficiencies it provided.

Being a modern system built on open-systems technology, the *AirOps* suite provides an automated, visually intuitive flight display and control system to help improve on-time performance, increase aircraft utilization and minimize operational disruption.

The quick implementation and operational use of the products meant that Jet Airways was able to meet its goal of becoming a well-regarded international airline.

"This has been one of the best implementations/cutovers ... even the user department has applauded the work done," Luethi said.

When Jet Airways needed to evaluate different aircraft types to meet its demands for international travel beyond Southeast Asia to London and New York, the *AirOps* suite helped make the optimal decisions.

Another aspect that has helped Jet Airways adapt to the rigors of international aviation is the integration of the *AirOps* suite with other systems at Jet Airways. Whether it is the reservations and check-in system, *SabreSonic™ Passenger Solutions*; the revenue management system, the *Sabre® AirMax® Revenue Management Suite*; the crewing system, *Sabre® AirCrews® Crew Management Suite*; or the air traffic control system, the *AirOps* suite seamlessly sends and receives data that keeps all the systems in synch and everyone informed.

Jet Airways has quickly transformed itself into an international carrier with help from a determined management team and sophisticated array of modern operational tools. Today, because the airline has taken full advantage of its government's ease on international service, the region's travelers have more choices in air travel, and Jet Airways is poised to remain India's most popular airline. **E**

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