



STAR ALLIANCE

STAR ALLIANCE LAUNCHES CONNECTING PARTNER MODEL TO EXPAND NETWORK REACH VIA LOW-COST AND HYBRID AIRLINES

South African Airline Mango to be first airline to implement

CHICAGO, USA – December 9th, 2015 – Star Alliance is set to expand its network reach with the launch of its Connecting Partner Model. Under this new concept, routes operated by “low-cost” and “hybrid” airlines will be able to connect to the Alliance network. This will allow customers of Star Alliance member carriers to select from an even wider choice of destinations and flights.

“With this innovative concept, we are breaking new ground. We see a definite trend of convergence between the ‘traditional full service’ and ‘low-cost’ business models in the airline industry,” said Mark Schwab, CEO Star Alliance. “At the same time, our customers are telling us that they need access to markets where we do not yet provide ideal coverage. In many cases network carriers are not in a position to fill this gap and hence working with future Connecting Partners will allow us to provide an extended network to our travellers.”

Connecting Partners will be carefully assessed for their fit into the existing Star Alliance network. While these selected airlines need to comply and adhere to the high operating standard required by the Alliance, they will not become a member of the Alliance itself.

Customers travelling on an itinerary which includes a transfer between a Star Alliance member airline and a Connecting Partner will be offered Alliance benefits such as passenger and baggage through check-in. Moreover, Star Alliance Gold Card holders will enjoy a tailored set of privileges in line with the different product offerings of the individual Connecting Partner.

Connecting Partners will enter into bilateral commercial agreements with selected Star Alliance member airlines, which may include additional Frequent Flyer Programme

based privileges.

Innovative and multi-award winning South African low-cost airline Mango has been selected as the first airline with which Star Alliance will be implementing the new concept.

“We are delighted to be working with Mango as we marry traditional and low-cost or hybrid airlines for the first time in our Alliance’s history. The airline’s innovative and progressive style makes it an ideal candidate for launching our new Connecting Partner concept. We aim to have first customers using this new offer as of the third quarter of 2016,” adds Schwab.

Mango’s first flight took to the skies on November 15th, 2006. Since then, the airline has grown its fleet from four to 10 Boeing 737-800 aircraft, operating between South Africa’s key domestic points as well as between Johannesburg and Zanzibar. The carrier remains the only African airline to offer on-board Wi-Fi. In addition, Mango has been recognised for its Customer Service Excellence by various awards, including the World Travel Awards and Skytrax.

“Innovation and a relentless pursuit of excellence are the cornerstones of Mango and fundamental to our culture as a business,” says Mango CEO Nico Bezuidenhout. Mango celebrates a decade in aviation next year and the carrier has recently become the largest low-cost airline in South Africa by passenger volume. “Participation in the development of, and ultimately becoming the launch Star Alliance Connecting Partner airline, wedges-in with our medium to long term business objectives,” he added.

Bezuidenhout said that while the Connecting Partner product flies in the face of convention, the common ground for the concept relates directly to the bottom line.

“Becoming a Connecting Partner will give any low-cost or hybrid airline a competitive advantage that immediately grows market share while creating greater choice for travellers,” he said.

About Mango:

Mango's first flight took to the skies on 15 November 2006 following one of the largest domestic e-commerce events of the time with more than 10 000 fare queries per minute at first sale. Since then, Mango has grown its fleet of 4 Boeing 737-800 aircraft to ten and the airline now operates a fleet of 10 aircraft between South Africa's key domestic points as well as between Johannesburg and Zanzibar.

Innovation is a cornerstone of the airline's business and the carrier remains the only African airline to offer on-board Wi-Fi on several of its aircraft, apps for booking and payment on the go across all major mobile platforms and is the only airline globally to accept store charge cards (Edcon) as payment method. Mango was the first airline to retail flights through supermarket Shoprite Checkers.

Mango has been recognized for its Customer Service Excellence by ACSA's Feather Awards in all stations it operates from, received 18 PRISM Awards for various aspects of its Corporate Communication and was awarded a Budgie Marketing Award for its launch campaign in 2006. In 2008 the World Travel Awards named Mango the Best Low Cost Carrier in Africa with the Skytrax World Airline Awards recognizing Mango as the Best Low Cost Airline in Africa for two successive years in 2014 and 2015.

About Star Alliance:

The Star Alliance network was established in 1997 as the first truly global airline alliance to offer worldwide reach, recognition and seamless service to the international traveler. Its acceptance by the market has been recognized by numerous awards, including the Air Transport World Market Leadership Award and Best Airline Alliance by both Business Traveller Magazine and Skytrax. The member airlines are: Adria Airways, Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, Avianca Brasil, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EGYPTAIR, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, THAI and United. Overall, the Star Alliance network currently offers more than 18,500 daily flights to 1,330 airports in 192 countries.

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