

Airlines are noticing that business class seems to be the ticket to revenues. According to the [New York Times](#), business and first class represent 10 to 15 percent of long-haul seats globally, but account for half of airline revenues. So airlines are competing to create the best business class by modernizing amenities, innovating seating, and creating a bid so that more seats are filled in each flight.

1. Airlines Update Business Class Amenities



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Airlines are starting to realize that business class is one of the most important features of their planes, and besides customer service, seats and amenities are some of the few features customizable to airlines.

The challenge is a business class seat has to function as a desk, an entertainment center, a dining facility, and a bed while remaining comfortable. Passengers also expect Wi-Fi and other amenities. Engineers are working to modernize all of these features while also trying to design the seats and

amenities with lighter materials so that the weight of newly designed business class seats will not jeopardize fuel economy.

2. Well-known Carriers Overhaul Seating

While modernizing in-flight entertainment and other features is important to carriers, they are also focusing on innovating seating. Beginning 2014, JetBlue will be the first airline with a separate single suite seat. The seat will come with a closable door on its New York to Los Angeles and San Francisco Routes.

Other airlines are trying to fit fully flat beds in business class instead of seats that lie-flat at an angle or "faux flat." The problem with flat beds are the seats need more space, meaning business class will lose about 10 percent of its seat.

Several different airlines are attempting to create solutions to this space problem. British Airways are trying to fit a 73-inch bed inside the 46 inches separating the two rows by angling the seats opposite each other in a yin-yang configuration.

Emirates, Swiss, and Delta use the latest trend: higher-density seating with slightly shorter beds and narrower seats that unfold into beds. The beds slide under the armrest of the passenger in front.

3. Economy Ticket Holders Bid for Business Class

Another feature airlines are introducing to compete to fill their business class seats are online upgrade auctions. These auctions allow passengers with economy tickets to take part in a blind bid for available business class seats.

Now Iberia, Austrian Airlines, Air New Zealand, El Al of Israel, Etihad of Abu Dhabi, and Virgin Atlantic are all carriers to auction upper-class seats to economy passengers. Some airline analysts are worried about airlines possibly risking eating into their premium revenues. However, others are confident in the bidding system because business class ticket buyers will want to guarantee their seat in business class.

The game of making more appealing flight features, while offering competitive prices is a challenge many airlines are meeting head-on. These airlines understand that their premium revenues rely on

their business class passengers. Designers and engineers are trying to make the most innovative, and luxurious seats in the tight spaces available, which will be a boon for business class travelers.