

Beat: Business

Cramer Ball is the new CEO of Alitalia

Big news from the Italian Carrier

Rome, 18.12.2015, 11:16 Time

USPA NEWS - Alitalia has appointed Cramer Ball as a member of its board of directors, designated to be appointed as Chief Executive Officer from early March 2016. News also on commercial proposals, and on the reception to Rome Fiumicino Airport.

A shareholders meeting convened today, chaired by Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, has appointed Cramer Ball as a member of the board of directors, in substitution of Silvano Cassano who resigned in September, and it has designated him as the next CEO according to recommendations from the company's Nomination and Remuneration Committee. Since September, the Nomination and Remuneration Committee interviewed many potential candidates in collaboration with international head-hunters. Cramer Ball's expertise in the air transport industry, managerial skills and change management drive were the deciding factors for the decision taken today.

Cramer Ball, aged 48, has more than 20 years of aviation experience. The proven expert at airline financial turnarounds will join Alitalia from Jet Airways of India where he was CEO and prior to that he was CEO at Air Seychelles, two airlines where he led substantial transformation programmes. Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, Alitalia's Chairman, said: "I believe Cramer is the right person to continue leading the development and implementation of our industrial plan which is now well in motion, with a target to make the company profitable in 2017. His proven abilities with transforming companies to success made him, among the many excellent candidates, the right choice for us.

"I would like to thank Alitalia's board of directors and the Nomination and Remuneration Committee for the excellent work in interviewing a variety of high-calibre candidates."

As CEO of Jet Airways Cramer Ball led the Mumbai-based airline to reduce substantial losses and the airline is on track to turn a profit in the next year. Similarly at Air Seychelles, he led the company's transformation into a profitable business.

Prior to his CEO roles at Jet Airways and Air Seychelles Mr Ball was Regional General Manager "South East Asia for Etihad Airways based in Bangkok and before that he was General Manager Australia and New Zealand for the UAE's national airline based in Sydney. He performed a similar job for Gulf Air and he was also Manager Strategic Corporate Programmes for Qantas and Commercial Sales Manager for Ansett Australia.

On commercial front, next week, Alitalia will offer a complimentary chauffeur car service for its business class customers who fly to 35 destinations served directly or via Abu Dhabi. The chauffeur car service is available for Alitalia flights to Abu Dhabi (from Rome, Milan and Venice) and New York JFK from Rome and also to destinations served in conjunction with

Etihad Airways, such as Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai, Delhi, Hong Kong and Johannesburg. The service will be extended from May when Alitalia launches new long-haul flights to Santiago and Mexico City.

Once a business class ticket has been purchased and the service booked, on the day of departure a chauffeur meets and greets customers and accompanies them to the airport.

After the flight with Alitalia, another chauffeur meets the traveller at the arrival airport and takes them to their chosen address. The same arrangements apply for the return trip.

Marco Martinasso, Vice President Marketing at Alitalia, said: "Alitalia's revamped long-haul business class belongs to the premium classes elite because of its quality and attention to details, including wi-fi* and a new "dine anytime" service.

Alitalia has also launched a new customer service initiative at Rome Fiumicino airport called "Transit Team" which is a dedicated unit to help air travellers switch efficiently from one aircraft to another. The team of 100 people will be easily recognisable thanks to a new uniform which features a distinctive grey jacket. The team will be equipped with tablet devices to assist customers with real time information. Alitalia customers transiting at Rome Fiumicino airport will find the Transit Team staff available to accompany them quickly to the departure gate for their next flight.

The new Transit Team is one of the many initiatives that Alitalia has launched recently to improve the customer experience at airports. At the airline's Rome Fiumicino home-base more shuttle buses to transfer passengers to and from aircraft have been added, plus more aircraft steps and baggage belts have been brought in to quicken the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers, their luggage and freight. More ground staff have also been deployed at departure gates to accelerate the passenger boarding process.

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Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-6789/cramer-ball-is-the-new-ceo-of-alitalia.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): by Cristiano Spazzali

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