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# SINGAPORE AIRLINES



Singapore Airlines took delivery of its first Airbus A380 on 15 October 2007

Entry into service of a new aircraft type is tricky at the best of times, and in the case of the world's largest production aircraft it was all the more vital to get it right. Singapore Airlines was well aware that the eyes of the world would be on it, but it also knew that being the first operator could result in great rewards. After the first nine months of operation, it is clear the airline did its homework, and the risk of being the "guinea pig" operator has paid off. As one of our judges commented: "SIA's nomination is a standout. Their introduction into service of the Airbus A380 has been an impressive thing to witness."

While SIA and Airbus had more time to prepare for EIS than anticipated, given that the first aircraft was delivered 18 months late, SIA's preparation work was meticulous and extensive and, some say, a model for future new aircraft service entry. It dated back around seven years to soon after it placed its first order for what was at the time known as the A3XX.

Overseeing EIS preparation work for the aircraft, which seats 471 passengers in three classes in SIA's configuration, was senior executive vice-president operations and planning Bey Soo Kiang. Bey says the airline focused from the start on ensuring that dispatch reliability would be as high as possible. "Our pitch to Airbus is that we've got 471 passengers, so any delay is going to be a nightmare for us in terms of handling them, finding the hotel rooms, and so on and so forth," he said shortly before the first aircraft was put into service. "So we approach it on a zero aircraft on ground-type of approach and we worked out what we call maturity testing programmes for various key components."

In addition to maturity testing, there were also extensive trials at key airports to ensure there were no ugly surprises. The hard work paid off. SIA took delivery of its first A380 in Toulouse on 15 October 2007 and it touched down to enormous publicity in Singapore on 17 October. Eight days later it entered commercial service, with an inaugural flight to Sydney in Australia for which tickets were sold for charity.

SIA now has five of the type in service, progressively replacing Boeing 747-400s on high traffic routes. By the time second operator Emirates puts its first A380 into



**"The many years of planning...have paid off"**

**BEY SOO KHIANG**

Senior EVP operations & planning, SIA

service SIA will have had the marketing advantage of being the only operator for more than nine months. In addition to Sydney, SIA now operates the A380 to London Heathrow and Tokyo Narita, and for a brief period early in August will be flying it to Beijing ahead of the start of the Olympic Games in the Chinese capital. It has 14 more of the type on firm order, plus six options.

Looking back now on the aircraft's operations, Bey says: "Measured by dispatch reliability and punctuality, the entry into service of the A380 has been comparatively better than the entry of other new aircraft types we have had. The many years of planning, developing, practicing and testing of all the processes by thousands of people, across the Singapore Airlines Group, in Airbus and at our respective vendors, to make sure all went smoothly, have paid off. This is in spite of the added complexity of introducing new cabin products on board, new service techniques and ground handling procedures at airports.

"By the week the aircraft entered service, very few people in the Singapore Airlines Group of companies weren't involved in one way or another in supporting the service entry. The smooth EIS is a testimony to their hard work, dedication and commitment."

**NICHOLAS IONIDES**

## PAST WINNERS

- 2007**  
JETSTAR
- 2006**  
CONTINENTAL AIRLINES
- 2005**  
RYANAIR
- 2004**  
AMERICAN AIRLINES
- 2003**  
LUFTHANSA
- 2002**  
ATLAS AIR

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