

Using Corrugated Instead of Plastic

A Case Study for British Airways

Weedon

Packaging Solutions Centre

Customer Profile

British Airways is the flag carrier and, based on fleet size, the largest airline in the United Kingdom. The company celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2019.

The Problem

With the arrival of its new fleet of Airbus A320 aircraft and the imminent introduction of densification on all other planes, which will see more seats and reduced cabin and galley space, BA needed to find a replacement for the existing rigid plastic trolley top tray used to deliver drinks, meals and other in-flight refreshment services to passengers.

The airline wanted a single, generic, corrugated solution for use on all its aircraft, across two different types and sizes of trolleys, each consisting of a double and single length version. The trays had to accommodate the varied fixtures and fittings on the top of the trolley and, most importantly, to do so safely.

Other aims were that the solution would:

- be simple and minimise Global Supply Chain complexity.
- be sufficiently compact to avoid the need for extra stowage space.
- be lighter and cheaper than the existing plastic trays.
- be easy to use and easily identifiable by cabin crew.
- be able to accommodate teapots safely, with safe access to teapot handles.
- locate into the trolley and remain in position, even when the cabin was at an incline.
- not obstruct access to the trolley handle.

The Solution

The Trolley Top Tray – a variation on a die-cut, 4-point glued quick-erect tray which could be easily assembled and broken down but which would be sufficiently strong for use during in-flight service. The design was adapted



in size for use on both types of double trolleys, with a shorter version for singles. Other features include:

- Locking tabs to secure the corrugated tray to the trolley itself as well as a recess in one end for easy access to the trolley handle.
- A layer pad to provide additional strength, as well as printed instructions on how to assemble the tray.
- Numerous transit trials and vigorous testing with multiple samples on long-haul flights to test the design.
- High quality print on White Kraft E-flute to stringent BA branding requirements.
- Use of Flexo Earthinks inks and FSC approved corrugated board to support BA's Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

Implementation

The corrugated trolley top tray has been successfully launched on BA's short-haul aircraft out of Heathrow and is working well. The airline is currently reviewing the operational requirements for its long-haul flights as its new fleet is introduced and existing aircraft are modified.