

In November 2007, the Dubai Air Show made headlines around the world. Over the five-day show the order book mounted up to a record breaking US\$155.5 billion. In 2007, the Air Show also achieved a 33% increase in trade visitors to a new record of 45,421, and some 140 aircraft jostled for space on the static park, creating one of the biggest aircraft displays in the world.

For 2009, the order book may be lighter than in 2007, but with the Middle East aviation industry still showing strong and steady growth, the Dubai Air Show has become one of the most important events in the global aviation calendar. Taking place from 15-19 November at Airport Expo, the show promised to be a hotbed for local and foreign aviation investors, so in case you have any doubts as to why you should have gone along, follow our 10 reasons why:-

The Emirates Hall

New for 2009 was an additional exhibition hall - The Emirates Hall. This is not the first time the event has required further exhibition space, but it was even more necessary this year after it became evident that the show, which was meant to be held at the brand new Al Maktoum International Airport in Jebel Ali, would in fact remain at the Airport Expo site. The Emirates Hall – named after its host and sponsor Emirates Airline – provided an additional 5000 square metres of exhibition space, an increased press centre and an extra registration building to accommodate trade visitor traffic.

Suppliers

With an estimated 50,000 aviation professionals gathered in one place, an abundance of product and services suppliers signed up to exhibit their latest offerings to the Middle East aviation market. The event was expected to attract 10% more exhibitors than in 2007, taking the total number of exhibitors to more than 900. From aircraft interiors to training and simulation systems to airplane engines, the depth and breadth of exhibitors is exactly why the Air Show has become one of the world's leading aerospace events. Some of the biggest names to visit include Airbus, Boeing, Dubai Aerospace Enterprise and Emirates.

Entertainment

There were approximately 114 chalets that ensured that you received a welcome that was brimming with hospitality.

The chalets served as hives of corporate entertainment and for 2009, 11 double-storey versions were been added. A total of 325,513 square metres were given over to entertain guests, host lunches and hold meetings, all while overlooking the static park and views of the afternoon flying displays.

Meet New Companies

Dubai Air Show organiser Fairs & Exhibitions admits that the number of returning exhibitors had dropped compared to previous years, but a number of new customers had signed up after witnessing the growth of passenger traffic in the Middle East. Abu Dhabi played a major role in this year's event. A key new exhibitor is the Abu Dhabi Airports Company (ADAC), which was using the Air Show as a platform to introduce itself to the international market; a sector in which the company is still young and largely unknown. Additionally, the Abu Dhabi-based Mubadala Development Company, although an exhibitor at the 2007 event, had a much bigger presence at this year's show as the host sponsor, signifying that the investment arm of the Abu Dhabi government is quickly establishing itself as a key player in the regional aerospace industry.

Networking

Conferences, dinners, receptions and award ceremonies were in abundance but it is important to make the most of your time. The highlight of the Dubai Air Show networking calendar was the gala dinner on November 17. Attendance was by invitation only, but the 3000 guests that were lucky enough to receive an invite to the luxurious Emirates Golf Club were treated to a star performance. Previous years have seen singers Rod Stewart, Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder wowing the crowd and this year's performer will be blues legend, George Benson.

Outdoor Static Display

Approximately 107 aircraft featured on the outdoor static display this year. This was a drop from last year's 140 aircraft, and indicative of the financial impact felt by the aviation industry over the last few months. However, Airbus brought its super-jumbo A380. Bombardier showed off its Learjet 60 XR and the Cessna Aircraft Company made its presence felt with a minimum of seven aircraft on display. Boeing also participated with a number of aircraft types.

Military

Civil aviation is always the first to hit headlines during any global Air Show, but at the Dubai Air Show, the military sector is a key aspect, making up 40% of the total number of exhibits displayed. Outside was a full-scale replica of the Eurofighter, and the Air Chief's conference was held on Saturday for key military insight.

Business

The Middle East region is a mass of opportunity for business jet suppliers and the Dubai Air Show always hosts a large number of business aircraft providers. Eurocopter had a full-scale mock-up of its 16-seater civilian helicopter, the EC-175, while Aerion is had a full-scale mock-up of its supersonic business jet.

At the end of the day, the Air Show is about making money and although it will be hard to beat the US\$155.5 billion worth of deals announced in 2007, the organiser is hoping a number of big deals were struck. No one expects the order book to break records this year, but as we head into 2010, the Middle East aviation industry remains in a buoyant state.

Dubai Air Show 2011

We know it was said in 2007, but this really is likely to be the last time the Dubai Air Show is held on the site of Airport Expo. In 2011, it is expected to decamp to the giant airport in Jebel Ali, where it can spread its wings, so to speak. The event's director Alison Weller revealed that the move would open up opportunities for the show to welcome the public after the trade days were concluded. This would be in-keeping with the traditional format of other international Air Shows and would do much for Dubai's tourism figures. However, Weller did not confirm when this move would be introduced.

FAC

This year FAC took six companies to exhibit at the Dubai Air Show:-

1. BTech Engineering
2. CCT
3. Aerodac
4. Beldam & Crossley
5. Hale Hamilton
6. VHR

For more information please contact us.