



LUFTHANSA BLAMES GDS BOOKING VOLUME DROP MOSTLY ON PILOT STRIKE

News / Airlines



Lufthansa has hit back at GDS bookings figures revealed by Tnooz yesterday as being "heavily influenced" by industrial action affecting the airline.

Pilots belonging to the carrier held their 13th strike in the last 18 months in the first week of this month, just days after Lufthansa introduced its controversial Euro 16 fee on all GDS bookings from September 1.

A highly confidential document circulating amongst the top brass at Sabre Travel Network, obtained by Tnooz from a third party this week, shared official booking volumes for all Global Distribution Systems and outlined how Lufthansa Group bookings in Europe in the first two weeks of September are said to be down 16.1% year-on-year versus a flat year-to-date up to August.

It also reported that on routes where Lufthansa has a market share of 30%-60%, volumes drops of

up to 30% were experienced in the first week of September. Competitor carriers British Airways, Air Berlin and Air France were stated as gaining from the declines.

However, in an emailed statement, a Lufthansa official says there is "no significant change" of the overall booking situation across the group.

"We are in line with the statements and forecasts given regarding the booking figures."

The airline labels the Sabre report as including "non-official sales figures", adding that it is "highly unprofessional to project them to describe the overall booking situation of LHG, even if you focus on all GDS sales."

The official continues: "The first weeks of September were heavily influenced by a pilot's strike action as well as other seasonal effects."

Lufthansa says it will give "detailed and reliable sales figures" within its regular financial reporting disclosures.

The LHG report obtained by Tnooz also included booking volumes for agency partners and on a country-by-country basis for 2015 to-date, including March when Lufthansa experienced a four-day strike by the same pilots' union.

During the course of that month, Sabre's leading agencies saw their bookings increase by 5.9% year-on-year, with its biggest OTA customer [whose name Tnooz is leaving anonymous] up 14.3% with a volume of 99,500 bookings, its second highest month in 2015 so far.

Conversely, one leading corporate travel agency, which has a third of its bookings going by way of Lufthansa, was down 82.2% y/y in March.

Lufthansa bookings via intermediaries on the Sabre GDS have reached 7.5 million in the year-to-date, with March this year accounting for 989,500, the third highest of the year.

German, Polish and UK agencies in March saw 43.6%, 12.1% and 0.5% drop y/y respectively in booking volumes via the Sabre GDS, but their counterparts experienced gains in the U.S. (7%), Italy (8.2%), Canada (13.4%), Greece (157.%), Sweden (43.1%) Brazil (35.9%) and France (19.4%) over the same time frame.

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SOURCE: TNOOZ

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