



BUSINESS OR SCIENCE? CHOOSE BOTH, URGES AIRBUS MARKETING EXEC

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Anaïs Marzo da Costa, **Airbus'** newly appointed Head of Aircraft Interiors Marketing is, unusually for someone in her team, not from an engineering background. "Normally at Airbus, when you're in marketing you're an aeronautical engineer, and I am not," Marzo da Costa laughed as she sat down with Runway Girl Network, fresh from presenting a Comfort and Ambience session on the introduction to [#paxex](#) track at this week's APEX Expo.

In her day job, Marzo da Costa contributes to cabin product development and supports sales campaigns across the Airbus commercial fleet, from narrowbodies to widebodies.

"I started off my career as a marketing analyst at Airbus in 2000, and I gradually got into cabins because I was very interested in the subject," Marzo da Costa explains. "I thought it was an important part of what airlines really care about, and the importance of seating when you're doing a campaign, and the importance of passenger comfort. I really like the subject."

Anaïs Marzo da Costa

"I worked first in cargo: used airplanes, and on the at the time new A330-200F freighter project, and then I had my own accounts as a marketing analyst. Some in Europe, then mainly Africa and India. Then I left Airbus, and went to the AirBusiness Academy, which was a nonprofit association delivering courses in aviation management all around the world. It was very interesting because we had to create the whole portfolio, and we were also keeping the Air Transport Seminar, which is an airline customer discussion forum for Airbus. I was the director for the seminar for more than

a year, so that was the training and consultancy part. When I left AirBusiness Academy I went to a small design company, and was working for Airbus for a short period of time, and then came back to Airbus in early 2009 in the cabin team.”

That depth of experience both within and outside Airbus is something that Marzo da Costa clearly counts as a benefit.

“It was really fantastic because you get the opportunity to go into all the regions of the world and not only deliver presentations on what’s happening — big trends in aviation — but also get feedback from customers. Not only do you have the worldwide perspective, but you get into the regional perspective, which was very enriching. It was a fantastic experience.”

RGN asks Marzo da Costa what she would recommend for young people considering a career in aviation, or for anyone thinking about working within the industry.

“It’s a matter of opportunities, and considering what you really want to do. In my case, I wanted to open my options to the business side because when I was eighteen I didn’t really know what I wanted to do. I thought that business school would open the doors to any business — even if I still had aviation in mind, I thought I could always go back to that if I really wanted to.”

At school, Marzo da Costa took the science track in the French baccalauréat system, but decided against immediately focussing on an aeronautical engineering background.

“I would recommend, if you really like aeronautics and you’re a science person, don’t hesitate to go to a science school. If you’re hesitating, and you’re not sure that this is really what you want to do, consider business.”

“It was very interesting, because even during business school I did a six-month internship in the design office of, at the time, Aérospatiale. At the time it was restructuring the research department so it was more on the business side, but still, I really already wanted to work in aviation,” Marzo da Costa says.

“I studied at an international business school in France and in Spain— the ICADE-CESEM International Business School in Madrid and Reims —and then I did a MSc in air transport management. The national school of civil aviation in France [ENAC] and the Toulouse business school have a joint MSc programme. You do a technical part — how the aircraft flies, aspects of airport and other subjects — and then you do the business part of it,” she explains.

When RGN asks what skills gaps Marzo da Costa expects in ten to fifteen years within her section of the aviation industry, she takes a moment to consider her answer.

“I think there is a lot to do in our industry in terms of big data. Today, a lot of industries believe that they are getting there, but honestly we are not. We are far behind the Googles of the world. In the industry specifically, this would be a very, very interesting skill to bring to the business.”

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