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## One-On-One Northern Flights



Christina Colliander, director of sales, Finnair North America, on building global connections.

**Global Traveler:** *Tell our readers about Finnair's businessclass product.*

**Christina Colliander:** For the last couple of years, Finnair has had lie-flat beds on all business-class long-haul flights. We have always had a very good business-class seat, but giving passengers the opportunity to lie down during long-haul flights really makes a difference. As a result, business class out of JFK is booked and we are very satisfied with the success of our New York service. Our beds have a slight angle to them, but by 2010 — when we phase out our MD-11s and replace them with Airbus A330s — all the seats will be 180-degree lie-flat beds. When the A350 comes out, we will replace our A330s as well. The ongoing changes will keep the average age of our fleet at 5.7 years.

**GT:** *Finnair has always had great connectivity to Eastern Europe, Russia, the Baltics and Asia. How effective is Finnair for North American travelers going to these regions?*

**CC:** We just launched the flight from Helsinki to Seoul this summer. Currently, we also fly to Bangkok, Thailand, three destinations in Japan (Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka), four in China (Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai) and Mumbai and Delhi in India. In that sense, Finnair has transformed itself from a niche carrier to a global airline through Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, offering passengers a minimum 35-minute connection time to all destinations through Helsinki.

Our close proximity to Russia, the Baltics and Eastern Europe makes Finnair a

natural option to these destinations. Finnair has been offering flights to Moscow and St. Petersburg for a long time, and recently entered into codesharing agreements with Aeroflot to Moscow and Rossiya Airlines to St. Petersburg. One of our newest destinations is Yekaterinburg in Siberia. Flights from the United States to Europe and beyond take a northern track, so our location is perfect.

**GT:** *A great number of our readers are entrepreneurs. How can the Finnair Corporate Programme help them?*

**CC:** The Finnair Corporate Programme has been evolving since its inception a year ago, and is now fully ready. It is a Web-based program available to anyone who wants to join, with no prequalification, and includes business-class fares and upper-end economy fares. Based on traffic over a six-month period, discount levels start at \$5,000 and move up to \$10,000. An online travel management system allows you to track your flights and savings. For member corporations, anyone who uses the corporate code has access to the accumulated discounts and levels. Although Finnair is a Oneworld carrier, the discount applies strictly to Finnair usage.

This year Finnair is celebrating its 85th anniversary and the 40th anniversary of Finnair flights to the United States. We have successfully moved to JFK's Terminal 8, which has a great sense of space and is a far better experience for the traveler. At Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, our spa will open in 2010 and will include a swimming pool, treatment rooms and a sauna. We are also evaluating the addition of new gateways to the North American market.