



SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AIR

INNOVATORS TRANSFORMING AVIATION
FOR A GREENER FUTURE

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 SimpliFlying

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BONUS CHAPTER

KLM'S SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY: MAKING BOLD MOVES

FROM 2006-2008, Maarten Koopmans was fighting to capture people's attention as the Head of Airport and Environmental Strategy for Dutch Airline KLM. "There was little interest back then," he said, noting that sustainability was the preserve of only a small number of employees responsible for it.

Today, Koopmans is the Managing Director of KLM's European regional subsidiary KLM Cityhopper. As part of his duties, he oversees more than half of all KLM departures from Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport.

Today, the way sustainability is perceived at KLM—and in the aviation industry in general—has changed. "I am not the lone ranger anymore," Koopmans said.

KLM's current goal is for 1% of the airline's total fuel consumption out of Schiphol Airport to come from Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)—higher than other airlines. Even so, their ambition goes even further: by 2030, KLM wants SAF to account for 10% of its total fuel consumption worldwide.

Founded in 1919, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines holds the distinction of being the world's oldest airline still operating under its original name. As a subsidiary of Air France-KLM, KLM is the national airline of the Netherlands, a country that is

particularly environmentally conscious even in comparison to its European neighbours.

According to the 2021 Eurobarometer survey, 34% of Dutch respondents saw climate change as the single biggest issue facing the planet today, as compared to 18% across the European Union as a whole.¹ However, this heightened climate consciousness hasn't deterred the Dutch from flying more.

In the first quarter of 2023, many Dutch airports saw a higher number of passengers than they did pre-COVID in 2019.² This might seem surprising given that the Netherlands boasts an excellent rail network with connections to neighbouring countries, all of which would seem to make excessive air travel unnecessary.

As Koopmans points out, a train certainly works well if you want to go from Amsterdam to Brussels, with KLM in fact offering train transfer tickets for passengers from Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport to the Belgian capital, allowing it to scale down its flights between the two cities.³ If you want to go to KLM Cityhopper destinations that are further away, such as Norway or Portugal, a train journey becomes more difficult.

While KLM Cityhopper serves numerous European destinations that are not easily accessible by train, parent airline KLM also manages a substantial amount of long-haul traffic through Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport. Here, flying remains the primary, and sometimes only, viable option for passengers.

Passengers arrive in Amsterdam from one part of the world, either with KLM or through KLM's airline partners in the SkyTeam Alliance (which includes, among others, Air France, Delta, SAUDIA, and Kenya Airways) before transferring to a KLM flight for the rest of their journey.

Statistics from 2022 showed that 35% of all passengers who passed through Amsterdam Schiphol Airport were in transit to another destination and never left the airport.⁴ In 2022, for example, Cape Town, Atlanta, and Bangkok were the company's top three destinations in terms of Available Seat Miles (ASM).⁵

Of course, KLM's extensive route network has resulted in the airline emitting over nine million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2022.⁶ Left unchecked, that number will grow as more people fly. All of this helps to explain why the airline is taking significant action to increase its sustainability efforts.

KLM'S LONG-TERM PATH TO CARBON REDUCTION

KLM has set specific targets to reduce its emissions, all of which have been submitted to the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).⁷ By 2030, KLM aims to reduce CO2 emissions by 30% per Revenue per Tonne-Kilometre (RTK) as compared to emissions in 2019. Additionally, the airline is striving for an absolute reduction of 12% in CO2 emissions.⁸

Responsible for making all this happen is Zita Schellekens, KLM's SVP Strategy & Sustainability, who joined the airline in March 2023. Schellekens says that the airline has to take a lot of small steps to get to that ambitious target: "By fleet renewal, operational efficiencies and improvements, and by purchasing sustainable aviation fuel."

The airline is already taking steps to improve its operations and reduce emissions. Of these, one of the most important is replacing older, fuel-hungry planes with newer and more efficient aircraft, in a €2 billion investment programme.

According to Schellekens, the impact of these new planes is significant. For example, a newer A350F emits around 40% less CO2 than an older Boeing 747 used for cargo, while the upcoming replacement of the Boeing 737 with the Airbus A320/A321neo will yield efficiency gains of 20%.

But while these newer aircraft are more efficient, they still rely on kerosene as their primary fuel source. While these new planes will help lower emissions somewhat, achieving meaningful decarbonisation will largely depend on transitioning to SAF. This comes as the European Union has mandated that

airlines operating within the EU will need 70% of their fuel supply to be SAF by 2050.⁹

At the same time, KLM is also looking at how aircraft can be powered by alternative propulsion systems. For example, in April 2023, KLM signed an agreement with AeroDelft, part of the Delft University of Technology, to research and explore the use of hydrogen-powered aircraft.¹⁰

Still, the company is interested in electric aircraft as well. “We know that there's going to be probably at least 19-seater or 30-seater [electric aircraft] before the end of this decade,” Schellekens said. To prepare for electric flight, KLM is already training pilots on a Pipistrel Velis Electro, the only electric aircraft currently licensed to fly in Europe.

Even so, Schellekens thinks it is too early to know which technology will emerge as the winner, and so plans to work with many different innovators. She believes that the sum of all these measures will demonstrate that KLM can grow while decarbonising at the same time.

“If you use less fuel, you decrease your costs,” she said, leading to a more efficient, as well as less carbon intensive operation.

KLM BECOMES KEY TARGET FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

Schellekens is optimistic, but this optimism has thus far not been shared by environmental groups who have been targeting KLM and Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

These groups believe that achieving net-zero emissions is incompatible with the continued expansion of the aviation industry. They also doubt the industry's commitment to decarbonisation, and have dismissed various sustainability efforts as mere “greenwashing.”¹¹

In recent times, environmental groups in the Netherlands have frequently voiced their opposition to the aviation industry:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, KLM, like many airlines globally, received state support. The Dutch Government provided the company €3.4 billion in aid with environmental conditions attached, all in an effort to push the airline further toward decarbonisation. Environmental group Greenpeace criticised these conditions as not going far enough, claiming that KLM would revert to business as usual once the funds were gone. As such, the organisation staged a protest in May 2020, with activists cycling onto the Schiphol Airport runway and unfurling a banner in front of parked KLM aircraft reading, “Back to Normal = Back to the Climate Crisis.”¹²
- In May 2022 as COVID restrictions were coming to an end, hundreds of protesters once again gathered at KLM’s hub at Schiphol Airport as part of a “Shrink Aviation” protest, demanding that the Dutch aviation industry reduce emissions by downsizing.¹³
- In April 2023, three activists from the climate group Extinction Rebellion were arrested after staging a protest in the Schiphol Airport departure hall. The activists targeted KLM, protesting that the airline was trying to halt the Dutch Government’s plans to cut flights in Amsterdam.¹⁴

Still, the most prominent action took place in July 2022, when two environmental groups, Fossilvrij and ClientEarth UK, submitted a lawsuit in Dutch courts against KLM, accusing the airline of greenwashing. Filed under the Dutch Civil Code, which prohibits misleading or deceptive advertising, the lawsuit specifically referenced a 2019 marketing campaign called “Fly Responsibly.”¹⁵

Jurriaan Trommels, the airline's director of brand, marketing, and communications, said that much of the inspiration at the time came from then-CEO Pieter Elbers. Launched to coincide with KLM's centenary anniversary in 2019, Fly Responsibly featured an open letter from then CEO Pieter Elbers asking travellers "to make responsible decisions about flying."¹⁶

Among other things, the campaign suggested travellers might want to use the train for short distances, pack light to help reduce aeroplane weight (and thus reduce fuel consumption), and consider offsetting their flights via a carbon offset programme the airline established in 2008 called CO2ZERO.¹⁷

All of this caused something of a media sensation and made headlines around the world, including one in the UK's *The Guardian* which read: "Dutch airline KLM calls for people to fly less."¹⁸

Though it may go without saying, a marketing campaign by a major airline suggesting that people should be more aware of their flight choices was groundbreaking—so why did environmental activists object to it?

Hiske Arts, from campaign group Fossilvrij, claimed that rather than reducing its flights and emissions, KLM was sticking by a "false message" that it was on the path to more sustainable flying. "There is no way [KLM] can do this while planning continuous air traffic growth that will fuel the breakdown of our climate," she said, "and KLM will now have to defend its misleading claims before a judge."¹⁹

Similarly, Johnny White from ClientEarth, took aim at CO2ZERO. "Offsets marketing is yet another dangerous distraction from what KLM and the airline industry needs to do to address the climate crisis: to stop unsustainable 'business as usual' air traffic growth," he said. The case is ongoing as of this writing, as a Dutch court ruled in June 2023 to allow the environmental groups' civil suit to proceed.²⁰

In light of this legal situation, KLM was unable to provide any comment aside from a statement saying that they no longer

use the 19 communications points central to the case and that they constantly review their sustainability communications to make sure it is clear and transparent.

AIRLINES INCREASINGLY FACE GREENWASHING CLAIMS

Environmental activists have been challenging advertising campaigns which they claim either present misleading environmental claims or attempt to conceal the environmental impact of air travel. While KLM is perhaps one of the more prominent examples, other airlines and aviation organisations have faced similar claims.

The Netherlands and the UK have been hotspots for such conflicts, as both countries boast active advertising regulators unafraid of banning campaigns deemed guilty of greenwashing. Other prominent examples of clashes between climate activists and airlines include the following:

- In January 2023, budget airline Ryanair had to amend the way it described its carbon offsetting schemes after the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets intervened.²¹ The regulator found Ryanair's claim that consumers could "fly greener" through offsetting their flights to be deceptive, emphasising that flying still remains a highly polluting mode of travel even with CO₂-compensation schemes.
- In March 2023, the UK's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) rejected a Lufthansa campaign with the tagline "Connecting the World. Protecting its Future," stating that it misled consumers about the airline's environmental impact.²²
- At the end of June 2023, the Dutch advertising regulator intervened in response to activist groups'

claims against holiday group TUI. TUI's campaign called "Fair Travel" allowed holidaymakers to donate €2 to make their trips more "sustainable." TUI matched the contributions, investing them in SAF and destination-based initiatives. However, the regulator agreed with the claimants that TUI's claims about more sustainable holidays, particularly regarding SAF, lacked substantiation.²³

- On a Europe-wide level, a coalition of consumer organisations in June 2023 lodged a complaint with the European Union against 17 airlines including Lufthansa, Air France, KLM, Ryanair, and SAS, asserting that statements they had made about carbon offsetting programmes and SAF were misleading.²⁴

So, why do activist organisations pursue these tactics? What is the end game of taking airlines to court or making complaints to advertising regulators? First of all, each case generates a lot of media attention, and by doing so, activists believe they can put the environmental impact of flying in the public spotlight.²⁵

Ultimately, these efforts are part of a broader, long-term strategy to weaken the so-called social acceptance or "social license" of flying.²⁶

Activists aim to transform the image of air travel from a desirable aspiration into a social ill, primarily due to aviation's contribution to climate change. To do so, various groups have drawn parallels to the shift in social attitudes towards cigarettes, referencing past advertisements featuring 1970s football legend Johan Cruyff endorsing smoking with the tagline "Smoke Responsibly" as an illustrative example.²⁷

Today, such a promotion would be unthinkable, showing how perceptions can change over time. Therefore, these activists envision a future for aviation where heavy regulation, accompanied by visible warnings in promotional material about the

adverse effects of pollution, noise, and climate change, becomes the norm, similar to the present state of tobacco.

APPEALING TO THE CONSCIOUS TRAVELLER WHO WANTS TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Since many activists are trying to delegitimise air travel and are publicly treating airlines the same way as tobacco companies, there is often little scope for direct dialogue with airlines. As a result, Julie van der Wilden, KLM's sustainability programme manager said that finding common ground in debates with activists can be difficult.

"I think you can have a debate about sustainability in aviation at two levels," she said. "You can make it an absolute debate, and in an absolute sense, the aviation industry is a polluting industry and KLM is a polluting airline. There's no arguing against that."

Even so, as van der Wilden points out, aviation "isn't just going to disappear," since it plays an important role in international human affairs. Environmental groups also realise this, but accepting both facts, according to van der Wilden, is what will help push the debate forward.

"The next discussion to have is a relative discussion," van der Wilden said. "How are you doing relative to what you should be doing or to what others are doing? That is the discussion we need to be having, and we need to be pushing more than we have so far."

Consequently, KLM's new brand platform is all about making conscious choices. The airline doesn't claim that flying is currently sustainable. Instead, it suggests what can be done to minimise the impact of flying at every step of the journey and at every customer touchpoint, and van der Wilden is leading this initiative. "We are moving away from anything called 'green,' but we want to make an impact and engage," she said.

One of van der Wilden's key responsibilities now is to eval-

uate how KLM can insert proof points, stories, and communications throughout the customer journey to communicate better to customers about the airline's commitment to sustainability. In order to do that, she looks for issues customers care about, one of which is plastics and waste.

"While we know that those are not the biggest impact points for aviation, those things are what people see," van der Wilden said. "When they are on-board they think, 'Okay, why is this plastic?'"

An insight van der Wilden had was that passengers were curious about which things on an aeroplane were or were not the result of environmental choices: customers wanted to know why the airline was doing what it was doing. This led her to map out the entire passenger journey to discover when and where customers would be most concerned.

Having identified those areas, van der Wilden's next step was to focus on improving the company's communication about its sustainability efforts in those moments; for example, while some catering equipment on board might still be made of plastic, the airline could communicate the reason behind that decision (to reduce weight and, consequently, lower fuel burn and emissions).

As van der Wilden explains, the informative customer journey starts when a passenger is looking to book a flight. "We are thinking about the booking flow—not only how to improve it, but also the overall proposition," she said. "We are also looking at the airport and asking, 'What can we do?'"

As such, KLM is designing a display and point of sale material in their Crown Lounge at Schiphol Airport to give waiting passengers an easy entry into KLM's sustainability story. Subsequently, once passengers are on the aircraft, they get more information through the company's sustainability channel on their in-flight entertainment.

All of these measures are designed to appeal to a group of passengers van der Wilden calls "conscious travellers"—people

who have travelled by air in the past and will continue to in the future because they genuinely love and need to travel. However, these travellers also acknowledge the negative environmental implications of air travel, which can create a persistent sense of discomfort and cognitive dissonance.

KLM's focus in future will be on nudging passengers to think more carefully about the travel choices that they make, so that they're not jumping on an aeroplane casually and without any consideration for the environment. "You make sure that you're going for a reason," said van der Wilden. "You should consider if you should stay a little bit longer and save yourself another flight in the future."

Based on the work van der Wilden is doing, Trommels said that the overall communications emphasis will be on the concept of "travelling well," which will be communicated through storytelling and informational initiatives as opposed to slogans or taglines.

"We want to switch the focus from 'I am a well-travelled individual' to 'I am an individual who travels well,'" Trommels said. Travelling well will mean making the best and most sustainable choices at every step of the journey—from booking to boarding to arriving at the destination, and including such steps as supporting local businesses.

BOLD THINKING THROUGH THE BOLD MOVES INITIATIVE

Complementing both the customer journey work being done by Julie van der Wilden and the wider decarbonisation work being undertaken by Zita Schellekens is a programme called Bold Moves. As the name suggests, this encourages KLM to think big when it comes to sustainability initiatives.

Bold Moves began during the COVID-19 pandemic, when a group of like-minded executives started what Koopmans calls "a movement within KLM."

"We said to our board, 'Let's come out of this crisis differ-

ently than we went in,' he said. "We need to make some bold moves on sustainability."

The Bold Moves initiative began with 15 members, Koopmans among them, but quickly expanded to include 100 individuals. The group generated 10 ideas, one of which they called The Fairline, a programme designed to test new sustainability strategies, but to use KLM's subsidiaries to do so.

Koopmans said the programme draws inspiration from other large organisations who took a similar approach, such as Disney with its Imagineering division to develop new theme park experiences,²⁸ or Nike's Nike+ division to develop connected fitness products and services.²⁹

After consideration, the Bold Moves team recognised that KLM Cityhopper, an existing subsidiary, could serve this purpose—and as a result, KLM Cityhopper has stronger sustainability targets than the rest of KLM.

By 2028, KLM Cityhopper aims to achieve net-zero emissions—22 years ahead of the industry's target of 2050. "We have a goal in 2028 to really make big steps," Koopmans said. "Big steps on fuel use, on the product on board, and on how we heat our buildings." And the biggest way KLM Cityhopper intends to reach its goal is through the use of SAF.

KLM Cityhopper accounts for a relatively small amount of the airline's fuel bill, as it has a short-haul European network. As a result, it will take only a small portion of the company's total supply of SAF to fuel nearly all Cityhopper flights with it. KLM Cityhopper can then serve as a SAF "early adopter," testing and refining the technology before scaling it across the rest of the airline.

But streamlining KLM's implementation of SAF isn't the only new idea to come out of Bold Moves. One initiative, which ended up being taken to over 20 airlines outside KLM, was called the Sustainable Flight Challenge.

HISTORIC RACES TO SUSTAINABLE SKIES: HOW KLM'S BOLD MOVES INSPIRED THE SUSTAINABLE FLIGHT CHALLENGE

In 1934, Sir MacPherson Robertson, a wealthy Australian confectionery magnate, sponsored an audacious event that captured the world's attention: an aerial race to be the fastest to fly from London to Melbourne.³⁰

In an era when Imperial Airways's flights to Australia required multiple overnight stops and spanned a gruelling 12 days, Robertson's idea for the event was to showcase the potential of long-range commercial aviation and inspire more innovation.

Among the 64 competitors from 13 countries, a Dutch team piloting a DC2 aircraft named Uiver ("stork" in Dutch) was one of the winners, completing the race in just under 71 hours.³¹ Their remarkable achievements in the race served as an inspiration for KLM's Bold Moves team, 87 years later.

"It was a time in which we didn't have the jets that we have today," said Robin Spierings, an alumnus of the Bold Moves team who now manages the Sustainable Flight Challenge. "They had to break the line of thinking that [long distance air travel was] impossible."

Inspired by MacPherson's vision, the Bold Moves team wanted to harness the same pioneering spirit with a sustainable aviation challenge. Even so, the team knew they would need more than just KLM to make their vision a reality.

That's where SkyTeam came in, offering a way to have multiple airlines participate in the challenge.

Created in 2000, SkyTeam is a 19-member airline alliance, which includes KLM, that offers passengers flight code shares, reciprocal lounge access for business and first class passengers, and the ability to collect frequent flyer miles across all member airlines.

When the idea was put to the board of the SkyTeam Alliance,

they approved it and ensured it was adopted across their network.

“We felt that with SkyTeam, we had a partner that could organise the inaugural flight challenge and bring it to the next level,” said Spierings. Spierings ended up being transferred by KLM to SkyTeam, where she became programme manager for both the inaugural Sustainable Flight Challenge in May 2022 and the second one in 2023.

The first edition of the challenge had 16 out of 19 SkyTeam Alliance members take part, with each trying to operate a flight that would be as light on CO2 emissions as possible.

Competition categories included lowest CO2 emissions; greatest CO2 reductions across different flight lengths; best customer engagement and best employee engagement.

Looking at what the individual airlines did in 2022, SkyTeam CEO Patrick Roux commented that a majority of the initiatives focused on SAF, reducing plastic on board, or maintaining electric vehicles at the airport.

For the 2022 challenge, KLM flew a 787 Dreamliner from Amsterdam to Edmonton in Canada, optimising its CO2 emissions at every stage of the route.³² The airline used renewable energy for ground operations and an automated tow truck so the aircraft engines wouldn’t need to be used to move the plane in place for takeoff.

When it came to the flight itself, a blend of 39% SAF was used as well as an

an optimised flight route to save fuel. Overall, KLM’s special flight managed to reduce CO2 emissions by 37% as compared to a similar, non-optimised flight.

Roux recalls a few strong entries from other airlines as well. “We saw some very interesting initiatives,” he said. “SAUDIA had a Jeddah to Madrid flight, and they created an in-flight lab for the passengers who were asked to contribute ideas for the future of sustainable flying.” In all, SAUDIA collected more than 150 ideas from their passengers and staff. Kenya Airways, on the

other hand, led a “farm to fork” initiative, where all the catering on board was done with local produce.

Overall, Roux says that the 2022 Sustainable Flight Challenge saw an average CO2 reduction of 15% per RTK (Revenue per Tonne-Kilometre) per flight. Key to getting so many SkyTeam airlines involved in the challenge was the support of Roux and the SkyTeam board. According to Robin Spierings, the original decision to have SkyTeam as opposed to KLM own the challenge turned out to be a “power move,” because SkyTeam’s execution of the challenge surpassed everyone’s expectations.

The second challenge, which took place in May 2023, saw the increased participation of 22 airlines, including subsidiaries of some of the SkyTeam airlines. That month, SkyTeam’s member airlines trialed “green innovations” across 72 flights worldwide.

The focus also shifted toward enhanced knowledge sharing and collaboration, and additional categories were introduced (for 31 in total), all to incentivise the adoption of initiatives between airlines. Initiatives that were successfully replicated by other airlines were rewarded, fostering cooperation and amplifying the impact of smart interventions.

This is because, as Patrick Roux said, the Sustainable Flight Challenge was not designed as a challenge in the literal sense of the word. “It is really there to share best practises to make sure the industry moves forward,” he said, “and [to accelerate] practises for the benefit of customers.”

Going forward, the focus of the challenge will be to incentivise the replication of initiatives from other airlines as a way to create industry-wide value and help distribute the tools to implement changes. “It’s about these smart, small interventions and designs that set [things] in motion among the airlines,” Spierings said.

For Spierings, the Sustainable Flight Challenge is much more than the sum of various airline initiatives. She believes it points to how airlines will approach sustainability challenges in the future.

“If we put all these initiatives to practise on a large scale, given that they’re proven at a small scale, we can actually accomplish our climate goals,” she said. “We’re at the tipping point of treating sustainability like safety, where we put the interest of the planet, the people, and the industry before individual competitive gains.”

“We can still compete,” Spierings added, “and whoever implements things best, fastest, or first will stand out. But ultimately, everyone will benefit.”

THE OCEAN OF THE AIR UNITES ALL PEOPLE

As KLM continues its sustainability journey, the airline remains steadfast in its commitment to reducing carbon emissions and embracing innovative solutions, while also nudging passengers to fly more consciously—and through fleet renewal, operational efficiencies, and a focus on SAF, KLM is taking tangible steps to minimise its environmental impact.

KLM CEO Marjan Rintel is optimistic about the future and believes in the airline’s ability to meet its targets, though she acknowledges that the entire industry feels a sense of urgency. “We take our goals seriously, and we have been innovators and front runners for 103 years,” she said. “If you talk to Airbus and Boeing and the rest of the industry, there’s a lot of pressure and a lot of focus to get this done. We know that this is a hard to abate sector. The road to a cleaner, quieter, and more efficient airline is a journey full of challenges and we have to come with the necessary innovations together.”

When it comes to SAF, which airlines like KLM will need to power all the kerosene-fuelled aircraft that will be flying for at least the next 30-40 years, Rintel is confident that the emerging industry is positioned for “exponential growth” which will lead to the supply needed to power airline fleets.

In addition, by collaborating with industry partners, governments, and customers, KLM aims to create a future where avia-

tion and sustainability go hand in hand. In the process, the company is ready to take on even its harshest critics.

Critics of aviation and numerous climate organisations view air travel as a significantly polluting activity whose negative impact on the environment is only increasing, even as only a small proportion of people participate in it. Consequently, they advocate for a substantial reduction in the frequency of air travel.

However, it's undeniable that the lives of hundreds of millions of people have been changed by the magic of air travel. The ability, for example, to fly from Europe to Australia in 20 hours instead of 12 days (or far longer by ship) has resulted in countless cultural, social, and economic benefits.

As Trommels explains, KLM's founder Albert Plesman was fond of saying that "the ocean of the air unites all people." Though his words were particularly motivating when KLM was established in 1919, a tumultuous time at the end of World War I, they continue to be the driving force for the airline as it takes on new sustainability challenges.

"[Plesman] had the vision that aviation could unite people, bring people together, and create mutual understanding," Trommels said. "And that is the element that we want."

Simultaneously, Trommels suggests more self-examination within the organisation. "We have to ask ourselves, 'Are all of our flights living up to that sort of lofty ambition?' That's what we want the brand to be about."

THINGS TO LEARN FROM KLM:

1. **Encourage staff to think big and bold.** Bold Moves resulted in dozens of different suggestions from a 100+ strong team on how the airline can really move the needle when it comes to aviation sustainability.

2. **Understand the importance of collaboration and sharing knowledge.** The Sustainable Flight Challenge was a direct consequence of the Bold Moves initiative, In 2023, it saw the participation of 22 airlines not just trying to stage the most sustainable flight, but also competing in over 30 other sustainability-related categories. That said, the competition was actually an exceptional exercise in global cooperation—airlines learned from each other and freely shared best practises.
3. **Look at where you can make an impact now.** KLM Cityhopper accounts for a small share of KLM’s fuel budget but a large share of its departures out of Amsterdam. Making Cityhopper a sustainability test case and diverting SAF to it allows KLM to make an impact much sooner.
4. **Speak to the so-called conscious traveller.** Climate activists have played an important role in keeping the industry on its toes. But ultimately, common ground is hard to find since they insist that the only solution is to radically shrink the industry by cutting flights. However, that is not the main audience you are talking to. Rather you are addressing the so-called conscious traveller. People who need to or want to travel, but are also aware of the climate impact of doing so.
5. **Move from well-travelled to travelling well.** KLM recognises the environmental impact of flying and the balance that needs to be struck between that and the benefits of mobility and travel. As a result, it is encouraging travellers to think about how they can travel well, which implies minimising impact at every step of the journey. Through its customer touchpoint mapping exercise, KLM aims to become the airline of choice for sustainability-conscious travellers.

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