They’re the heart and soul of Cathay Pacific

HUMAN TOUCH: A new “mini-site” launched as part of the People & Service campaign highlights the customer-facing staff who help to make the CX experience special.

Thank you!

Airline on alert
Cathay Pacific responded quickly to ensure the safety of passengers and staff once the Influenza A (H1N1) alert was raised by the WHO.

Chief Executive Tony Tyler described staff response to the Special Leave Scheme (SLS) as “fantastic”, saying the high sign-up rate will be a big help in the airline’s efforts to preserve cash during the current business downturn.

By the deadline for giving consent on 10 May, almost 100 per cent of ground staff in Hong Kong and 99 per cent of outport staff had signed up for the scheme, while more than 96 per cent of CX cabin crew in Hong Kong had agreed to take part.

At Dragonair, the figures were 100 per cent for all ground staff, more than 99 per cent for cabin crew and almost 96 per cent for pilots.

At the time of going to press, almost 33 per cent of CX pilots had consented to the scheme – though their deadline has been extended to 18 May to take account of the fact that SLS is tied in with contractual issues that require more thorough consideration.

“I cannot thank staff enough for their fabulous response,” Tony told CX World. “At this current time preserving cash has become our top priority and the staff costs we save as a result of the Special Leave Scheme will be a very big help.”

Tony, however, reiterated that SLS will not make the airline bulletproof. “We are facing an enormous challenge from the current business downturn, and if the package of measures introduced last month doesn’t have the desired effect then we’ll have to think about doing more,” he said.

CX announced on 17 April that it was reducing passenger capacity by 8 per cent and cargo capacity by 11 per cent with effect from May, in addition to introducing the SLS.

Airline applauds staff for response in helping to preserve cash

Staff have been asked to take between one to four weeks unpaid leave, with senior staff being asked to share more of the burden.

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How different staff groups responded to SLS

The following figures, as of 10 May, include staff taking voluntary unpaid leave.

Cathay Pacific
- HKG ground staff – 99.9%
- Countries – 98.7%
- HKG cabin crew – 96.2%
- Basing cabin crew – 98.9%
- Pilots – 32.7%

Dragonair
- Ground staff – 100%
- Countries – 100%
- Cabin crew – 99.2%
- Pilots – 95.9%

* Excluding Italy and Germany which require a longer period for clearance in accordance with local laws.
** Excluding Canadian bases which require a longer period for clearance in accordance with local laws.
*** Includes consent for SLS, ULV and COS changes. The deadline for CX pilots to make their decision is 18 May.
Fast action as flu fear spreads

Cathay Pacific remains on high alert following the Influenza A (H1N1) outbreak that has been grabbing headlines around the world since late April.

The airline instigated a series of measures (see panel, right) soon after the World Health Organisation (WHO) gave its first alert on the outbreak on 25 April, setting up the Emerging Diseases Task Force two days later to spearhead the company reaction.

The key role of the Task Force, with members drawn from key operational departments, has been to safeguard staff and passengers, safety and well being, all the time guided by expert opinion from bodies such as the WHO, the US Centers for Disease Protection, IATA, and the relevant authorities in Hong Kong.

“Our aim was to inform and educate – as quickly and as widely as possible,” says Dr Rose Ong, Head of Corporate Medical Department.

“We wanted to maintain a balanced approach – protecting the airline’s operational integrity and brand, while at the same reassuring our staff, customers and stakeholders.”

The WHO upgraded its alert as the spread of the virus became clear and at the time of press was on Phase 5, indicating “widespread human infection”.

Cases have declined and stabilised in Mexico, though there has been a steady rise in cases reported in the US, and Mainland China’s first confirmed case was reported on 11 May. But Rose stresses the importance of putting the outbreak in perspective.

“Influenza A (H1N1) is a pandemic, but so far the symptoms are mild – not as severe even as regular seasonal flu,” she says.

“There’s a need to stay calm and keep the outbreak in context. For example, seasonal flu kills up to 500,000 people around the world every year – as of 12 May there are just 53 deaths from Influenza A.

“This is nothing near as dangerous as SARS or avian flu and I don’t believe it warrants the same sort of draconian measures in response.

“However, we do take the outbreak seriously and I encourage all our staff to keep up to date with what’s happening through IntraCX.”

In terms of masks, Rose stresses that, in line with IATA and WHO guidelines, they are not necessary unless a person is sick or dealing with sick people. “However, mask usage is still permitted for personal considerations among our front-line teams,” she adds.

“Cathay Pacific was one of 10 companies from Hong Kong and China to receive an Achievement Award from the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Association on 29 April.

The Association was impressed with the airline’s longstanding dedication to minimising its environmental impact through various programmes, including the “FLY greener” carbon-offset scheme.

Director Corporate Affairs Quince Chong was present to accept the award from Baptist University Associate Professor Jonathan Wong (pictured left).

“I am pleased CX’s environmental efforts, internally and for various external initiatives, have been recognised by the HKEPA,” she says.
**Drive on to boost summer bookings**

Still no sign of industry upturn as traditional peak approaches

Despite talk of “green shoots” appearing in the aftermath of the global economic downturn, the aviation industry remains downbeat about its prospects in the immediate future.

IATA revealed that losses for the global airline industry topped $1 billion in the first quarter, noting that “airfreight appears to have bottomed out but passenger travel continues to shrink, particularly premium.”

Cathay Pacific actually recorded an 8 per cent increase in the number of passengers carried in April, but the figure masks underlying trends – a continued front-end slump, low fares in the back driving down yield, and a negative currency impact – that are hurting the bottom line.

A recent report from Singapore said that airfares have dropped to their lowest levels since the SARS outbreak in 2003. For cargo, CX posted a 13.3 per cent drop in tonnage compared to April last year, while the depth of the slump in the Hong Kong market was underlined by HACTL figures showing a 22.5 per cent tonnage drop for the month.

At CX and Dragonair, the high passenger loads seen in April tailed off markedly in early May – usually a slack month.

The eyes of the commercial teams are now focused on the traditional upcoming peak months: July and August for leisure traffic and September-October for business travel.

General Manager Revenue Management Tom Owen says advance bookings for CX and KA remain significantly down on last year in both cabins, especially in July and August.

“Potential passengers remain very sensitive to pricing levels while market sizes have withered due to the ongoing global recession,” he says. “Yields remain under tremendous pressure due to aggressive competition and significantly fewer premium passengers taking our services.”

The Influenza A scare impacted on group bookings to Hong Kong, especially from North Asia, “but the impact on other routes appears to be relatively mild, at the time of writing at least,” says Tom.

There’s no sign of any marked pickup in demand for premium traffic, “though it does appear the previous rates of steep decline are now slowing,” he says.

“In the Economy cabin the home market remains soft, although there may be a late pick up as potential customers hold out for further fare deals.”

“Also, the impact of direct cross-Strait flights on our Taiwan business remains intense, especially in the premium segment.”

The current position is to ensure CX and KA remain the preferred choice for both leisure and business travellers by offering attractive fare products and leveraging off the brand.

“Numerous initiatives are in place around the world to stimulate both premium and leisure demand while corporate teams continue to look for opportunities out of this crisis to enlarge our corporate base for the future,” says Tom.

CX welcomes HKIA charge cuts

Cathay Pacific and other airlines operating at HKIA have been offered a 10 per cent reduction in both landing and parking charges until the end of 2009 – a move described as “timely” by Chief Executive Tony Tyler.

“As the biggest airline operator at Hong Kong International Airport, we appreciate all the savings we can get from the Airport Authority and our other suppliers,” Tony said in a statement issued by CX.

The landing and parking charge reductions will result in savings of around HK$200 million for airlines, while Airport Authority Hong Kong’s total relief package – which includes rental deferrals – has been given a value of HK$450 million.

The AA stated that half of rental payments for airline lounges, office premises, counters and storage can be deferred for up to one year and repaid by interest-free instalments from April 2010 onward.

“We welcome the Airport Authority’s package of relief measures,” said Tony. “It is essential for airlines and the airport to work closely together, especially in these challenging times, to underpin the competitiveness of the Hong Kong aviation hub.”

Vice Chairman of the Board of Airline Representatives in Hong Kong, Joe Ng, said the move “will help our members reduce operating costs in the midst of falling passenger demand and revenue brought on by the financial meltdown.”

In the midst of one of the steepest business downturns seen to date, CX has been working hard to win concessions or discounts from all suppliers and service providers.

A number of airports within the Asia Pacific region have already slashed charges to help airline users weather the storm.

Malaysia introduced a two-year discount of 50 per cent on landing charges effective 1 April, while from 1 May to the end of 2009 Thailand has cut landing charges by 30 per cent.

Singapore, China and Taiwan are also offering a range of concessions.

New application puts airline ahead in the mobile world

Cathay Pacific customers have embraced the CX Mobile application with over 20,000 downloads since it launched in mid-April.

The application takes advantage of the capabilities of modern “smart phones” to give customers a range of useful features that enable a smoother experience when travelling on Cathay Pacific.

The application works on all major smart phone brands including the iPhone, BlackBerry and Windows Mobile (with support for the latest Nokias and Sony Ericcsons).

Passengers can use the application to check flight arrivals and departures, check-in for their flights, read about the place they are flying to using City Guides, and access all mobile services at m.cathaypacific.com.

Online Marketing Manager Ali Bullock says CX now leads the industry in terms of mobile technology.

“Other carriers have mobile applications but they only support iPhones,” he says. “We extended it to BlackBerry and Nokias to reach out to as many people as possible.”

The next phase will extend the mobile application to KA passengers and will be available in simplified Chinese.

“Phase two will also include a link to Google Maps,” Ali says. “There will be a link on the City Guides to get directions for making it easier to get around a city.”
The HKIA team was presented with the 2008 HKIA Customer Service Excellence Programme – Corporate Award on 20 April at a special ceremony held at Hong Kong International Airport.

The annual award programme is organised by the Airport Authority Hong Kong and aims to reward airport frontline staff who have demonstrated exceptional customer service over the year.

The Corporate Award was voted on by more than 200 organisations based at HKIA and this is the first year it was presented.

Director Service Delivery Ivan Chu accepted the award from Airport Authority Hong Kong CEO Stanley Hui and Hong Kong Tourism Board Chairman James Tien.

Fourteen CX HKIA staff were also individually nominated for a Customer Service Excellence award.

General Manager HKIA Algernon Yau (pictured above with the CX nominees) extended his gratitude to all the HKIA team for their hard work.

“I am very proud of the team in winning this award which is an acknowledgement for their hard work,” he says.

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PRD potential realised

The recent strategy review highlighted the need for CX to build a stronger presence in the Pearl River Delta, home to some 45 million people…

While Cathay Pacific has done a lot of work to build traffic to and from the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, it was clear the airline still wasn’t doing enough to tap into the full business potential of the area earmarked as China’s economic growth engine.

Some 45 million – more than six times the population of Hong Kong – live in the PRD, forming a potentially huge market for CX and KA.

In order to boost sales, both inbound and outbound, and align Group activities in the region, the recent strategy review recommended the setting up of a “PRD supermo” for the airline – a role that’s been taken up by James Tong, General Manager Sales PRD & HK.

One of the first challenges, says James, will be changing staff’s mindset towards the PRD.

“We’ve been treating the region like one of our outposts, but in fact we should be viewing the PRD very much as our home market,” says James.

“When we treat it more like our home base we will begin to unlock the full potential. We need to work harder to get more people thinking about travelling through Hong Kong to reach their destinations.”

A lot is already happening in terms of building PRD sales, with better coordination of sales activities from outports and a stronger focus on corporate and leisure sales in Guangzhou.

Dragonair plans to launch a twice-daily service to Guangzhou in September, giving a significant boost to connectivity through HKIA, and James says there are plans to look at new opportunities to create a seamless travel experience and bring a high level of customer service to passengers.

“Connectivity is currently okay, but not perfect – there’s more we can do,” he says.

James heads a PRD core team, with members drawn from key commercial departments, which meets regularly and has clearly defined targets.

In addition to the CAN flight and sales office these include a PRD sales online setup, the creation of PRD experts in outport sales teams and generally building up the CX and KA brands and awareness in the region.

“And of course we have set clear revenue targets as we build our PRD presence,” says James.

“In the long-term there will inevitably be more integration and much closer cooperation between Hong Kong and the PRD, and more competition is inevitable.

“We have to do a lot of work now to ensure we capture the benefits of growth in the region – it’s important not to be sidetracked.”

Cargo team celebrates two more awards

Freight-forwarders from around the world cast their votes for the “20th Cargo Airline of the Year” awards – and CX came out top in one of the main categories.

The airline was named Best Asia Pacific Carrier at the “air cargo Oscars”, organised by Air Cargo News and held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London on 25 April.

Ray Jewell, Regional Manager Cargo Europe, was there to accept the award on CX’s behalf.

The voting for the awards – in which Emirates was named Cargo Airline of the Year – was audited by the British International Freight Association, with hundreds of forwarders from around 90 countries voicing their opinion.

Earlier in April, CX took the Best Carrier to the Far East award at the 2009 Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association event.

This was the ninth year since 1999 for CX to take a CIFPA honour, with Cargo Manager Eastern Canada Kam Leung Au picking up the award on the airline’s behalf.

TEAM TRIUMPH: The UK Cargo team with the Air Cargo News trophy.
Letters to the Editor

Star letter

Is SLS really a fair deal?

Compared to the leave-without-pay scheme in 2003, the SLS scheme announced this year is an improvement in that the distribution of the burden appears fairer. However, within each staff level, is it still fair?

A high proportion of Levels C and D+ staff receive various fixed allowances which are close to or even exceed their basic salary. The rest probably receive less than 50 per cent of their basic salary in allowances.

The extremes in total allowances, which are not being included in the calculation for SLS, challenge the claim of fairness. Why should some staff have their daily living expenses covered by these fixed allowances and others don’t? Is the company prepared to make SLS fairer?

Name withheld

Bob Nipperess, Employee Services Manager, replies: In drawing up the 2009 SLS scheme we reviewed a number of approaches based on past experience as we wanted to make the scheme as acceptable as possible for all staff.

In the end, the Company decided the principle of linking the scheme to job levels was fairer and more equitable.

Also, the deduction of salary using the same principles we apply for calculating profit share for individuals is the more consistent and acceptable approach.

Because of the differences in employment terms for various groups of employees, we have to adopt an approach that will not complicate the matter.

Touring round

Almost every day, Cathay City is host to school tour groups, which is a great way for the airline to showcase its facilities and operations.

I work in the Flight Training Centre and often see groups of school children observing the 777 flight simulator in operation while listening to the tour guide provide interesting details – in Cantonese. Shouldn’t the tours be conducted in English, the international language of aviation?

It might impress upon the children the importance of developing their language skills if they wish to pursue a career in the industry.

Bob Gates

Elsa Leung, Corporate Communications Manager – Public Relations, replies: The Cathay Pacific tour for visiting school groups is offered in both Cantonese and English and the schools are presented with the language option when they make the booking.

As the vast majority of schools in Hong Kong are Chinese speaking, they normally choose the Chinese-language tour.

New cargo city?

With China’s continued trade and development expansion into various parts of Africa and the subsequent increase in demand for cargo traffic, has Johannesburg ever been considered as a future dedicated freighter destination?

Name withheld

Chitty Cheung, General Manager Cargo Planning & Operations, replies: We are aware of the continuous expansion of trade between China and Africa and there are a number of places in Africa worth exploring for freighter operations.

However, our current priorities are to improve the profitability of our existing flights.

When considering whether to start a new service, we have to take a very cautious approach, especially in the current economic climate.

We shall continue to monitor the developments of potential new markets (and Africa is definitely one of them) to ensure we do not miss out on any valuable opportunities.

Maximise aircraft

We’ve been operating three daily flights to Dubai since 1 October and one of them is the CX745 service.

Out of the daily flights operated as CX745, only three are continuing on to Bahrain, while the remaining four terminate in Dubai.

While I understand that we are being severely hit by the economic crisis, wouldn’t it help to boost earnings if we used the aircraft to fly return short-haul flights within the area such as Doha and Cairo, rather than making the aircraft sit on the ground for almost 12 hours before its return flight to Hong Kong?

Godwynne Gallardo

Frank Wong, Planning Projects Manager, replies: Making use of ground time to generate additional revenue makes sense. In the case of CX745 those flights do have long ground times in DXB, and extending the flights to other Middle Eastern destinations is being considered.

But, aside from basic demand and supply, other important issues we need to consider includes setup costs, whether we can expect to generate not just revenue but importantly profit over the short, medium, and long term (especially if we consider a scheduled service rather than charters), traffic rights, operational availability and concerns over and whether the route complements well with the overall CX network.

Spruce up Travel Desk

I requested a few months ago that the default view on the “Find a Flight” function on Travel Desk be changed to show the availability and I am very pleased to see this change has now been incorporated.

May I ask for another improvement? When viewing saved trips in the trip planner, it would also be more convenient to see this change has now been incorporated.

The integration at CX is incredible – there are 20,000 staff of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. This contributes to the unique corporate culture at CX.

Wilson Jia

The company is people oriented and the staff grow along with the airline.

Mark Yang

I can feel the strong attachment the staff have to the company. They are proud of being at CX.

Ted Liu

I find the safety management at CX stems from the safety culture cultivated inside the hearts of everyone here.

Steven Chen

The people are warm and friendly. I feel very comfortable!

Helen Kang

Working happily and living well – these are CX people!

Kevin Wang

Confident, optimistic and love their jobs – this is what CX people are like. These are qualities that can help overcome the current financial crisis.

Bili Zhang

The online poll

Last month we asked you “Has the CX response been sufficient in light of the Influenza A outbreak?” You answered:

Yes, the airline has taken the right steps and kept everyone fully up to date on what’s happening

I think more could have been done to keep us informed

There was too much information – the whole Influenza A threat was overblown anyway

Check out the CX World website and Daily News on IntraCX for next month’s poll question.

Send us your feedback

We welcome feedback from anyone in the CX network on any issue affecting the airline or the industry. Please email your letters to CCD#SCT. Not all letters will be published but those that are will be edited for length and to comply with the CX World style.

The sender of the star letter each month will win 3,000 Asia Miles. The Feedback page is sponsored by Asia’s leading travel reward programme.
Sun still shining on Sanya

The decision to reduce the number of frequencies to the southern Chinese city of Sanya, on Hainan island, has not stopped Manager – Hainan Paul Chung and his team from still aggressively promoting the popular holiday destination.

“Sanya’s attractions of warm weather, beautiful beaches and professional golf courses are well known,” Paul says.

With the recent political instability in Thailand, many resort lovers who enjoy Phuket changed travel plans to Sanya – the travel time is shorter and hotels are cheaper and just as good.”

Hainan is also the only province in Mainland China with no visa restrictions for Russian travellers. According to Paul, the potential of the Russian market with the people’s high purchasing power has yet to be widely explored, though the recent announcement of visa-free travel to Hong Kong will allow for more dual-destination promotions.

“The Russian market comprises 20-25 per cent of local hotel occupancy and there are many Russian charter flights operating to and from Sanya,” Paul says.

“So we are promoting Hong Kong as a shopping destination after a relaxing beach holiday in Sanya. We expect the market to grow to over 500 Russian travellers monthly.”

Paul says more international hotel chains will be opening properties on the island over the next few years and are looking to Haitang Bay as land in the popular Yalong Bay district fills up. “More and more hotel groups are buying sites and expanding their network in Sanya.”

“There are already over 30 hotels confirmed to open in Haitang Bay in the next two to three years, including Shangri-La, Conrad, Regent, Intercontinental and St Regis,” Paul says.

Paul says bookings are encouraging especially over long weekends.

“In April because of the Ching Ming festival, Easter holidays and the Boao APEC forum, four flights were upgraded to A330 operations and there were ad hoc upgrades to A321s to cope with the demand,” Paul says.

“The load factor shot up to 80 plus per cent with an annual average of around 60 per cent.”

Leisure travellers comprise the majority of the passenger traffic contributing about 80 per cent of the traffic mix.

“The remaining 20 per cent are business travellers – hotel pre-opening teams and MICE groups,” Paul says.

Putting crew issues front and centre

If life had taken a slight twist, then Assistant General Manager Inflight Services Christine Liu would be sitting in a counsellor’s office listening to patients. Instead she tackles different issues every day relating to the more than 1,300 KA cabin crew. “I handle all crew-related issues from service standards and procedures to training and cabin crew relations – a vast area to cover,” she says.

Christine graduated from Hong Kong University with a degree in Psychology and says she did contemplate a career as a psychologist.

“But I thought I should get some work experience before I got involved in counselling in order to help me understand how the patients are thinking and feeling,” she says.

So Christine joined CX as a Management Trainee and loved it so much she never left. She worked in various departments including IMT, MKT, RUBIC, REV, CCG as well as a stint in Bangkok, before joining KA ISD in November 2008.

Christine says the biggest challenge in her current role is finding a balance between the well being of the crew community and the company’s decisions and expectations.

“The challenge is to know what crew are thinking and make decisions that meet their needs. There are over 1,300 cabin crew whose interests and needs vary, and who obviously travel a lot so a lot of communication is required to get their feedback,” Christine says.

“I try to use every channel possible to commmunicate with them. One way is the crew forums where we meet with 40-odd crew at a time, talk to them about their concerns and get their feedback.

“I also aim to fly on KA flights at least once a month and have gatherings with the crew when we stay over in outports. And we have a crew relations team who act as a liaison and pass on any ideas and feedback.”

Fine dining inflight

First and business class passengers from Beijing to Hong Kong can now sample signature dishes from two prestigious restaurants in Beijing. Gourmet Chinese dishes from Chynna at the Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, and Sureño, the Mediterranean restaurant at boutique hotel The Opposition House, will be available inflight from 16 May.

General Manager China Patrick Yeung says: “This new inflight menu brings the best of both Chinese and Mediterranean cuisines to our passengers, highlighting our dedication to creating a memorable travel experience.”

In another inflight promotion, First and Business Class passengers from Hong Kong to Beijing or Shanghai can now select from a menu featuring creations from the renowned Zeffirino Ristorante at the Regal Hong Kong hotel.

KA PEOPLE

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Up close and personal

**Ann Chang, Inflight Service Manager**
I never like sitting still. I am always on the move. Maybe that’s why I love my job so much.

The job can be tough of course, but it has wonderful moments, too. I remember a while ago we had been told it was a passenger’s birthday, so just for fun, we popped a message on his screen wishing him a happy birthday. He got such a surprise!

**Alice Wong, Flight Attendant**
Life is not about what you know or what you say – it’s all about believing in yourself and having confidence.

I learned that after I went to the US. My time in America helped me a lot. If I had never left Hong Kong I think I would have been too scared to talk so easily to foreigners.

**Nancy Hui, Flight Purser**
As a kid I always liked airports. Just like Hugh Grant says in the movie *Love Actually* – “Everybody is in love in an airport”. How can you be angry when you’re waiting for someone you love to return?

So I decided I wanted to spend my life arriving at airports and being happy. And that’s just what I have done.

**Ben Hau, Cargo Sales Reservations Officer**
A lot of people think cargo isn’t very exciting, but cargo revenue is important for the airline, so it’s a good division to be in.

When I first started, I was working at the public counter where people could just walk in and give us cargo to ship. We handled everything – dogs, cats, and one time a huge fish in a tank that Hong Kong Ocean Park sent to an aquarium in Japan.

**Gigi Chung, Flight Attendant**
When I was little kid I always wanted to be a Flight Attendant. I love to try new things. I took up tai chi a while ago and now I am really beginning to experience the benefits. I feel much healthier and more balanced as a person.

I am also getting quite involved with CX’s “FLY greener” programme to offset carbon emissions. I am more and more conscious of the environment and I am trying to eat more organic food and live more sensibly, too. It’s another new experience for me. But I am sure it will be rewarding.

**Cynthia Yung, Customer Sales Officer**
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**The People & Service brand campaign website launched on 8 May, giving customers a glimpse into the individual stories of selected customer-facing staff.**
Marketing Manager Max Lui says the website provides customers with a more personal view of the people who make up CX. “There are two sides to every story, and for every delighted passenger there is a staff member who is even happier to have made them smile,” he says.

“The site gives the public a unique opportunity to see just a few of the personalities behind the uniforms and suits, and understand what inspires each of them to deliver the Cathay Pacific service that all our customers know and love.”

The site will be regularly updated to feature different staff. Pictured here are a few of the people currently on the site – go to www.cathaypacific.com/people to see more.

**Helen Tsang, Customer Services Officer**
I love toys. My house is full of them. And I’m always flying off to Japan whenever I can to buy new ones.

There’s a special place in Tokyo that sells old-fashioned, second-hand toys that are really lovely.

I think I am quite a cheerful person – maybe it’s all those toys – and very talkative. I love meeting people so I think my job is just right for me.

**Jessica Chan, Head of Customer Relations**
I think I get my biggest buzz from people. Just being around people I like and enjoy gives me so much energy. If people are in need and I can help, or if I can make people laugh or smile, that makes my day!

I guess that’s just as well, really, as my whole job is all about helping people – when we disappoint passengers, we do all we can to make things right.
Mission accomplished

It was a trip to remember for the Cathay Pacific staff who volunteered for the oneworld humanitarian mission to Thailand in April.

Together with staff from other oneworld airlines, including Qantas, American Airlines and Japan Airlines, the 100-member delegation spent five days in Bangkok’s Toey Klong area and worked on various children’s projects in association with local charity group, the Human Development Foundation.

“It’s good to step out of our comfort zone once in a while,” says Vancouver Customer Service Agent Jann Chen, who had never put up a ceiling or painted a wall before this trip.

Contributing their skills, the staff volunteers – ranging from crew to ground staff – helped to decorate an AIDS hospice for children, planted vegetable gardens at orphanages, worked on facilities for underprivileged toddlers and helped to repair a half-way home for street kids.

Materials for the projects were paid for by the volunteers, who organised fundraising activities prior to the trip. Each person also covered their own expenses and took time from their annual leave allowances, in order to join the mission.

In addition to the manual work, the group also participated in other community activities at the Mercy Centre and Home, Romklao School, Lock 6 Pre-School and other help facilities.

“It was an excellent team project with a worldwide team of like-minded volunteers getting stuck in to some good old-fashioned hard graft,” says ENG’s David Neale.

The work undertaken by the group also left a deep impression on the beneficiaries in Thailand.

“The elderly in particular can’t stop talking about the oneworld group and their new cement floor,” says Mercy Centre’s Usanee Janngeon. “I would like to thank all the staff for giving up their time to help us.”

PRACTICAL HELP: Nine staff from Cathay Pacific took part in the oneworld humanitarian trip, chipping in to contribute towards improving the lives of Bangkok’s underprivileged.
WHAT I DO

Nelson Chin,
Manager Airline Planning

What is the main part of your job? I work with other key departments and recommend how, how many, when, and where to fly to improve the profitability of CX and KA flights, and their contribution to the network in the coming years. We get up-to-date information on market trends from REV, outports and the outside world, then run through scenarios with REV on the best places to fly to generate revenue, go through the feasibility with key operational departments, including FOP and ISD on crew requirements, APO and ENG on aircraft requirements, and IFD on traffic rights.

Once we receive endorsement, we implement the changes and work with almost every department in the company to make the flight happen.

In the end it’s very much a team effort.

What is a typical day for you? Most of the time is spent in the office reviewing numbers, going through reports and having discussions with various departments.

However as it’s also important for us to be close to the market, we engage with the travel industry, government bodies, tourism boards and airports around the world, so we can verify and understand where the numbers are coming from.

What do you like about the job? The whole process, from initial feasibility studies to getting the involvement of all departments to make it work and finally seeing the route grow prosperously. I guess it’s like nurturing a plant and seeing the route grow! In the end it’s very much a team effort.

What is the most challenging part and how do you tackle it? What may seem an ideal network today may not be tomorrow given the dynamic changes in passenger trends and competitor activities, so we must ensure our recommendations not only generate immediate returns but also solidify our position to generate and maximise future returns.

At the back of our minds, the business must always be treated as an ongoing concern and our recommendation should ensure the well being of the company over the long term. This is tackled through forming views based on the expert opinions and recommendations from people throughout the various CX departments.

Going beyond the norm with tableware, vintage wine

Elegant tableware from a world-renowned chef and rare vintage wines are being offered to passengers as part of the Beyond Duty Free promotion inflight from April to June.

The limited-edition tableware made from stainless steel and lacquer is presented by Michelin chef Joel Robuchon while the vintage wines, including Petrus, Latife Rothschild and Montrachet, are among the rarest in the world.

“So far we have had two passengers purchase the tableware – 10 sets in total – while local wine writers have also expressed an interest in writing about the vintage wine offering,” says Inflight Sales & Logistics Manager Camilla Taylor.

The products will be available until the end of June but may be continued via the website depending on demand.

Inflight product boost

New development facility provides the look and feel of a real cabin

A new Cabin Development Centre has opened at Cathay City allowing for more realistic and comprehensive testing of new products.

Built to the specifications of Zone C in a Boeing 777-300ER, the area is impressively similar to the interior of a real aircraft.

Assistant Manager Product Amanda Yang says CX is the only carrier to have such a sophisticated cabin simulation. “There are two moving bulkheads which allow the area to be divided into a maximum of three separate areas,” she says.

“This means we can simultaneously simulate several cabin environments using different sets of side panels including the A330 or even the A320 for KA products.”

Inside, customisable mood lighting and audio-visual systems have been installed to maximise the scope and flexibility during the research stage.

“We will use it to test out seats, mood lighting, and many other inflight products to gain a more accurate perspective of how it would look and feel in a real cabin,” Amanda says. “The seats in the new cabin product were previously tested in the Flight Training Centre, which did not give as accurate a perspective.

“Another advantage is that we can now test our inflight products right here where all the relevant departments can have easier access. We will also be able to invite cabin crew to test out the product and give their valuable input,” she adds.

Charity flight brings toys, gifts to China

Christmas came early for the children of Chengdu when a Cathay Pacific cargo flight from North Carolina, carrying over 100 tonnes of shoe box gifts, landed in the earthquake-stricken city on 27 April.

The cargo team in the US worked with non-profit organisation Samaritan’s Purse to carry the 65,000 shoe boxes filled with toys and other gifts to provide some much-needed cheer to the children of Chengdu almost one year after the earthquake hit.

CX was also involved with Samaritan’s Purse immediately following the 2008 disaster, helping to fly a freighter-load of urgently needed supplies to Chengdu.

Manager Cargo, Midwest USA Douglas Wahl says: “I am proud to have been part of these two Chengdu charter flights as they are near and dear to my heart. We should not forget the importance of these two flights – helping those in need in China.

“I would like to thank the entire team in the US, Head Office and the ground crew in Chengdu who helped to makes these charters so successful” says Doug.
Plans put to the test

Exercise enables CX and AA discover if new disruption procedures work

Cathay Pacific staff spent the early hours of 24 April at Hong Kong International Airport testing crowd control procedures and new software to be employed in the event of a service disruption.

This is the first time the Hong Kong Airport Authority has done a full-blown typhoon specific exercise—particularly relevant given the typhoon season is about to start.

Crisis Response Development Manager Carrie Shiu says: “The objective for the CCP Department was to test typhoon preparedness, particularly crowd control measures. We wanted to see how the flow of passengers would work after the barriers and signs had been set up.

“I was also concerned about how cabin crew volunteers are briefed and we conducted a wash-up meeting afterwards to gather their input,” she says.

While a simulation exercise with only 100 “passengers” was far from being a real disruption involving several thousand people, Carrie says the exercise was still very useful.

“Because the crowd control measures are new I think it was worthwhile to test them out to get a sense of how they work,” she says.

AHQ also tested two new concepts—the Flight Disruption Control Centre (FDCC) and new software called the Flight Disruption Control System (FDCS).

The online Cathay Pacific and Dragonair City Guides, featured on both carrier’s websites, will soon have a special section showing travel tips and ideas from staff.

Called Air Crew Tips, the section will include fun, unusual and entertaining staff recommendations for passengers to enjoy when they visit a wide range of cities. The section will go live on 11 May.

“We want to tap into their unique perspective and offer it to our customers. We are looking for anything from great restaurants and bars to little out-of-the-way antique stores,” Celine adds.

Staff can visit www.cathaypacific.com/tips to submit their tip.

“The more information provided the better,” Celine says. “Phone numbers, websites or even a photo of the place being recommended can be submitted.”

As an added incentive, every two months a prize will be given for the best tip submitted with the May/June prize being a two-night stay at the Park Hyatt Tokyo.

Your travel tips needed

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“Though the City Guides already feature invaluable travel information from Luxe Guides and Lonely Planet, we have thousands of staff who travel frequently, eat out and go shopping worldwide and participate in cultural events around the world,” says Manager Marketing Communications Celine Ho.

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Obituary – Ratima Tumjib

Friends and colleagues were saddened to hear of the death of Flight Purser Ratima Tumjib, who passed away on 27 April after contracting a viral infection.

Ratima joined Cathay Pacific in June 1995 and was promoted to Flight Purser in 2002.

Scores of Ratima’s ISD colleagues signed a condolence book that was placed in the Crew Lounge.

She is survived by her mother and two siblings.

Manager Customer Services & Product Development – Airports Russ Fortson says: “FDCC is a new AHQ initiative that will assist IOC in making decisions regarding deployment of additional aircraft and ascertain when to cancel/combine flights from a customer perspective.

“FDCS is one of the biggest tools in managing a severe disruption as it enables the FDCC to get an overall view of what is happening in the outports.

“Through FDCS, the outports let us know what the accommodation situation is and the protection availability and this allows AHQ to get a holistic view of the network and identify problem areas,” he says.

During the exercise, named “Summer Blow”, three outports – San Francisco, Vancouver and Taipei – tested out the FDCS.

“The exercise went well in that we proved the concept works well and were able to identify areas where improvements can be made,” Russ says.

HKIA Quality Assurance Manager Anna Choi says she wanted to use the exercise to show the readiness of CX as well as the Airport Authority.

“The queuing setup landside and at the AEL platform were the important areas we needed to see in action,” she says. “Even small things like whether we have enough signs is important as those are things we have to identify now.”

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“Through FDCS, the outports let us know what the accommodation situation is and the protection availability and this allows AHQ to get a holistic view of the network and identify problem areas,” he says.
The Heart as soon as I step into the office!” he says.

Revi Thekkethil, formerly with the Reservations & Ticketing team in Riyadh and now working for CX’s GSA after an in-house restructuring, has been through some tough times in his 23 years with the airline. In the last few years he underwent heart surgery and battling mental, physical and spiritual suffering.

But as much as he loves singing, and in particular harmonising, the modest Aeon says his greatest love is playing the guitar – a hobby he could happily indulge in for hours on end. “Some of my friends call me a guitar maniac,” he laughs.

He started off by playing mellow music on the acoustic guitar. But, since coming across other instruments including the djembe and bass guitar, he now enjoys playing more up-tempo music, especially on stage in front of an audience.

Aeon lists acoustic player Michael Hedges as his guitar hero and looks to bands such as Pink Floyd, Radiohead, U2 and Fleetwood Mac for inspiration in his new hobby – songwriting.

“I wrote my first song at 34, for a friend who passed away,” explains Aeon.

His friends, who are professional musicians, envy the fact that Aeon can play music simply for his own enjoyment. “I would love to have the chance to record my own album – and I hope everyone will support me!” he smiles.

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But when the going got tough, Revi steered himself and managed to overcome all the hurdles. He is now back to his former confident self.

“It was the darkest time of my life,” says Revi, who worried about his bills with CX when he lost his place on the Reservations & Ticketing team.

Thanks to self-determination and positive thinking – and great support from family and friends – Revi has bounced back to regain his confidence in serving passengers.

Letters from customers praising his excellent customer service are coming in once again and Revi attributes his success to the good training CX provided.

“My mind is full of how I can deliver Service Straight From the Heart as soon as I step into the office!” he says.

Classy launch
The Italy team celebrated the launch of the new cabin product, the introduction of the summer schedule and the return of the 874 on the Rome-Hong Kong route with events in both Milan and Rome.

Marco Polo Club members, top corporate accounts, VIPs and top travel agents attended the two events which included a slide presentation and cocktail reception.

Spotlight on media talent
More than 400 entries – the highest ever – were received for the 2009 Cathay Pacific Travel Media Awards, which were presented in Auckland on 31 March.

The awards are organised by the New Zealand Travel Communicators Association and have been sponsored by Cathay Pacific since they were established in 1991.

Freelance writer Pam Wade won the Cathay Pacific Travel Writer of the Year Award for her story on Glasgow, a destination she travelled to on a CX-sponsored trip.

Auckland-based photographer Amos Chapple took the Cathay Pacific Travel Photographer of the Year award for his portfolio of photos taken while working full time for the Our Place publishing project, photographing UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Travel agents fly high
The Sri Lanka team and the Singapore Tourist Board held a joint promotion to motivate local travel agents to highlight CX’s holiday packages to Singapore.

Sri Lanka Country Manager John Holden presented the prizes of a holiday to Singapore, with hotel accommodation and tours, to World Travel Centre Manager Travel & Tours Shanen Alles and Aitken Spence Overseas Travels Executive Thurka Shyanmini. Colombo Sales & Marketing Manager Ruhan Abbas says: “The familiarisation tour where they received firsthand information on upcoming attractions was designed to inspire the winners to further promote Singapore as a destination for Cathay Pacific passengers.”

Cricket team a hit
It was a dream come true for the CX Mumbai Airport team who had a chance to meet the Indian cricket team when the players flew from Mumbai to Auckland via Hong Kong.

The cricketers were met by hordes of adoring fans at Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport, who swamped the CX check-in area before the team was led away to the safety of the lounge.

Corporate Sales Executive Akshay Samant went the extra mile to take care of them, to the point of escorting them to Hong Kong where they spent their transit time in the CX lounge. “It was a great experience meeting them,” Akshay says. “And they were very impressed with our lounge facilities.”

Vancouver on top of freighter frenzy
The Mt Redoubt volcano eruption in Alaska led to a number of freighters being diverted from Anchorage to either Vancouver and San Francisco from 23 March to 24 April. The ash from the volcano was reported to have risen 60,000 feet above sea level, causing 144 freighter diversions via YVR and three freighter diversions via SFO.

Vice President Cargo Americas Stephen Wong expressed his gratitude to the YVR cargo team for the extra effort they put in during this time. “The team worked tirelessly to handle on average 4.3 flights per day during this period,” he said. “We can’t thank them enough for their dedication and hard work.”

Guitar man
Taipei Mechanic Aeon Teng was one of the winners in the first ever CX/KA Taiwan Singing Contest held last year.

And as much as he loves singing, and in particular harmonising, the modest Aeon says his greatest love is playing the guitar – a hobby he could happily indulge in for hours on end. “Some of my friends call me a guitar maniac,” he laughs.

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Looking back on 40 great years in Indonesia

The Jakarta team celebrated 40 years of CX in Indonesia with a gala event on 29 April.

Key business partners were joined by Indonesia staff as well as Director Sales & Marketing James Barrington and General Manager SE Asia Anna Thompson who flew in just for the event. Three ex-country managers, Clement Lam, James Ginns and Richard Reed, also joined in the celebration.

In welcoming the guests, Country Manager Indonesia Vincent Li said: “Starting humbly with just two flights a week 40 years ago, we are now serving Jakarta with double-daily frequencies.

“Together with our services to Surabaya and Denpasar, we are now operating 27 flights a week between Indonesia and Hong Kong, and two freighter services a week,” he added.

James Barrington stressed the importance of the Indonesian market to the CX network and the fact that flights were increasing despite the financial downturn.

“Jakarta has grown to become one of the most important destinations in our global network,” he said.

“We actually have more flights to the country this summer as we are adding four more flights a week to Denpasar between July and September.

The evening included a presentation of awards to key travel and cargo agents to thank them for their support. Cathay Pacific’s signature event, “Walking On Air”, featured cabin crew showcasing the airline’s uniforms over the past years.

The Cargo team had another reason to celebrate with the opening of the new office on 28 April (far right). Anna Thompson did the ribbon-cutting honours with Jakarta GSA PT JAS General Manager Mr Mansur (left) and property management company Soewarna General Manager Mr Sunarto.

HKMA Quality Award & Special Award for SMEs

WARMEST WELCOME TO OUR QUALITY AWARD DINNER AND PRESENTATION CEREMONY

www.hkma.org.hk/qa

Based on the world-famous Malcolm Balridge Award, the HKMA Quality Award seeks to reward those organizations that have achieved outstanding standards of quality.

The Quality Award Dinner as the event highlight will be held on Monday, 6 July 2009 at the Ballroom, InterContinental Hong Kong. Dr John CC Chan GBBS JP, Chairman of The Hong Kong Jockey Club will be the Guest of Honour. The Award winners will be announced during the Presentation Ceremony on the night. Join us on this memorable occasion and you can share the experience of first-class companies in quality management.

To participate in this special event, please contact Ms Mei Tang on 2774 8553 for tableseat reservations. For more details on the Dinner, please contact Ms Kristy Chan on 2774 8585 or Ms Victoria Lo on 2774 8528.
Shooting the breeze

Simulator Instructor Johnny Loo overcame blustery conditions to shoot an impressive 69 and take the top prize at the second annual CXWorld Golf Challenge on 18 April.

The weather at the Nine Eagles Golf Course at HKIA could have been sponsored by the Scottish Tourism Board, with the strong wind bending flagsticks almost double. Luckily, the rain – another key element of Scottish golf – held off until minutes after play was over.

A total of 44 players from all departments took part in this year’s event with Johnny lifting the tournament trophy – generously donated by Nine Eagles – and 10,000 Asia Miles for the best gross score of the day.

A total of 15 prizes – all donated by sponsors – were given out on the day, with Flight Purser Yuku Furuyama shooting an 81 over 18 holes to win the women’s best gross score prize.

Yuku’s skills won her a two-night stay in Shanghai – and an extra prize of a bottle of champagne after she holed in one at the eighth, at 200 yards from the back tee the longest of Nine Eagles’ par threes.

This was Yuku’s first-ever hole in one and, following golfing tradition, she generously bought a couple of jugs of beer for each table to celebrate the achievement.

Cathay Holidays Ltd sponsored the grand prize of the day – a golfing holiday in Xiamen including flights, hotel and golf – which was decided by lucky draw. The winner was Matilda Chan from Engineering.

Model hobby has Daniel whirling the hours away

Staff on the Change for Good field trip in February were stunned when they realised AV Production Officer Daniel Chan had carried a model helicopter with him to northern Thailand.

“I always take a model helicopter with me wherever I go,” he laughs. “I couldn’t go to bed without playing for a little while each day. The best part is that you can fly them virtually anywhere as you don’t need much space.”

Daniel says his first memory of a real helicopter was slightly hair raising. “I was working with a television station and was asked to do an aerial shot of the flooding in the New Territories,” he says. “Only after I got on board did I realise that the side door next to my seat would need to stay open the entire trip to cater for the camera!”

“But I got interested in helicopters, so when I saw people flying models in Saigon two years ago I decided to get one for myself.”

Model hobby has Daniel whirling the hours away

Daniel says the most challenging aspect of controlling a model helicopter is to keep a stable flight path and overcome the wind factor.

“Sometimes when I fly a chopper in quiet places the movement of the blades sound so real I have a feeling that I am in command of a genuine helicopter,” he says. “I really enjoy it!”

1. How did you deal with the culture shock after moving to Manila? I actually didn’t have that much culture shock – I found it easy to adapt.

2. Have you tried out any of the local delicacies? I like pork adobo very much and for desert halo-halo is usually my choice. Those two dishes make me forget about losing weight! I haven’t tried balut yet, but I heard it is actually delicious – tastes like a boiled egg but with a different texture.

3. The Philippines team really like to party and sing. Do you join in with a favourite karaoke song?

One of my favourite karaoke songs is Memory from the musical Cats. I started to question my singing ability after hearing my friends here – they are all great singers!

4. Favourite thing about the Philippines?

The people – their warmth, charming hospitality and contagious optimistic nature.

5. Least favourite thing?

My one-year posting – it’s too short!

6. What do you recommend visitors see in the Philippines?

In Manila at the Cultural Centre or the little bars in Malate, you can enjoy great performances ranging from contemporary ballet by Ballet Philippines to indie rock mixed with Philippine folk by local bands.

7. What is an ideal Sunday afternoon?

A good book after a torturing contemporary dance class.

8. What is your dream holiday?

Nothing too special. Spending time with family and friends, and some time for myself, will be good enough.

9. What do you do to relax?

Tidying up my place, reading, listening to music or hanging out with friends.

10. If you were left stranded on one of the Philippines’ lovely islands, what would you like to have with you?

Some good friends, definitely!
Teams take pole position!

It was a scramble to the top for two CX teams taking part in a unique sporting event last month.

The airline fielded a men’s team and a women’s team for the Corporate Challenge Relay on Cheung Chau – an adaptation of the climbing event held during the island’s annual “Bun Festival”.

The two teams of five competed against participants from other major companies in climbing to the top of a 14-metre tower constructed from bamboo poles.

The rain poured down on the day of the event but that didn’t stop the CX men taking the champion’s trophy by a wide margin.

The women’s team – also representing Dragonair – came second in their event.

“The team members went through a tough training regime under adverse weather conditions so we are very happy with the result,” says team captain Stanley Tam.

The teams went to Cheung Chau a week before the event to get familiar with the proper climbing techniques and skills.

Ladies’ team member Perry Yu says it was great fun – and a big surprise to walk away with two trophies.

“It was raining during the race, which increased the difficulty level, but it was a case of ‘no pain, no gain’ – this was a unique experience for all of us,” says Perry.

The Quiz

Enter our latest quiz and win a two-night three-day stay at the Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon in Vietnam.

Located in the quiet seaside town of Quy Nhon, approximately 650 kilometres north of Ho Chi Minh City, all of the resort’s 63 rooms face the sea.

A range of activities are available including a relaxing session at the Life Spa which is located in a private garden overlooking the sea and has steam baths, a Japanese dry sand and salt sauna and two outdoor saltwater ponds. Guests can also partake of a range of watersports including canoeing, body boarding and snorkeling and diving trips to two private islands.

The resort also offers sightseeing excursions to nearby Cham Towers, Tay Son Palace, Long Kanh Pagoda and the Han Mac Tu Memorial.

At the end of the day, enjoy authentic Vietnamese cuisine at the Senses restaurant while watching the sunset over the water.

More information at www.life-resorts.com

The winner of our second prize this month will receive a two-night stay in a deluxe harbour view room at the Kowloon Shangri-La Hong Kong.

The 700-room hotel is located in the heart of the Tsim Sha Tsui East shopping and entertainment district and has stunning views of the famous Victoria Harbour.

Guests can enjoy Japanese cuisine at Nadaman, classic Italian dishes at Angelini, Cantonese specialties at Shang Palace, international buffets at Café Kool or relax at the end of the day in the Tapas Bar.

The fitness centre includes an indoor swimming pool, sauna, steam bath, jacuzzi, massage and facial services and a solarium.

Find out more at www.shangri-la.com

To enter, visit the online quiz entry form on the CX World site. The deadline is noon on Friday, 5 June.
Storming the desert

Abu Dhabi Assistant Sales Manager Ashley Castellino and Dubai Marketing & Sales Officer Clifford Rasquinha take on the challenge of dune bashing

Rain is rare in the desert terrain of the United Arab Emirates, so when it pours the residents love to get out there and soak it all in. We had been at the receiving end of some glorious weather and I was excited enough to take up a long overdue drive into the desert.

I only had one destination in mind - the spellbinding “Empty Quarter” which is roughly 1,200 kilometres long and 650 kilometres wide, and is one of the largest continuous deserts in the world spreading across Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE and Yemen.

The two-and-a-half-hour drive from the capital city into the Empty Quarter affords visitors a magnificent view of some of the largest and most spectacular sand dunes in the world.

The chief attraction in this region is the oasis of Liwa. Where there is sand there will, of course, be camels. But increasingly the popular activity of “dune bashing” is taking centre stage.

Not for the faint-hearted, it involves driving up and down the dunes in 4x4s, quad-bikes or purpose-built dune buggies.

Moreeb Hill (Tal Mireb in Arabic) takes pride of place among these sand dunes and is the venue for an annual organised drag race.

With a reported 50-degree slipface, and a 300 metre-long hill climb, it is the perfect place to test your skill and courage. Just standing at the base of this dune and staring up made me weak in the knees at the thought of driving uphill.

The region is now gaining global attention as the venue for the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge which involves five gruelling days of driving in the Liwa Desert.

And such is the enthusiasm for motor sport in Abu Dhabi that they support and participate in the World Rally Championship and will soon be hosting the final round of the Formula One Championship in November 2009.

A fun-filled food festival which stretches from West 46th Street between Broadway and Ninth Avenue, including historic Restaurant Row, provides visitors with row upon row of booths offering samples of signature dishes from Times Square’s best restaurants.

Street performers provide entertainment throughout the evening with a swing band and free dancing lessons from Swing46 adding to the festive atmosphere.

Find more information at www.timelessquareagency.org.

Priscilla storms the West End

Priscilla Queen of the Desert – the Musical is showing at the Palace Theatre in London until September.

Based on one of the most successful Australian movies of all time, Priscilla Queen of the Desert tells the story of three Sydney drag queens who head off to Alice Springs in a brightly painted bus. The musical stars Jason Donovan, Tony Sheldon and Oliver Thornton.

The high-octane show showcases pop hits from across the decades alongside 500 colourful costumes and custom-made headdresses including one featuring an aquarium complete with fish.


Snap happy

This month’s photo comes from Sydney PSR/CGO Accounts Victoria Mikitas who went on a driving holiday around South Europe, stopping at Gibraltar on the way from Spain to France.

“Gibraltar can be visited in one day as it is quite compact and it’s easy to walk around,” she says.

The most recognisable attraction, the Rock of Gibraltar, dominates the entrance to the Mediterranean between southern Spain and Africa.

“One of the biggest attractions are semi-wild Barbary macaques which are found in Morocco and Algeria and the only free-living monkeys in Europe,” Victoria says. “They are extremely cute and playful and I could have watched them for hours.”

To reach the macaques’ home Victoria recommends taking a cable car to the Upper Rock Nature Reserve.

“The views from various terraces are spectacular, and you can listen to the history of Gibraltar through an audio listening device while enjoying the scenery,” Victoria says.