



**Speech: Jaan Albrecht, CEO Star Alliance
welcoming Continental Airlines**

„I cannot wait until Continental becomes a Star Alliance member!“

This comment is one of thousands, which are currently floating around the social networks in the internet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

this unknown customer expressed so nicely, what today stands for:

The leaders of Star Alliance have come together from all over the world to celebrate a great event in a great city.

New York, this amazing melting pot of cultures, is definitely the right place to announce the membership of one of the finest airlines in the world in the most experienced and most sophisticated airline alliance.

Just as this city has, our alliance brings together the cultures and flavors of the world in a unique way. In 12 and ½ years of successful development we have learned to work together for the benefit of our shareholders, our employees and first and foremost for the benefit of our customers.

Star Alliance would not have been able to establish its leadership role in the industry, if the concept would have failed in the eyes of the customer.

Our customers told us right from the very beginning:

- In today's globalized world, we require convenient flight schedules to all major airports on the globe.
- We want to travel as safe and as comfortable as possible.
- And we want our status recognized wherever we are in the world.

Global Reach,
Seamless Service and
Worldwide Recognition,

These three basic principles have not changed from the founding days of our alliance.

We are convinced that achieving these goals on a global scale can only be reached in partnership with like-minded people.

Or in other words: No individual company will alone be able to serve the global traveler in the desired way.

I am sure, that this was one important reason for our „unknown customer“ from the web, who no longer wants to wait to receive the added benefits of traveling on the Star Alliance network as a Continental customer, because:

- As of today, customers can reach far more than 1,000 destinations in every corner of the globe.
- As of today, customers are welcome in just under 1,000 airport lounges.
- Frequent flyers: as of today they can collect status miles whenever they board one of our more than 19.500 daily departures.

All these are customer benefits, worth waiting for.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just as our „unknown customer“, we at Star Alliance could hardly wait until this remarkable company was to join our team.

Because we know Continental is a perfect fit.

- A perfect fit, as its national and international networks ideally complement the networks of our other member airlines.
- A perfect fit, which in combination with our other North American members now represents the best customer proposition in every part of the continent.
- A perfect fit, because of its excellent product, on the ground and in the air.
- A perfect fit, because of its sense for business and partnership.
- And last but by all means not least, a perfect fit because of the spirit and the dedication of Continental's employees.

Larry, Jeff, congratulations, your team has done a marvelous job over the past weeks and months.

We know how much hard work is required behind the scenes in order to build the computer links between the alliance members, to adapt the processes and procedures, to train the people and to inform the customers.

We know that no airline ever before has attempted to make a straight switch from one alliance to another, and to make things even more challenging, to make a straight switch in just two days.

That all of this went smoothly, without noticeable hiccups, must be attributed to the calm and targeted professionalism of everybody involved.

So, again, a big thank you to the integration teams of Continental as well as the other Star Alliance members.

And because of the fact, that I have received formal confirmation this morning that all standards and requirements of membership have been fulfilled by the „applicant“,

I am now proud to formally announce on behalf of our Chief Executive Board, that

Continental Airlines is now a member of Star Alliance.

Continental Airlines, welcome onboard!