

EasyJet charts path out of pandemic fallout

20 July 2021, by Roland Jackson



More EasyJet planes will be taking to the skies as vaccinated Europeans travel more.

British airline EasyJet on Tuesday ramped up summer capacity and revealed narrowing losses, thanks to easing Covid travel curbs in Europe, speedy vaccinations and improving demand.

The carrier, which had slashed costs and flights as the deadly pandemic ravaged global aviation industry, cautioned however that the road to recovery would be bumpy across its mostly European routes.

EasyJet said in a statement that it will operate 60 percent of its pre-pandemic flights in its [fourth quarter](#), or July through September, as the UK government permits more [travel](#) flexibility for vaccinated passengers.

The airline had operated just 17 percent of its 2019 capacity in the third quarter, or three months to June.

'Emerging transformed'

EasyJet said it was capitalising "on the opening-up of travel in continental Europe and the easing of restrictions for the fully vaccinated in the UK".

The airline added that it "will emerge from the pandemic transformed".

The coronavirus outbreak had grounded planes worldwide, resulting in massive losses across the aviation sector.

However, the industry has since been boosted by the lifting of many international travel restrictions despite the emergence of the fast-spreading Delta variant.

EasyJet on Tuesday added that its pre-tax losses fell 8.2 percent to £318.3 million (\$436 million, 370 million euros) in its third quarter from a year earlier, thanks partly to tight cost controls.

Revenues surged to £212.9 million, up from just £7.2 million last time around.

Passenger numbers increased to almost three million.

"During this quarter we have successfully managed through the continued challenges of the pandemic, using our operational responsiveness to capture demand while focusing on cost control and minimising cash burn," said chief executive Johan Lundgren.

"So, while we know the road to recovery from the pandemic isn't going to be a [straight line](#), we are ready to compete using these new-found strengths with everything we have learned, leaving a long-term, positive imprint on the airline, transformed ready for the post-pandemic era."

'Important milestone'

EasyJet added that it paid out another £122 million in customer refunds in the third quarter, taking its total refund bill to £1.2 billion during the pandemic.

The airline's share price rose 2.1 percent to 785.88 pence in London morning deals as investors welcomed the update.

"This summer is an important milestone in getting back to the skies, but 2022, when travel has resumed in earnest, will reveal the [pandemic](#)'s long-term winners and losers," said Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Laura Hoy.

"If EasyJet can rebuild on a leaner cost base to capitalise on the travel frenzy it could find itself flying higher than its peers," she added.

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