

Dufry/Avolta CEO Xavier Rossinyol tells GTR Mag that he sees endless opportunities in the industry



When the new brand identity was announced, CEO Xavier Rossinyol, said, “We see a great opportunity emerging from the changing traveler and customer expectations and their boosted appetite to travel”

In February of 2022 Xavier Rossinyol was announced as CEO of Dufry. Now, after the partnership announcement of Dufry and Autogrill earlier this year and the subsequent creation of a new brand identity, as of October 2023 he is now the CEO of Avolta.

The Avolta logo consists of a stylized icon on the left, made of three overlapping, rounded, purple shapes that resemble the letter 'A' or a series of curved lines. To the right of this icon, the word "Avolta" is written in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.

For its new identity, the company used a branding agency in the UK. The agency was given constant

direction for nine months. Store branding will be kept the same as before

Rossinyol could not be more excited for the future of travel retail, saying: “We’re in the best business in the world. We combine travel, retail and hospitality. It’s in the human DNA to travel. We are a species that likes to explore and travel in the modern way of doing this.”

And Rossinyol does not take this world of air travel for granted. “The vast majority of humanity has never traveled by plane,” he says. “The potential isn’t just good today or for the next six months or even the next five years, but the next 50 to 100 years.”



Avolta’s CEO Xavier Rossinyol with *GTR Magazine’s* Hibah Noor post in-person interview

For much of the world this mode of travel is still exciting and new. Passenger air travel is little over 100 years old, after all, and it’s been only approximately 50 years since it became more accessible to those other than the wealthy. A few years back it was estimated that every day in China 7,000 people took their first flight ever. This statistic can be extrapolated to other parts of the developing world as new airports are being built, as incomes rise and as the internet makes the world a smaller place.

Travel giant

In recent years with its acquisitions of World Duty Free Group, Hudson and others, Dufry has grown to be the undisputed giant in travel retail. The “business combination” with Autogrill brings travel F&B to the equation, giving the newly named Avolta an incredible advantage.

“The advantage of Avolta today is that we have all the retail power of Dufry and all the F&B power of Autogrill and HMSHost,” says Rossinyol. “Now we can be more adaptive, faster for our customers.”

He sees some holes in the current offer that Avolta will be ready to fill. “The domestic airports need more F&B,” he says. “In some long-haul transit airports you need much more duty free and luxury shopping because travelers have much more time.”

With its new capabilities as Avolta, the company can now offer whatever is needed, ultimately benefitting the consumer. “If you have only one part of the business then you’re incentivized to push that business,” he says. “We can now be much more pro consumers and pro travelers.”

Customer enchantment

This concept of focusing on the needs of the traveler instead of the needs of the business is what Rossinyol feels the industry needs more of, and he says this is the absolute focus at Avolta. “You can’t organize your business thinking what you want to do or what you want to purchase,” he says. “We need to think about the traveler and what they need and how they need it. We need to think about how we can make the journey as exciting and rewarding as the destination.”

In this industry we often hear about who we are targeting, the income, the generation, how to attract more Gen Z or provide more luxury. Rossinyol looks at this differently, saying: “We love all generations, all passengers, all social economic backgrounds. We need to adapt to what they need.”

Both the challenge and the beauty of this industry, according to Rossinyol, is that every traveler is different. “We need a lot of investment in getting data and information and really understanding the passengers even before they fly,” he says. “Avolta is in 75 countries with 5,500 POS. We will have exposure to 2.3 million PAX this year. We are the most global company. We have more consumer insights than anyone else in the world. We know about the use of devices and the span of attention the way people experience travel.”

Rossinyol also comments on the need for flexibility. “If you design a store for the next 10 years you’re going to fail. I wish we could reconfigure a store every two hours to cater to our passengers.” He says store design must have the capability of being changed several times per year, and that the role of digital is to offer support: “We need to understand the physical location and our salesperson will make the difference.”

Creating an atmosphere that the traveler enjoys makes their journey more pleasant and it creates an atmosphere where they are more likely to shop. “It’s not the traveler’s job to buy, it’s our job to enchant them,” says Rossinyol. “If passengers enter a pleasant place, where there is something entertaining to you and for the kids, and someone speaks nicely to you or offers you a sample of a perfume, your mood completely changes.” Once the traveler is relaxed, more focused and with an improved mood, then that traveler becomes a potential customer.



Avolta encapsulates the company's expanded vision and commitment to innovating the traveler-centered experience with enhanced digital engagement