

## **“Hajj and Arbaeen challenges for a network schedule airline”**

About speaker:

Dr. Walid Abillama graduated from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1994, with a PhD in Industrial and Operations Engineering and started his career at Middle East Airlines (MEA) in 1997 as Head of Development and Marketing. In 2017, he was appointed as Head of Commercial Strategy and Alliances at MEA and continues to occupy this position as of this date. At MEA, Dr. Abillama is responsible for the development of the route network, including scheduling, fleet composition, frequency and capacity planning, pricing and revenue management, commercial agreements and alliances.

He participated since 1998 in the continuous transformation of the MEA network, the introduction of revenue management practices in 2000, and was involved in the implementation of various code-share partnerships and alliances that provide MEA passengers access to markets beyond the MEA network of operations, and in return provide partner airlines the access to the MEA product. He develops medium and long-term plans for the MEA network based on market intelligence, fleet/alliances/partnerships with the objective to maximize the MEA network profitability in the medium and long term.

He leads a team of scheduling and pricing analysts, inventory distribution specialists and revenue management analysts with the task to build and maintain a network and pricing structure for MEA and implement inventory policies that support the MEA market position. Until present at MEA he champions dynamic and real-time issues related to competition challenges and demand fluctuations by performing capacity optimization through the optimal assignment of frequency and aircraft type, and conducting fares/seat optimization through inventory control using revenue management techniques and fares definition and distribution.

His research interests are the implementation of optimal production policies under uncertainty where flexibility and quick response is key for success in a fluctuating air travel market such as Lebanon.

Abstract:

Dr. Abillama will discuss the challenges presented by the traffic movement of the Hajj and Arbaeen pilgrimage for a network schedule airline like MEA. He will discuss the characteristics of these movements, the challenges they address, and will present the solutions adopted by MEA to manage these traffic movements successfully.