

**FACE-TO-FACE WITH:**



**Gaëtan Gagné**  
*President and CEO*  
**Aéroport de Québec**

Since 2010, Gaëtan Gagné has been President and CEO of Aéroport de Québec inc. (AQi), the company responsible for the operation and development of Québec City Jean Lesage International Airport (YQB). From 1997 to today, he has also been sitting on Aéroport de Québec inc.'s Board of Directors and was named Chair of the Board and President of the Executive Committee from 2001 to 2009.

Under his leadership, airport traffic has doubled in just a few years as a result of a strong *Passenger First*<sup>®</sup> focus and a \$450 million capital investment program. This strategy led to the construction of a new terminal in 2008, and the current building of a new international terminal to be delivered in 2017. It is also under his initiative that U.S. President Barrack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently announced the implementation of a new U.S. Preclearance facility at YQB.

Prior to that, Mr Gagné held various positions in the insurance industry, namely as President and CEO of L'Entraide assurance. He is also still active in the Armed Forces as Honorary Colonel of the 35<sup>th</sup> Canadian Service Battalion. In 2012, he was awarded The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and, in 2015, the Canadian Forces Decoration (C.D.) in recognition of his loyal service.

Active in the business community, Mr Gagné is a member of various trade associations including the American Association of Airport Executives, the Canadian Airports Council and the Board of Trade. He has earned a Fellow designation from the LIMRA Leadership Institute and was granted the titles of Chartered Director from McMaster University, as well as Certified Corporate Director by Laval University. He is also a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD).

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**In your own opinion, share with us the challenges which smaller airports will face to become airport cities.**

At most airports, be they small or large, the most significant challenge is to never lose sight that passengers are their bread-and-butter. To accommodate and provide them with a world-class service, airports must build top-notch infrastructure capable of processing an increasing passenger volume. Moreover, within their organization, airports also need to implement a customer service culture, which would clearly distinguish them from the competition.

**Share with us the approaches which Aéroport de Québec adopts to develop its airport for commercial development.**

So far, our priorities have been centered on developing facilities, which directly benefit passengers. We thus built a new terminal in 2008 and an international terminal will be delivered in 2017. Commercial development was therefore oriented toward stakeholders supporting services to airlines and general aviation. For instance, significant measures were recently taken to improve FBO and handling services. Moreover, a new line of service was added with the arrival of a helicopter operator. New roads were also built with a view to commercial development and planning is underway for our Airport City West area.

**What do you feel are the most likely scenarios or changes that the airport city or aerotropolis industry will face in the next 5-10 years?**

Our industry will need to pay more attention in the future to sustainability issues, such as dealing with environment matters, maintaining excellent relations with all stakeholders, improving long term profitability and adopting efficient safety and security. Those are critical elements which will need careful consideration in the coming years.

We also might face situations where airports will grow at a faster pace than their environment. According to forecasts, airport traffic will double in the next 20 years and it will be of the essence to identify and mitigate potential bottlenecks long beforehand, especially in areas out of our total control such as road networks, public transit, transport legislation, etc.

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**What do you think is the role of UBM Airport City (ACE) and how does this benefit the industry?**

In those days and ages of our industry increasing complexities, networking with peers has become a key element of success. That is where UBM Airport City can help and actually, they do. With conferences such as the one taking place in Qingdao, China, we can learn from each other's experiences. We can also discover new ways of doing things, new technology and avoid costly mistakes. UBM could also implement a platform where industry players could exchange throughout the year.

**What do you hope to see in the future series of UBM Airport City (ACE)?**

Looking forward, it would be nice if UBM could cover topics like the human aspect of implementing airport city or aerotropolis. Such major undertakings like implementing an airport city or an aerotropolis involve indeed discussing with numerous stakeholders with potential conflicting interests.

There are also other interesting experiences to be shared with regard, for instance, to reconciling airlines and airport interests, dealing with different levels of government, making sure the airport community becomes involved, etc.

Although some of those questions were discussed in previous conferences, it is always valuable to explore best practices of success stories which may be reproduced elsewhere.

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