COLLABORATION KEY TO ADDRESSING AVIATION CHALLENGES

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Has there ever been a bigger push for airlines to up their game, from so many quarters?

On one hand, carriers are striving to attract their share of passengers, focusing on tighter on-time performance, and developing brand-worthy ground-to-air experiences.

On the other, the air transport industry is under increasing pressure to tackle its carbon emissions, from IATA's 2050 CO_2 reduction targets to the passenger flygskam movement.

In this seemingly 'push-me-pull-me' situation for carriers, it would be understandable for some to feel torn about how best to proceed with operational investment.

Yet SITA's Air Transport IT Insights 2019 results show that airline chief information officers expect investments to increase in the medium term – particularly in those technologies 'doing the heavy lifting' to realize digital transformation.

And rightly so. Digital transformation offers opportunities to improve performance, lower emissions, reduce delays and win over passengers. Emerging technological advances will deliver real-time optimization, better situational awareness, and greater collaboration between airlines.

Investing in savvy digitization projects can help airlines realize returns on investment in many ways: financially, reputationally, and by contributing to carbon reduction commitments.

DIGITALLY ENHANCED FLIGHT OPS

Let's take a look at carbon emissions. Among IATA's four-pillar strategy for addressing the global climate challenge, is more efficient aircraft operations. While not the sole, silver bullet for this complex issue, various technological capabilities exist that can provide airlines with the digital tools to make reductions in their CO_2 footprint.

Consider dynamic route optimization. This function, incorporated into high-functioning, air/ground connected flight planning applications, can enable airlines to identify and fly the most fuel-efficient routes, to consistently minimize fuel burn.

Then there's real-time situational weather awareness, such as that enabled by leading applications like eWAS Pilot, which provide airline crews with the latest and fullest weather picture, helping them make informed operational decisions. This directly affects fuel loading – if an airline can avoid flying through cumulonimbus cloud thunderstorms, for example, it won't have to take off with additional fuel to cope with it.

In addition, when combined with real-time fuel monitoring and alerting, flight tracking solutions (such as AIRCOM® FlightTracker, used by carriers including Singapore Airlines) can proactively support pilots' situational awareness, driving optimized fueling.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

Beyond the carbon emissions challenge, however, remains a fundamental issue underpinning the success of an airline's day of operations, across the board – collaboration.

It's well known the ATI suffers from ingrained communications siloes. These primarily exist between pilots, air traffic control, ground service providers and airlines. But if the industry's performance is to truly move forward, airlines and the wider industry need to find ways to break out.

This is where, in supporting more collaborative information sharing, digitization comes into its own.

At its heart, our Digital Day of Operations suite of application solutions facilitate that much-needed transformation to more effective communication and collaboration. From pre-flight to post-flight processes, our goal is to transform data from the day of operations into value for the different departments, assisting airlines in the safe tracking of flights, and enhancing air/ground communications for overall flight operations optimization.

AIRCOM® FlightMessenger, our airline communications backbone, enables communication between different stakeholders and systems to keep things running. We aim to bring FlightMessenger's ACARS translation benefits to other enterprise collaboration tools too, enabling pilots to collaborate more effectively with stakeholders on the ground – something already seen in its integration with AIRCOM® FlightTracker.

eWAS Pilot also offers opportunities for better co-working. By using the app in inflight connected mode, pilots and dispatchers get the same view of weather information, making collaboration much more effective.

Meanwhile, we continue to develop CrewTab – our tablet interface digitalizing cabin crew processes for greater operational efficiency and enhanced customer service. CrewTab can help airlines digitalize entire crews, creating more collaboration during briefing and flight preparation, potentially reducing briefing times.

By harnessing our expertise in air/ground aircraft connectivity, our solutions enable everyone involved in the day of operation to digitize their workflows and processes, and feed into that bigger, digital picture.

THE FUTURE IS COLLABORATIVE

As the ATI becomes more mobile – in terms of people, connectivity and data – a holistic, digitally-optimized and collaborative approach will remain key to enhance operations in every direction.

With truly collaborative working the catalyst for bigger picture system efficiencies, the industry can make better use of resources to improve its operations, and sustainability.

In the long run, moving forward together is key to the industry tackling the challenges it faces.

Airlines want to advance their aircraft operations. But they face three fundamental challenges: high operational costs, poor on-time performance, and inefficiency.

SITA FOR AIRCRAFT's Digital Day of Operations portfolio addresses these challenges. It provides a suite of applications and services that together enable real-time collaboration and support for operations staff, pilots and cabin crew to optimize the flight operations journey at take-off, in-flight and landing.

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