

Ground Support

WORLDWIDE
EQUIPMENT – SERVICES – HANDLING

ROBERT WRIGHT

2017 Team Leader of the Year

GROUND SERVICE PROVIDERS

The ABC's of 'IT'

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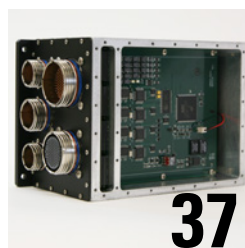
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Keep Customers Satisfied to Retain a Positive Public Image

Some unpleasant headlines have served as a reminder about how important it is to resolve conflicts and seek ways to avoid them.

The *Ground Support Worldwide* team is wrapping up our award season, having traveled to present our final award this month. So now we get a little break from running around (well, about two weeks). No, I will not ruin the surprise by telling you who received the Lifetime Achievement Award. You'll have to wait until the June/July issue to find out.

During our recent travel, the airlines have been in the news. While aviation is always in the news, this time it has not been how we, as an industry, would like to be perceived. In this day and age everyone is ready and willing to put everything on the Internet ... and I do mean everything.

The way we conduct customer service has changed. People want instant gratification, and if something doesn't go their way, then they are ready to let the entire world know.

On our most recent trip, a flight was delayed. We were given the option to schedule a different flight and be on our merry way. For me, it was no big deal, these things happen. For another group of passengers who were checking into the flight

at the same time, well, they were having a melt-down. They complained at the kiosk (not sure how that helped) that someone was going to fix this, or someone was going to hear about it. I understand the frustration, but when flying there is only so much in your control.

Hopefully, we have put all this crazy stuff behind us, and we can move on. But please always remember that customer satisfaction is critical, because people are just waiting to record the next big mistake.

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AirCargo 2017
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June 6-8

NATA 2017 Aviation Business Conference
Washington, DC

June 7-9

2017 Aviation Fuel Conference, Seminars & Open House
Eatontown, NJ

July 24-30

EAA AirVenture
Oshkosh, WI

September 24-27

42nd Annual Regional Airline Association Convention
Palm Beach, FL

September 26-27

NATA Ground Handling Safety Symposium
Fort Worth, TX

October 10-13

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BUSINESS BUZZ

► TOP NEWS

Vestergaard Company Buys Share in Kalmar Motor

Vestergaard Company announced that it bought a significant share in Kalmar Motor. Vestergaard's investment in Kalmar Motor is the result of a mutual agreement between the management of both companies that the two ground support equipment manufacturers – both based in Scandinavia – can further benefit from an elaborated future cooperation. Since January 2015, Vestergaard Company Inc. in McHenry, IL, has served as Kalmar Motor's service partner in North America.

"Vestergaard Company is very happy to have been given this opportunity to invest in an innovative company that over the last period of time has showed impressive results and has great future potential," Vestergaard CEO Stefan Vestergaard said.

"Vestergaard Company and Kalmar Motor are very similar when it comes to company culture as well as in our focus on delivering products of constant high quality," Magnus Johansson, CEO at Kalmar Motor added. "We aim for very high customer satisfaction in everything we do and with the new strengthened cooperation between our companies we will be able to raise this bar even higher to the benefit of our customers."

The companies' cooperation will primarily focus on sales and service efforts worldwide. Both companies will continue to work and produce at their own respective facilities in Kalmar, Sweden, Roskilde, Denmark and Laem Chabang, Thailand.

NATA to Hold Ground Handling Safety Symposium

The National Air Transportation Association (NATA) announced it will hold the NATA Ground Handling Safety Symposium on Sept. 26-27 in Ashburn, VA.

The NATA Ground Handling Safety Symposium is a new annual event being developed by the NATA Safety Com-



mittee to promote safety at FBOs and other general aviation ground handling firms. Held at the NTSB Training Center in Ashburn, the symposium will be designed for safety professionals, directors of safety, line service managers or operations managers and anyone else who is responsible for making sure that aircraft are handled safely.

The theme of this year's program is "Building a Better Safety Management System." Topics will include: The Big Picture, Safety Management & IS-BAH; Practical Approaches to Risk Assessment; Safety Promotion and Your Organizational Culture; Safety Reporting & Employee Buy-In; The Intersection of Safety & Service; Emergency Response Basics for FBOs; and Data & General Aviation Ground Handling.

Qatar Airways Meets Resolution 753 Requirements One Year In Advance

Qatar Airways became the first airline in the world to achieve compliance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) Resolution 753 at its hub in Hamad International Airport (HIA). The resolution requires the airline to track every piece of baggage from the start of the journey all the way through to its finish. The certification has been achieved thanks to the airline's Baggage Management System ("HAQIBA") developed in-house, as well as its seamless real-time integration with the Qatar Airways website and mobile app. Qatar Airways offers real-time updates on checked baggage through the "Track My Bags" feature on its website and mobile app, providing passengers with a hassle-free baggage experience. The information includes various stages of the baggage handling process such as check-in, transfer, arrival, as well as reference to bag tags and baggage belt.



"Qatar Airways' efforts over the past year to comply with IATA Resolution 753 on Baggage Tracking have paid off. We congratulate the airline on becoming the first in the world to achieve full compliance of the resolution at their hub in Doha. Qatar Airways' ability to track baggage at every stage of its journey will allow the airline full visibility to man-



age its baggage operations and to more easily trace, retrieve and deliver missing or delayed bags, leading to a better experience for passengers,” said Nick Careen, senior vice president for airport, passenger, cargo and security for IATA.

Resolution 753 was developed to reduce mishandling and baggage fraud, increase passenger satisfaction and enhance the overall baggage management landscape at airports around the world. The resolution was issued in 2016 and made mandatory for all IATA airlines, who have until June 1, 2018 to comply.

Baggage Management Continues to Improve

Baggage management by the world’s airlines improved again in 2016 as the industry focuses on technology investments and prepares for a step-change in handling by June 2018. According to the SITA Baggage Report 2017, the rate of mishandled bags was 5.73 bags per thousand passengers in 2016, down 12.25 percent from the previous year and the lowest ever recorded.

Since 2007, the rate of mishandled baggage has fallen 70 percent due to investment in technologies and process improvements by the world’s airlines and airports. Over the coming 18 months, this is expected to improve even further as IATA members have adopted Resolution 753, requiring every piece of checked baggage to be tracked along its journey by June 2018.

“It is frustrating for passengers and airlines when bags go missing but the days of not knowing where your bag is will soon be a thing of the past. We are on the brink of a new era in airline baggage management because the world’s airlines are committing to track baggage throughout its journey,” Ilya Gutlin, SITA President, Air Travel Solutions, said. “This requires data capture, management and sharing across airlines, airports and ground handlers giving a better view of where each piece of luggage is at every stage. At SITA we are providing several tracking innovations that will allow the

air transport community to scale up their tracking capabilities without massive capital investments.”

Unifor Encourages Federal Government to Invest in Aviation Personnel

Canada’s federal government must invest in aviation workers to increase aviation safety for the public, said Unifor in a submission to the federal Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

“You cannot have a safe and efficient air transportation industry that is staffed with McJobs,” said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. “Employment security and safety go hand in hand.”

Unifor said that many safety and security vulnerabilities can be traced to employers in the industry cutting corners on staffing levels and wages. The submission reviews the growing precarity of airport workers employed “under the wing” and recommends limiting contract-flipping by service providers and establishing a \$15 minimum wage airport-wide. Unifor’s recommendations also address under-staffing of air traffic control inspectors and pilot fatigue.

Unifor represents more than 12,000 members in the aviation sector working as air traffic controllers, flight attendants, pilots, baggage handlers and customer service representatives. The union is Canada’s largest union in the private sector, representing more than 310,000 workers.

WFS’ Airport College Named in IATA’s Top 10 Aviation Training Partners

Worldwide Flight Services’ (WFS) Airport College has been recognized as one of the world’s top 10 aviation training providers by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in its list of 2017 Premier Circle Members. The Paris-based Airport College is one of only two training providers in Europe to be awarded Premier Circle status by IATA this year out of the network of 450 member institutes in more than 90 countries that are autho-



rized IATA training partners, including universities.

WFS first established its Airport College in 2000 to provide training for its own employees to meet mandatory aviation industry requirements. However, it soon identified a high level of demand from other companies requiring professional training services for their cargo and ground handling personnel. Today, the Airport College incorporates a simulated airport terminal boarding area in Orly to train students in passenger services as well as a facility to teach ULD handling at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

“We are extremely proud that such a respected global organization as IATA has recognized the quality and professionalism of our training services,” said Yann Le Tonqueze, managing director of the WFS Airport College. “Ensuring its employees have the training and accreditation they need is central to WFS’ Health & Safety commitment and the Airport College enables us to also extend these services to other companies that share the same philosophy.”

NAS Abidjan Awarded ISAGO Certification

National Aviation Services (NAS) was awarded the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) certification for its Abidjan operations.

This is the most recent certification received by the company from IATA. In 2008, NAS was among the first ground handling providers in the world to receive an ISAGO certification for its Kuwait operation. Since then this certification has been renewed five times.

“As we continue our aggressive network growth and expand our portfolio of prod-



ucts and services, we remain focused on high levels of service quality, safety and security. We are pleased to have NAS Abidjan ISAGO certified and look forward to getting all our operations ISAGO certified in the coming future," said Hassan El Houry, CEO at NAS.

In Abidjan, NAS provides ground handling services at the Félix-Houphouët-Boigny International Airport serving 25 airlines and an average of 5,000 passengers per day. These operations are reinforced with more than 800 employees and 300 pieces of ground support equipment. Globally, NAS has a presence in more than 30 airports across the Middle East, India and Africa.

"This is the first time that the Félix-Houphouët-Boigny airport in Abidjan is recognized by ISAGO," said Amadou Kone, minister of transport, Cote d'Ivoire.

ire. "This also grows the very short list of West African airports handled by an ISAGO certified handling company. I urge you to remain focused on high quality services. This is how we can together embrace the challenge of making our airport the Hub of West Africa."

► PEOPLE

Bricaud Joins WFS as Global Head of People

Worldwide Flight Services (WFS) has appointed Fabienne Bricaud to the post of Global Head of People. WFS employs 18,000 staff at 188 major airports in more than 22 countries on five continents.

Bricaud started her



career in the telecommunications and engineering sector with Alcatel-Alsthom, working with its division in France and internationally. In 2013, she became Group HR Director for Mobivia Groupe, Europe's largest independent automotive maintenance and repair services group which employs more than 22,000 people.

In her new role, Bricaud will be based in Roissy and report directly to Craig Smyth, CEO of WFS.

Moser, Raebiger Assume New Roles at AeroLogic

As of May 1, Josef Moser, previously head of flight operations and crew training, will take over as chief operations officer and accountable man-



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ager at AeroLogic GmbH. At the same time, Wolfgang Raebiger, previously captain and head of fleet at Lufthansa Cargo, will take over as new chief financial officer in the senior management at AeroLogic.

The previous managing director Ulf Weber left the company at his own request to pursue a new challenge. Markus Niedermeyer, who was also part of the management as authorized officer, will remain his role as head of administration for several months in order to ensure a smooth transition, before taking over a new management position at Lufthansa Cargo.

► NEW DEALS

Swissport, easyJet Extend Geneva Contract

Swissport International and easyJet announced it has extended its ground handling services contract in Geneva.

Swissport provides easyJet with ground handling services including passenger and ramp handling, baggage services, operations coordination and load control. easyJet operates more than 870 routes over 138 airports across 31 countries with more than 260 aircraft and flies more than 74 million passengers a year. At Geneva airport, easyJet is the number one carrier with a strong market share of over 40 percent and operating a network of 75 destinations in Europe and North Africa.

"We are proud to continue to serve easyJet with professional and efficient ground handling services," said Swissport Geneva CEO Antoine Gervais. "We are keen to drive both customer service satisfaction and future innovation to ensure successful operations in this fast growing business segment. Furthermore, our collaboration confirms the position of Swissport as one of easyJet's preferred ground handling providers."

"easyJet and Swissport have been long term partners and we are really happy to renew our contract for easyJet operations in Geneva. From a network perspective Swissport operates ground handling for easyJet in 27 airports helping the airlines to make travel easy for millions of our passengers every year," added Simon Cox, easyJet head of airport and central procurement.

Menzies Aviation Expands into Germany

Menzies Aviation took their first steps into the German market at the end of March, with passenger services operations commencing at four of the country's busiest airports: Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich.

The company's first airline customers are British Airways at all four airports (including BA CityFlyer in Düsseldorf and Frankfurt)



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"In selecting Menzies Aviation to handle our brand, we knew we were choosing a company with a similar heritage to our own and one which would uphold our values and brand, which has developed over many years in Germany," said Nick Barlin, customer service manager, British Airways & BA CityFlyer, Germany. "The transition has been seamless and the hard work put in by the Menzies team gives me confidence in our relationship moving forward. I look forward to watching Menzies grow in Germany in the coming years."

United Airlines and Lufthansa Cargo Announce Cargo Joint Venture Agreement

United Airlines and Lufthansa Cargo have signed a joint venture agreement

for extensive cargo cooperation on routes between the U.S. and Europe. The cargo joint venture partners plan to provide a wide range of benefits to customers by cooperating on the availability of their capacity and aligning booking and handling processes.

"The Lufthansa-United cargo joint venture will generate numerous benefits for our customers because our continental and transatlantic networks, our hubs and our fleet complement each other effectively," said Peter Gerber, Lufthansa Cargo CEO.

"We are excited about the benefits that will be generated by our teams' cooperation and our combined capacities," added Jan Krems, president of United Cargo. "Cargo customers will appreciate the opportunities for quicker and easier shipping between key locations in the U.S. and Europe."

The contract signing initiates the implementation phase of the joint venture project, during which the carriers will align their cargo IT systems and business processes with the goal to implement Business Day 1 later this year.

WestJet to Launch Ultra-Low-Cost Carrier

WestJet announced its intention to launch a new, ultra-low-cost carrier (ULCC) in Canada subject to agreement with its pilots and any required regulatory approvals. Service is expected to start in late 2017 with an initial fleet of 10 high-density Boeing 737-800s designed by the airline that first brought low-cost air travel to Canada in 1996. The ULCC will provide Canadians with no-frills, lower-cost travel options.

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WESTJET cost, regional roots into a renowned, international airline with service to 21 countries and today it's all about disrupting at the price-sensitive end of the market," said Clive Beddoe, co-founder of WestJet and Chair of the Board of the Directors. "Launching a ULCC will broaden WestJet's growth opportunities and open new market segments by offering more choice to those Canadians looking for lower fares."

"The worldview on low-cost airlines has changed since the launch of WestJet in 1996 and we are responding," commented Gregg Saretsky, WestJet President and CEO. "The complete unbundling of services and products in order to lower fares for the price-sensitive traveller has created the ULCC category and our new airline will provide Canadians a pro-competitive, cheap and cheerful flying experience from a company with a proven track record."

Atlantic Street Capital Acquires GAT

Private equity firm Atlantic Street Capital has made a majority investment in GAT Airline Ground Support, Inc. Founded in 1965, GAT offers a portfolio of services at 37 airports throughout the U.S., including ramp services, passenger handling and related ancillary services. The company employs over 2,000 people.

Atlantic Street Capital acquired its majority stake in GAT from the founding family. Boe Strange, chief executive officer of GAT, will continue in that position and remain a significant shareholder in the company.

"Our company was built by delivering outstanding customer service and being a differentiated partner to our global customers," said Strange. "Our presence is well represented in small and medium-sized airports throughout the United States and there is ample opportunity to follow our customers to new locations as they grow. We are also aligned with Atlantic Street in building on our winning formula by investing in our infrastructure to enhance

our scale, broaden our services and allow us to grow rapidly without sacrificing our stellar track record."

"We have looked at several ground services companies over the last several years and believe the great team at GAT is

well-positioned to take advantage of the trends and opportunities in the market," said Peter Shabecoff, Atlantic Street Capital founder and managing partner. "We are thrilled to back one of the best companies in the industry."



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Fuel Handling Training Symposium Poised to Grow

Approximately 230 people attended the first annual event in Miami.

Photo courtesy of Gammon



By Josh Smith

Approximately 230 people from 37 countries around the world attended the first annual Aviation Fuel Handling Training Symposium in Miami March 1 and 2 – with another 100 or so turned away due to space restrictions.

So the two-day event, hosted by Gammon Technical Products at the Sheraton Miami Airport Hotel and Executive Meeting Center, will expand in the future to accommodate more people.

“I didn’t anticipate how much of a

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draw there would be,” said Jim Gammon, president at Gammon Technical Products, adding the event was created to serve as a networking and training opportunity rather than a revenue generator.

The Training Symposium came about after representatives from major manufactures and industry associations attended the Aviation Fueling Conference and requested a larger-scale event.

This first annual Training Symposium was supported entirely through sponsors, including Gammon, BETA Fueling Systems, Westmor Industries, PECOFacet, SkyMark Refuelers, Cla-Val, the National Petroleum Management Association (NPMA), Eaton, Liquid Controls, Parker Velcon, Garsite, Total Control Systems, Engine & Accessory, Meggitt, Hannay Reels, Veeder-Root, FAUDI Aviation, OCV Control Valves, ProFlo Industries, Conidia Bioscience, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Fuel Quality Services, World Fuel Services, Emcee Electronics, ECHA, Inspectorate, Hewitt, PEAR Corporation and the Energy Institute.

“The main thing is to give attendees names and faces to connect with standards and equipment,” said Gammon. “And the other is to give sponsors contact with customers.”

Attendees had an opportunity to gather information about the latest equipment and best practices surrounding the aviation fuel handling industry.

Additionally panels of industry experts discussed refueling accessories; the military sector; general refueling vehicle maintenance and design considerations; pressure and flow control systems; meters, automation, additive injection and additives; microbes remediation and storage tank maintenance; filters; receiving fuel, storage and contamination clean-up; electronic quality controls and sensors; system specifications and standards; airport system design and nozzle and control valve maintenance and repair.

There were also tables for companies to leave information, but a full exhibition was not held.

The 2018 Aviation Fuel Handling Training Symposium will be held in Los Angeles to make room for more attendees, and the event will be expanded to two and a half days.

A large turnout is expected as Gammon said he has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees and sponsors.



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The ABC's of 'IT'

Technology continues to help ground service providers improve operations, safety and accountability.

By Jen Bradley

When it comes to technology, knowledge and ease of use is true treasure, even for the ground handling profession.

Time and money are tight, as are the safety standards ground handlers must comply with. They are then told to follow individual and specific airline processes and service guidelines.

How does an organization stay ahead of it all? How do they afford it, in training, in finances, in simple hours of the day?

Technology companies have developed integrated solutions for many of these questions. Let's see how.

Safety First

Terry Wickman, president of Keytroller LLC from Tampa, FL, says emerging technology is readily available for ground handlers. They just have to know where to look. They also need to be open to finding new solutions as well as implementing them.

The company's first product 19 years ago was a keypad ignition system for vehicles, which has evolved into a completely wireless unit with an LCD display that electronically allows for the OSHA daily checklist to be completed and for tasks to be sent to mechanics, dealers, supervisors, etc.



Photo courtesy of Keytroller



Photo courtesy of Amadeus

It also tracks usage hours to schedule regular maintenance on ground handling vehicles, and has sensors which prevent abusive operators, Wickman explains. He says the device is truly a vehicle management system and one that puts safety first, in a variety of ways.

"Everyone's looking for ways to make equipment safer," he notes. "How do you better plan for maintenance scheduling? They have to get these planes loaded and out, so each ground handling company may have its own buzzword at any given time."

By this he means that one group may be looking to deal with speeding on vehicles, while another is looking for additional equipment usage information.

The company also has developed a variety of electronic devices for forklifts and mobile equipment monitoring, such as weigh scales and speed controllers, even directional control inhibitors. A camera can be used to also record abusive vehicle behavior when triggered by an incident such as a strong impact. Then a supervisor can receive the video in an email, and view the incident immediately.

Wickman says that pedestrian safety lights are another product which have a

lot of potential in ground support circles.

"They're used a lot on forklifts these days and are very, very effective," he explains. "I haven't seen them a lot in ground support, which is surprising as there are all kinds of people walking around the vehicles."

The SlingBelt is another one of these products that technology has improved and helps keep ground handling personnel safe.

"The advantage is, if the person does not buckle it, it will flap in front and be annoying. But if he does (buckle it) and sits on it, it's going to be real uncomfortable," Wickman notes.

It doesn't matter if a company is making steel or servicing airports and airlines, the buzzword on the ground and in the air is safety. Wickman says that with the multiple tiers of people in the airport/airline organizations, it's hard for a company like his to get in front of the right people.

He recommends execs and technology buyers go to the trade shows, view new technologies and learn how they can be implemented. He adds reading trade magazines is a valuable way to gather information too.

"Our competitors are seeing the same thing," he explains. "It's hard to find the

right guy who is the decision maker and get a meeting. Attend the major trade shows and you'll see these new technologies in a quiet environment."

Technology for Service Standards

As a ground handler himself before joining Amadeus, Yannick Beunardeau, director of Airport Solutions, knows the ins and outs of the industry. He is based in Nice, France, and oversees the development of the new generations of Amadeus products for airports and ground handlers.

They are in high demand and use, as Amadeus technology is being used by 130 airlines, 110 airports and 100 ground handlers worldwide.

Amadeus began in 1987, and always has been delivering these technology and IT services for the travel industries. He says the European independent ground handling industry boomed in the late 1990s due to deregulation, and so the company's passenger service systems became the core of its ground handling technology tools.

Today, these trends are also growing in the United States and in South America.

Beunardeau says that each time a ground

handling company accepts an airline for a client, they must conform to the tools and standards of that airline.

"So to service multiple airlines, means you also have to adopt multiple tools to help them, especially when checking passengers and loading aircraft," he says.

The Amadeus Altéa Suite, a passenger service system, became very successful when it launched and has been welcomed by the ground handling community to help standardize those service tasks such as reservation, inventory, departure control and ticketing.

"In the United States, we've got Southwest Airlines and then British Airways, Air France, Japan Airlines, etc. using the same tool that we produced," Beunardeau explains. "It was a big relief for ground handlers because when they need to host one of these airlines, it saves them a lot of money

in terms of training and readiness."

It makes sense, he adds, to use a tool that enables multiple airlines to process tasks the same way. The technology in the Altéa Suite, however, does allow for airline-specific parameters to be set that will differentiate things where desired. Beunardeau says that this system operates in the cloud, which allows ground handlers extreme flexibility when opening new stations or upgrading others.

"You just need to have a Wi-Fi connection to operate it," he explains.

Additionally, Amadeus' Airport Common Use Service (ACUS) is also cloud-based. He says that there are times airlines cannot be convinced to use the Departure Control System (DCS), but when additional resources are needed, he says the ACUS is an option. It enables the passenger processing systems to be deployed anywhere and on any device, over

multiple airline clients. Each of Amadeus' 100 ground handling clients uses this, and he calls it the "biggest switchboard of the world."

Another system coming from Amadeus is the Baggage Reconciliation System (BRS) which is gaining popularity in the United States after considerable growth in Europe. He says that this is now being required by IATA because of the need to scan bags when they arrive at a destination airport.

"In the past, ground handlers needed to buy the best-of-breed for one system of each type, and it was one nightmare to integrate that all together," says Beunardeau. "And they were spending a lot of money on integration."

Dollars and Technology Sense

Continuity is something Beunardeau of Amadeus says saves costs too. He says that it can be difficult for ground handlers to keep up



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with rapidly changing and improving technology, just as it is in most industries.

He explains that spending money on integration is a waste, because it only means transferring data from Point A to Point B.

"I think it's way better to spend IT money on systems, not transferring information," Beunardeau says.

By subscribing to software as a service (SAS), it allows an organization to not be

certified IT specialists. Instead the company can subscribe and benefit from a "community product," he explains. With these types of products (similar to Microsoft's Office 365), when a new function is available, it's available for everyone who has the contract.

"If we develop and follow the trends of the industry, they will not be stuck with one version forever," Beunardeau explains. "It's our policy to continue to evolve the systems and make community products, never-ending evolutions of the same products."

Wickman agrees, and explains Keytroller even offers lease-to-own agreements for a variety of products, or customers can try a demo for a period of time to see if the solution is the right fit.

"Customers can spread out the cost and still get the utilization of the products, without the big capital outlay," he says.

Data-Driven Solutions

While all these products are promoting safety, service and savings, Keytroller's Wickman adds one thing which can't be overlooked is the data that can be gathered and used to improve all those areas even further.

Keytroller's CyberWatch LAN, for example, connects to any machine – whether a baggage conveyor or air conditioning unit –

that a user may want to monitor. It is Wi-Fi enabled and the meters can be configured as alarms.

"How long did that air conditioner run, or the generator?" Wickman asks. "When you have that data coming in electronically, it's really easy for ground handlers to look and say we need to get this part replaced, oil changed, etc."

He says that once the hardware is purchased, the rest is automatic once it's set up.

"One (unit) may be way overused and another hardly at all," Wickman says. "With a monitor, ground handlers can see these things without physically going around a plane and finding the unit, and wondering which it is."

"It's a way to make the job easier," he concludes, adding that's what technology is all about. **GSW**

"One (unit) may be **way overused** and another hardly at all. With a **monitor**, ground handlers can see these things **without physically going around** a plane a finding the unit, and **wondering** which it is."

— Terry Wickman

▶ ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



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2017 TEAM LEAD



ROBERT

ER OF THE YEAR:

By Josh Smith

With the mind of a mechanic and the abilities of a manager, Wright is uniquely qualified to oversee maintenance operations for Alliance Ground International and Cargo Force.

When Bob Wright entered the workforce, the aviation industry wasn't exactly in his mind as his ideal career.



WRIGHT

But, deep down, it was probably in his heart. After all, Wright came from an aviation family; his father retired from the FAA and his grandfather operated flight schools after his time in the Air Force.

While his own foray into aviation was more happenstance, Wright has developed a passion for his vocation while learning the ins and outs of all things ground support.

Today, with three decades of experience and industry knowledge, he is director of maintenance for Alliance Ground International (AGI) and Cargo Force, where he manages overall maintenance operations for both companies.

He oversees 100 mechanics across 20 locations throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, and his unique blend of mechanical and managerial skills sets him apart as the *Ground Support Worldwide* 2017 Team Leader of the Year.

"He understands how people operate equipment, how they abuse equipment and how to repair the equipment," says Tony Romeo, who is chairman and CEO at AGI and Cargo Force and also owns Charter America, a GSE leasing company that offers a full line of all types of GSE. "You don't find that too many times. You either find a mechanic, or you find a manager."

"Bob has all those talents," he adds. "He's a valued asset to the company and he's very loyal."

Working His Way Up

Even though he grew up around airports and other members of his family worked in aviation, Wright didn't set out to secure the same type of career.

As a mechanic, he began working at an FBO repairing fuel trucks.

"I had worked on trucks before. I got

there, and I thought 'this is pretty cool,'" Wright recalls. "Then six months later they came to me and said, 'Can you fix that tug?' I thought, 'Yeah, it's got a motor. Of course I can fix it.' It just went from there."

Soon after, Wright was put in charge of the entire GSE department and a few months later, he was overseeing the fuel department, too.

Early in his career, he always said yes when approached about taking on more responsibility or working on new pieces of equipment. Wright credits his success to being open to new challenges, which allowed him to gather an array of information about different types of GSE.

In the early 1990s, Wright went to work for Romeo for the first time. When that company, Miami Aircraft Support, was sold approximately 10 years later, Wright took a job at a small GSE refurb and parts company in Clearwater, FL. There, he performed overhauls and refurbs, which helped him hone skills like fabricating, welding and painting.

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Then in 2013, Wright teamed up with Romeo again at AGI and Cargo Force.

"He's grown professionally very quickly," Romeo says. "He gets along with his people that work under him, and they complete the work as he wants."

A Mechanic and a Manager

A key reason for that positive relationship is Wright's willingness to get dirty and turn wrenches with his team of mechanics.

"I've always been, for the most part, in a management position," says Wright, who operates out of a modest office near the companies' maintenance facility at Miami International Airport (MIA). "But I always kept my hands in the maintenance. Even when I was a maintenance manager, I was still a working maintenance manager."

Wright studies the equipment so he can share as much knowledge as possible with his team.

"Nobody knows everything, and nobody can figure everything out," he says. "But I know it's part of my responsibility to help them and steer them in the right direction."

Leadership Style

Elias Hane, account manager at Cargo Force, has worked with Wright for more than two years. Hane says Wright is approachable and his door is always open. In fact, the office coffee pot is located in Wright's office.

"Normally, we face imposing leaders and natural leaders. I think Bob is a natural leader," Hane says. "You don't need to know he's the director of maintenance or the one managing the situation. He leads, and people follow him and get involved with him."

Cargo Force handles up to 700 flights per month at MIA, which can be chaotic at times. But Hane says Wright is often thinking two or three steps ahead and is ready with solutions when problems occur.

"I have had many situations on the ramp that are difficult to handle. If he sees me struggling, without interfering with my management, he helps," Hane explains. "It's wonderful working with him and having him on your side."

Wright says he tries to remain positive and upbeat as much as possible. But he adds there are times when he has to be the disciplinarian – especially when it comes to



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striking a balance between keeping equipment operational while working within the constraints of his budget.

Leading by example is important to Wright, whether that means grabbing a wrench and diving into a repair or model-

ing the work ethic he wants from his team.

And with high expectations for his team's quality of work, Wright will regularly inspect and audit repairs.

"When I go into a city, I try to spend the time to do an actual audit and really look

at what they're doing," Wright says. "I look to see how their shop area looks. I look to see how the equipment looks. Is it clean? I don't like dirty equipment.

"It's our name on the equipment, in front of these airplanes. I don't want it to look like trash," he adds, noting Romeo demands the same, clean appearance.

Effective Communication

Clearly communicating with his crew at Miami, as well as at other locations, is critical for maintenance operations at AGI and Cargo Force to succeed.

As director of maintenance for both companies, Wright serves as a liaison between corporate headquarters and his maintenance managers.

To do so requires a lot of emails and phone calls, he says.

"I hold a conference call every week with my managers," Wright explains. "It's my time to get that smaller group on the phone at the same time to go over anything I know we need to address. They give me a good rundown of where they are at each station.

"Even though they're all in different cities, what I wanted was for them to all come together and get to know each other. They all have the same kind of equipment, and they all deal with the same type of problems," he continues. "They've all developed a pretty good camaraderie with each other."

Wright emphasizes that the organization is one big team – not several small teams in each city. By working together, AGI and Cargo Force can accomplish much more, including combining the resources of both companies.

"Everybody has got a talent. If you can find what each person's talent is and get them to share that with everybody else, now you've taken 10 people's talents and thrown them together."

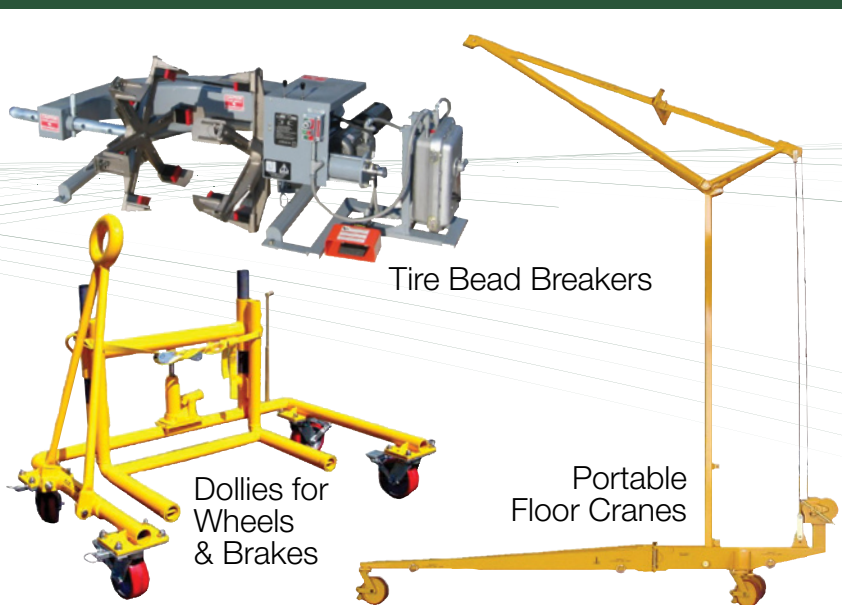
Keeping approximately 100 mechanics on the same page throughout a nationwide network can be a challenge. Ensuring all the necessary GSE repairs are completed correctly with a limited staff can be difficult too.

"Between motorized and non-motorized equipment, a lot goes into it every day – even without any problems. It's challenging, to say the least, because I have to be the motivator.

"But in one way," he continues. "I think



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it's an advantage because having a limited group of people means I know every one of them. I know every single mechanic by name. I know who they are and they know me," Wright says. "I know who I'm dealing with everywhere – not just my managers, but every single mechanic. So that's an advantage."

Wright must also ensure his "old-school" mechanics have a firm understanding of the latest technologies while his younger, technology-focused employees develop a broad

mechanical foundation. No matter which background an employee has, Wright is approachable.

"If you don't know something, be honest. Show him your need or the issue that you have, and he will help you accomplish whatever task you're doing," Hane says.

No Two Days Are Alike

Every day on the ramp is different, and Wright must use his time wisely, balancing several responsibilities.

While no two days are alike, in a sense, Wright says every day is similar.

"You're going to come in, you're going to figure out what needs to be worked on today," he says. "What problems do we have to tackle? What are the priorities?"

The variety of work keeps things interesting for Wright and his team. He says the equipment used on the ramp has always been fascinating to him. But the equipment used today has changed and the technology has improved, which makes it even more intriguing.

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Also, the non-stop pace of ground handling and cargo handling adds excitement – and stress – to the workday. The business pretty much never stops, he says.

“You have to make sure everything moves on time,” Wright says. “Our entire world is about not being delayed.”

“We all answer our phones 24 hours a day because the last thing I want to hear first thing in the morning is ‘we took a delay.’ Because in our business, it’s a killer.”

Acknowledging Others

Wright credits the people he has worked with for helping mold him into a successful leader in the industry.

“I always like to give credit to the people who have affected my life in the business,” Wright says, noting he has learned from experiences at each professional stop he has made.

However, he says Romeo has had the biggest influence on his career.

“He was never a mechanic, but he always knew how important the equipment was to the operation,” he says. “Ensuring the customer is always taken care of was always the priority.”

“He’s very tough. He’s very demanding,” Wright adds. “But he’s also fair. He knows when somebody’s working hard. He can tell the difference between real mechanics and ‘pretenders.’”

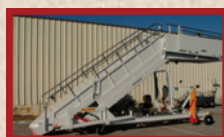
As a result, Wright has similar expectations for his team. While mechanics have set schedules, he expects his managers to put in the effort necessary to get quality work completed on time. One of the company’s highest priorities is providing customers with the equipment they expect.

“I give my guys a certain amount of leeway, but I need the job done right,” Wright says, adding he takes pride in his work, and wants the same attitude out of his team.

With that, he recognizes not everyone is going to be on the ramp 24-7 like he may prefer to be.

“I’ve never been a vacation guy,” Wright says. “I’ve had to learn that normal people stop for lunch. Normal people take vacations. I’ve had to learn how to push without it feeling like I’m pushing.” **GSW**

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Brazil's Benefits of Growth

Large-scale events have given the country's aviation infrastructure a boost and have demonstrated the ground handling industry's ability to adapt accordingly.

By Mario Pierobon

Over the last few years, Brazil has had the unique distinction of hosting a series of important international events that have displayed to the world the country's notorious spirit of hospitality and also its organizational capabilities.

In July 2013, the city of Rio de Janeiro hosted the World Youth Day with Pope Francis that was attended by more than 3 million people. In the following year Brazil hosted the World Cup, whereas in 2016 the country hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In preparation for these events, the country witnessed a significant overhaul of its aviation infrastructure, so let's look at the effects experienced by Brazil following the infrastructure improvements put in place, the role of the aircraft ground handling industry and its immense potential for development.

Well Managed Events

"The main initiatives of our preparation for the World Cup and the Olympics Games were especially focused on adjusting the air network to/from the cities related to these events, and thus offering services in quantity, quality and price adequate for this specific demand. We have also worked hard in strengthening relationships, communication and joint work with the other players to be sure all the efforts would be coming together in time," say officials at ABEAR, an association of Brazilian airlines.

"In general, as seen in other similar host countries, we have not experienced any general raise on the demand for air transport in Brazil after the events, so our infrastructure – after improvements in the main airports, for instance, São Paulo, Campinas and Brasília, for the World Cup, and then Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte, for the Olympic Games – was good enough to cope with

the challenge,” they add.

“For the ground handling segment, the balance of operations during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games was extremely positive,” says Ricardo Miguel, president of ABESATA, the main association of ground handlers in Brazil. “Even with the difficulties inherent in an event of this magnitude, the ground handlers made all efforts for the success of the Olympic Games and then faced an even greater challenge for the Paralympic Games.

“A global event such as the Olympic Games shows how important it is to have good support from companies specializing in ground handling, since the number of non-scheduled flights (executive aviation, air taxi and charter) is very large to account for guests and tourists,” he continues. “From the point of view of ABESATA, the experience from the previous events – such as the World Cup, Confederation Cup and World Youth Day with the presence of Pope Francis – were very important for the success of the Olympic Games. The aviation segment was not only more prepared but also mature for working together – airlines, ground handlers, airport, event organizers, government and so on.”

According to Phil McGrane, chief commercial and business development director

at dnata Brasil, the two major global sporting events experienced by Brazil within two years of each other were showcases as to the organization skills the country naturally possesses for events and its ability to pull them off with success and being recognized on the world stage.

The country’s airport infrastructure for the World Cup was easily able to handle the demand. As for Rio 2016, with the dramatic improvements Rio Galeão made to its infrastructure, the airport itself surpassed all expectations.

“In terms of the ground handling provided for both events, the number of combined handlers in Brazil was also well managed. There were no major bottlenecks and Brazil’s aviation infrastructure worked well as one joint force,” he says. “Although dnata was represented at both Rio and Sao Paulo before, since these events, we as dnata have invested heavily in both stations to satisfy our domestic and international client demands. This has been in technology, ground support equipment (GSE) and staff. We have a very modern GSE fleet and with that, brought our international standards of safety, quality and professionalism.

“These combined, and our ever-growing base of clients at both bases, are further testament to the long-term outlook dnata takes

of the Brazilian market and, the opportunities that being at Brazil’s two largest airports generates. dnata has 26 other airports within its portfolio across Brazil handling between 15,000–18,000 flights per month and a team of well over 3,000 employees.”

The Brazilian government is in the process of granting concessions at more regional airports and these, in turn, all offer significant improvements to ways of doing business.

“The concessionaries, the airport authorities and government agencies recognize the importance of an ‘integrated airport’ approach. All airport service providers and stakeholders should be valued and their contributions sought and welcomed. Brazil then stands to gain from a much-improved aviation infrastructure,” says McGrane. “Being a gateway to South and Central America, the country must take a long-term view on its huge airport assets and the entities within those. It will continue to showcase Brazil for what it has and, its endless opportunities.”

Operational Challenges

Despite the opportunities ahead for the aircraft ground handling business, the country has been facing almost two years of shrinking demand due to a national eco-



Photo courtesy of dnata Brasil



Photo courtesy of dnata Brasil

conomic downturn, so the pressures of rapid growth that Brazil had been experiencing up to the eve of the World Cup have been released, according to officials at ABEAR.

The other operational challenges of aircraft ground handling companies in Brazil are not that different from the ones faced in other countries.

"We still need a large number of people working at our companies, as many things are manually done on the ground, here in Brazil we have a lot of airports far from big centres – more than one hundred airports are served by civil aviation operators, where ground handler support is needed by all airlines. At these remote airports we also have a large number of international airlines with one flight per day or two per week needing to hire a ground handler," notes ABESATA's Miguel.

McGrane of dnata Brasil points out that, for many years, airlines have been able to benefit from an array of handlers – all with different, and at times, complex pricing strategies.

"Many of them were below market price and this has resulted in the quality and consistency of service being eroded. At the same time, the investment in costly GSE has not always been evident, and this in turn, has also raised questions as to safety and quality amongst the handlers," he says. "Combine this with archaic employee legislation and other restrictions that place airport service providers at odds with their airline client demands, it is very easy for handlers to be exposed to huge liabilities. The airlines themselves can also be included in potential lawsuits – should they arise, and this has always hampered the potential growth of new and available traffic being attracted to Brazil."

The government is now making reforms to some of its labor legislation and ground handling companies' hope, in time, these benefits will be realized by the handlers themselves.

"There is still a long way to go in other areas. For example, importation taxes on new or used GSE equipment needs to be reduced or to have exemptions. By gaining these benefits, the ground handlers will be able to invest in more modern fleets. They can also take advantage of technological



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advances in the everyday roles of ground handling,” says McGrane. “The importance of a ground handler being well equipped and having the latest technology and fleet are paramount. Combine that with a well-trained, updated and incentivized workforce, then the airport infrastructure will be a very positive place to work, which in turn generates revenue for all parties.”

According to ABESATA, the Brazilian aircraft ground handling industry suffers from high employee turnover rates like in many other parts of the world.

“Our associates have been investing a lot in training their teams not only for improving the quality but also to retain talents and reduce turnover,” says Miguel.

On the one hand, handlers all have the same pay scales for their labor resources; this negates the need for staff to jump from one company to another simply for increased salary. On the other hand, however, there are airports that allow employees to work for multiple companies.

“This raises many questions – fatigue, different operating standards and much more, but with salaries as they are, many employees are left with little option,” says McGrane. “A comprehensive labor reform program that allows employers to develop staff incentive programs – not just financial ones – would be of huge benefit.”

A Country of Opportunities

Brazil has a plethora of airports. Many of these are regional, and even these have other smaller nearby airports that could be developed. Besides the almost 100 airports served by the commercial aviation, there are also more than 3,000 runways and small airports used by general and business aviation.

There are significant differences in terms of the development of aircraft ground handling services between urbanized and peripheral areas of the country.

“Again, a comprehensive master plan needs to be created, whereby the need not only to generate cash, but to sustain the local economies in many ways, should be considered. This in turn will help to increase the overall Brazilian economy – creating jobs, the ability to spend and, to attract foreign direct investment and to develop local business,” says dnata Brasil’s McGrane. “Lots of

larger regional airports already have regular international flights. Due to the size of Brazil, it is important that the government, along with the aviation family, develops a campaign that attracts business to all its airports and that promotes Brazil for what it has: amazing, lively people; a richness of beaches, forests and green spaces; a talented workforce; huge industrial and agricultural potential and so much more.”

ABESATA believes that the smaller airports are essential to connect the more than 5,500 Brazilian cities.

“In these special markets, ground handlers have a great business opportunity to support aviation at all the aerodromes,” says Miguel. “ABESATA, as the largest association in the ground handling segment, is working hard to attract as much as possible ground handlers to the association, so that we can work in the same direction, with a high quality standard all over the country.” **GSW**



▶ ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mario Pierobon is a safety management consultant and content producer. He currently is working on a research project investigating aircraft ground handling safety. You may reach him at marioprnb@gmail.com.

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Meeting Challenges of Aviation Fueling Training with Multi-Generational Groups

Targeted training efforts can improve line safety and bridge the generational gap in education.

By DeborahAnn Cavalcante

Let's face it; training takes time, money and effort. But where do we find the time? Where will we get the money? And effort; can't people just learn how to do the job from hanging around the more senior personnel?

These are questions that apply to most any industry and role within that industry. The aviation industry, specifically aviation fueling, is no exception. So what is the solution?

Time

It is true that everyone gets the same 24/7, but with reduced staff and ever increasing demands, there just doesn't seem to be time in the day to train anyone. Yet it is essential that each of our staff members have the proper training to do the job we require them to perform. As managers we expect professionalism with our personnel; however, professionalism requires investment. The starting point being



Photo from iStock

the investment of time to provide effective communication and training methods to produce the desired outcome. This changing landscape causes us to rethink our strategies concerning training.

The late 1980s and '90s are delivering a new generation of young people coming into the workforce today that are hungry for information. One thing researchers have learned is that these younger workers long for information. Just ask anyone a question nowadays and the first thing they do is reach for their smartphone to learn the answer. This generation is known as the Internet Generation, iGen or Net Generation; a generation whose individual members are called Gen-Yer's, digital natives, echo boomers or millennia's. They are extremely adept in online life, which includes online training. However it has to be exciting, informative and memorable. No one wants to sit in front of a computer screen, tablet or smartphone for any length of time without being interested in what they are viewing.

Money

"Do more with less," seems to be the phrase we often hear. With travel budgets being reduced, or cut, there just doesn't seem to be any money for training. On the other hand, how much will the accident or incident cost? In aviation, particularly fueling, the cost of the accident, or incident, is always financial and that is certainly devastating. But even more devastating is when the cost is a limb, life or multiple lives. There is no amount of retribution that can replace those affected by an aircraft tragedy.

When an employee is asked to travel to attend training they are excited, enthusiastic and in many ways indebted to the company, however, it is expensive and time consuming. Furthermore, the workload is increased for the remaining staff if the employer doesn't have the redundancy in personnel. Often, training is delayed, or not addressed at all because there aren't enough bodies to take anyone "off line" for any period of time.

Effort

Today's business world can be a ruthless one. The aviation industry, in itself, is very unforgiving when it comes to lack of knowledge. Often times we do not take into consider-

ation that the baby-boomer generation has had decades of hands-on experience in this industry. We sometimes expect the Gen-Yer's to display the same (if not more) business sense, tenacity and expertise as their baby-boomer counterparts.

To help our younger workforce meet the growing demands and expectations set upon them, we must provide them with a type of training that will close that gap. The training should be fast, effective, seamless, streamlined, focused and independent of other factors that may delay them in reaching their goal within the specified time.

These changing demographics are presenting training challenges as employers try to bridge the communication gap that may exist in multi-generational workforces. Successful management of this new multi-generational workforce will require training that satisfies the needs and lifestyles of this diverse group.

Tribal knowledge can be rich and useful, however, many times it is myopic and will not deliver both the "How" and the "Why" a task is to be performed. Gen-Yer's want and need that information. Baby-boomers, holding management and supervisory positions in our organizations are delivering that training and tribal knowledge that must be passed on. This group values classroom-based, instructor-led training and, if given a choice over technology, will most likely choose to continue classroom-based training where they are most comfortable.

The Gen-Yer's have never known life without the Internet, tablets and smartphones. They have instant information access and flexibility in their DNA. Immediate and continuous access to highly focused training, which can be quickly downloaded, becomes essential in retaining workers of this generation.

All employees deserve to be aware of the policies and procedures of an organization, but moreover they need to be clear on the reason those policies and procedures exist. To accomplish that effectively, there must be an effort to cover the required fuel handling training on all applicable subjects in a learning-centered environment; an environment that is hands-on, interactive and collaborative.

No longer is tribal knowledge enough, as it lacks standardization and does not set a clear

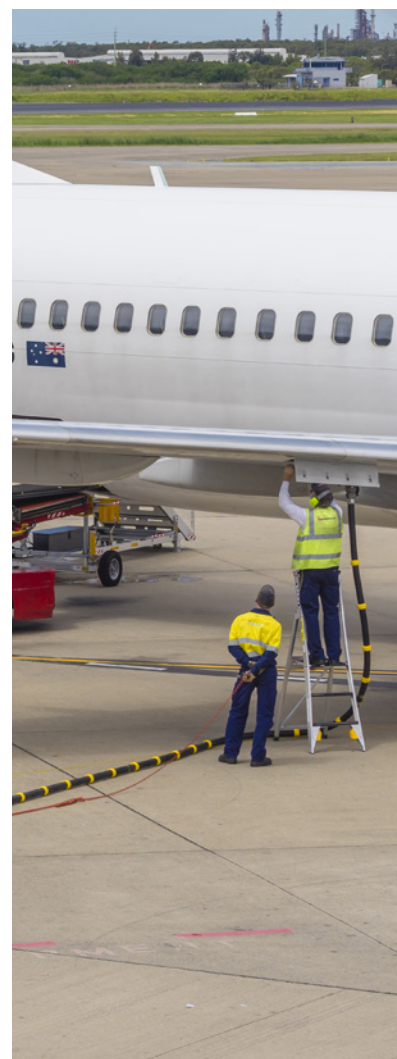


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All employees deserve to be aware of the policies and procedures of an organization, but moreover they **need to be clear** on the **reason** those **policies and procedures exist**.

expectation. It is important to remember that if you do not set that clear expectation for your team, each will take it upon themselves to do a task their own way.

Simulations and hands-on methods, with peer-to-peer collaboration will go a long way in bringing the multi-generational groups together. A one-size-fits-all approach to training will not get the job done, so consider a blended approach. Classroom training will most likely continue to exist, but could be supplemented with other technology to enhance acceptance and create a culture of acceptance and enthusiasm.

Solution

Today's aviation fueling professionals, specifically those faced with training multi-generational groups in fuel handling and quality control, are seeking blended training methods to effectively reach all employees from

baby-boomers to Gen-Yer's and those in between. One suggested course of action is to combine classroom training with electronic digital tools. One such tool is revolutionary in the marketplace, and known as, Fuel Analysis Safety Tool (FAST). For example, fuelers and line technicians will participate in a classroom curriculum that focuses on fuel handling and quality control; specifically on how to ensure clean dry fuel reaches the aircraft.

Accompanying the classroom training, the employee uses a new electronic fuel analysis safety tool for fuel handling and quality control, in lieu of a "paper workbook" or "class manual." Once the employee is actually conducting the task in real time, the electronic tool serves as a checklist, reporting tool, continual training tool and effectively acts as the required documentation for the completed task.

This combined method satisfies the needs

of those employees who prefer traditional classroom training and those who are most comfortable with technology and instant information access. There are even additional bonuses for management such as the ability to view photo imaging of abnormalities in fueling systems, or samples, memorializing fuel test results and email alerts to abnormalities that require attention.

Instantaneous gratification is the society we now live in. To ensure our younger workforce meets the growing demands and expectations set upon them, companies can benefit from providing training that is delivered to bridge that gap between experience and expectation. Delivering what is needed in the method it will be best received is the path to success. **GSW**

For additional information you may reach DeborahAnn Cavalcante, Aviation Training Academy, at dac@aviationta.aero.



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Once It's Gone, It's Gone:

How to Protect Your Hearing on the Job

Airside workers need to take proper hearing protection into consideration when on the job.

By Tom Buske

Exposure to environmental noise is one of the leading causes of hearing loss throughout the world, with approximately 30 million workers exposed to hazardous levels of noise on the job. Every day, we are flooded with transport, industrial and recreational noises. This constant exposure wears down the delicate nerve hairs in the inner ear in the same way bristles on a toothbrush wear down over time.

That damage is irreparable. When it comes to hearing, once it's gone, it's gone. So how can we protect our hearing and preserve it, regardless of environmental noise?

To best understand what damaging noise is, we need to talk about decibels (dB), or the way we measure sound intensity. On one end, 0 dB is barely audible sound. A normal conversation hovers around 55–65 dB. From there, we move into the higher – and more dangerous – ranges.

Highway traffic typically measures at around 75 dB, while something as simple as a hairdryer accounts for 85 dB. A lawnmower garners 95 dB. Construction sites, as you can imagine, often creep up over 100dB on a regular basis. Jet engines – the most consistent source of environmental noise for airport workers – frequently register at 140 dB.

How loud is too loud? Anyone exposed to levels at or over 85 dB, particularly on a regular basis or over a prolonged period of time, is at a high risk of hearing loss. Without proper hearing protection, running a chainsaw for just 15 minutes can cause permanent damage. Obviously, consistent exposure to the noise produced by jet engines on a daily basis puts airport workers in serious jeopardy of hearing loss.

Considering more than 10 million Americans suffer from noise-related permanent hearing loss, this is a problem that demands attention, not to mention more preventative measures.

The FAA has been trying to improve noise control for decades, and continues to develop quieter

aircraft and enhanced flight control measures. Someday, there may be jet engines that operate at the same decibel level as a car engine. Until then, however, airport employees must take more immediate steps to protect themselves.

Fortunately, the solution is not complicated. Hearing loss can be prevented by wearing good quality noise protection.

If you are an airport worker exposed to hazardous levels of noise on the job, hearing loss is likely already happening. While you can't always control the noise, you can control how you protect yourself. Protective ear buds or earmuffs that provide adequate Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) can block out a significant percentage of damaging noise.

When shopping for hearing protection, be sure to look for audiologist-recommended products. The best hearing loss prevention products will protect against hearing loss, tinnitus, and the daily stress of excessive noise by dampening loud vibrations before they can damage your hearing. By blocking out such a large amount of environmental noise, using earbuds or earmuffs allow you to keep music and conversations to a safe, hearing-preserving level.

We've all heard the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. One place where that is certainly the case is with hearing protection. Don't take your hearing for granted; keep it protected and safe for years to come. **GSW**



▶ ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Tom Buske is a leading brand management professional for ToughTested, a subsidiary of Mizco, International. As VP of Branding and Strategy, Buske leads the marketing and brand development for the rugged brand, assisting with new products, marketing initiatives, and competitor research.



Photo courtesy of SITA

The Journey of a Bag

While passengers embark on their flights, SITA's BagJourney technology shares data to help ensure luggage makes it onto the same aircraft.

By Josh Smith

While passengers travel by air across the globe, airports, airlines and ground handlers go to great lengths to make sure those customers' checked baggage makes the same journey.

SITA introduced its BagJourney system to ensure everyone involved in the process has up-to-date information about the location of each piece of baggage being handled.

"BagJourney is a repository of all baggage handling events. You can see anything that happens to the bag – from check-in all the way to delivery of that bag to the passenger," says Peter Drummond, baggage portfolio director at SITA.

Typically, when a traveler checks a bag, and that piece of luggage is tagged with a barcode, it passes through multiple points before reaching the desired aircraft.

As it moves through the departure control system to the baggage handling system, gets routed to the loading carousel and placed in the aircraft hold, the bag's tag is scanned multiple times and a message is sent through a message distribution service or via a direct connection. The last scan is done by a ground handling agent.

"He'll scan the tag and the computer will tell him whether or not that bag for that passenger is on a particular aircraft," explains Drummond. "If it gets an OK, that bag goes onto a cart and that bag is then sent to the aircraft out on the ramp."

At each of those scans, each system can send a baggage process message that is delivered to the airline.

BagJourney came about because SITA saw a desire for passengers to track their baggage.

"That was primarily our use case for the origin of BagJourney. We had a great system in place in message distribution called Bag-Message. BagMessage distributes messages from airlines to airports, and from airports back to airlines," Drummond says. "We thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if we could do something with that data? Maybe we could add some value to it and give it back to airlines to enable passengers to get a live update on the status of their bags.'"

"In fact, you can do service recovery **aboard the aircraft before** the passenger even realizes their bag has been **mishandled**."

— Peter Drummond



Photo courtesy of SITA

"BagJourney is taking existing technology, and then reading those messages, applying some business logic to them to define some identifiable statuses and then presenting that in a manner that enables airlines to integrate this with their apps," he adds.

BagJourney was created before the International Air Transport Association (IATA) passed Resolution 753, requiring IATA members to maintain an accurate inventory of baggage by monitoring the acquisition and delivery of each bag.

However many of BagJourney's features help airlines become compliant with Resolution 753 because the system allows SITA's customers to demonstrate a bag

has been loaded into an aircraft, transferred to another airline, delivered to the passenger, etc.

"We thought this is a great opportunity for BagJourney. Out of the box, airlines and airports could become IATA compliant by using this back-end environment," Drummond says. "It's mainly geared at airports or airlines that don't have access to IT systems – big IT infrastructures."

BagJourney can also provide assistance if a passenger's baggage doesn't make it onto the aircraft correctly because it works with SITA's WorldTracer system that tracks mishandled luggage.

Additionally, BagJourney can be integrated into cabin crew information services,

so that if a passengers' bag is mishandled, an airline can process the passenger aboard the aircraft.

"In fact, you can do service recovery aboard the aircraft before the passenger even realizes their bag has been mishandled," Drummond notes.

"The passenger can just go home without having to worry about collecting the bag or being agitated about that bag not arriving," he continues, noting it can often take up to 30 minutes for a passenger to realize his or her bag didn't arrive at the destination and then that person has to begin filing a report with the airline. "The whole experience of that flight is going to be ruined by the arrival process. So you can process them aboard the aircraft, and you can even upgrade them while they're on board the aircraft."

What's more, the information provided

by BagJourney can be used further for proration when a bag is mishandled and doesn't arrive at a passenger's destination.

"The airlines prorate the cost back to each individual airline based upon who's at fault. By knowing, and seeing, where that bag has been touched, you can see who is at fault with more ease," explains Drummond. "It's easier to align the cost."

Pointing out that large airlines often have their own baggage-tracking devices, Drummond says their primary customers are often smaller airlines.

"This is really a service that we could offer to smaller airlines or smaller airports to track bags much more easily," he says, adding the Etihad Group uses BagJourney.

Going forward, SITA intends to build additional capabilities into the BagJourney to enable airlines to add more tracking points that could provide additional data

to help various systems communicate effectively.

"At an airport, you may already have a baggage handling system that's already in place, and you may have a baggage reconciliation system that's already in place – two separate systems sold and run by two different organizations and managed by maybe multiple IT vendors," Drummond says. "So with BagJourney, the great thing about being in the cloud, you can build a data capture point at an arrival belt that connects directly to the internet, inputs that data into BagJourney and then we can share that data with those existing services at an airport."

"It's information that's already passing through the systems shared by the different entities, and then providing it back to those same entities in a more identifiable way," he concludes. **GSW**

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Technology and Security Should Go Hand in Hand

Embrace cutting-edge solutions to improve operations. But make sure new methods are adopted and implemented wisely to avoid unnecessary risk.

Throughout this month's issue, we've discussed the value of technology and how it affects the way business is done in aviation – and in the ground support arena, specifically.

Whether we're looking at the latest advancements in fueling equipment, IT solutions that serve as maintenance checklists, safety features built into GSE or developing automated ways to track and reconcile baggage, technology is influencing the way work is performed on the ramp. More than ever, aviation – from ground handlers to airlines to airports – is interconnected.

The beauty of integrated IT solutions and other cutting edge technology is the convenience it offers. Additionally, the data provided allows companies to identify trends and make informed decisions.

The (potential) downside of technology is the risk of sensitive information being stolen by hackers.

In fact, a few months ago, United States senators Edward Markey and Richard Blumenthal submitted a letter to the FAA encouraging the agency to implement regulations to ensure aircraft and GSE are not vulnerable to cyber-threats.

Noting cyberattacks committed on the country's transportation system, the senators stated the importance of fortifying technology-based stan-

dards and promoting safety and security. To do so, they urged the creation of regulations to design aircraft, GSE and other maintenance equipment in a way that prevents cyberattacks. In addition to other guidelines, they also suggested periodic testing and updating of cybersecurity protection and sharing information about cyber-threats to protect others.

Technology is constantly evolving, and it is important that security grows at the same rate.

That said, technology is not something that should be feared. Embrace technology and the positive changes it may bring to daily – and long-term – operations.

But in doing so, make sure new methods and systems are adopted and implemented wisely to help your company avoid potential risk.

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