

HOW DOES DIGITALIZATION OPTIMIZE AIRLINE OPERATIONS?

Now faced with the reality of the tough post-COVID-19 operating environment, the notion of deploying shiny new digital tools, solutions and services may not be at the top of airlines' priority lists. But a lot of airlines are at a critical juncture for turning digitalization talk into action, with many affordable intelligent solutions on offer that don't just make it possible to work smarter and more cost-effectively when times are tight. They can also help airlines refine and rebuild their operation long-term, and actively support their digital goals as they change.

DIGITALIZING FLIGHT NOSE-TO-TAIL

In daily flight operations, strategic digital enhancements delivered through a suite of intuitive airline applications and services offer both immediate and future-proof benefits to airlines. By supporting the roles involved at every flight stage, these can, in turn, help airlines optimize their overall operations.

In the cockpit, digitalization has increasingly transformed work processes to become natively digital. More and more pilots have been able to access a connected ecosystem of apps, services and documents that will define the future flight deck. Targeted applications offer pilots access to rich, vital information through a single handheld device. These can help them enhance operational efficiency, situational awareness, collaboration and safety processes, as part of an airline's bespoke digitalized portfolio.

For pilots, going digital is a surefire way to minimize workload. For example, being able to upload briefings or submit reports digitally with a device that connects at the gate, instantly eradicates layers of admin.

Digitalization also elevates operational performance. Take specialized apps, such as for granting situational weather awareness. By delivering graphically optimized views of market-leading weather data, apps which bring greater awareness to the cockpit can support more flexible and responsive operations, and safer and more economical flight routes. With flight disruptions formerly estimated to cost the airline industry some \$60 billion annually, the case for avoiding such risk is clear.

AIR/GROUND COLLABORATION

Adopting a central digital ecosystem of airline apps also enables pilots and ground-based operatives – many of who have had to adapt to remote working – to collaborate more effectively. Giving everyone involved in flight operations the same view of airline information, wherever they are located, enables greater consistency and communication around flight performance. Having more eyes on the same data, such as through smart fuel tracking, also offers further potential to identify issues or areas for optimization.

Similarly, for cabin crews, using a digital applications suite helps to radically streamline

administrative processes, enabling more time to be spent focusing on passenger service. These digitalized capabilities span everything from automation (e.g. prefilling set parameters in digital forms) and integration (formatting crew data to feed seamlessly into ground IT on offload), to easy access to latest customer information (by synchronizing passenger profiles with airline customer relationship management systems).

REAL-TIME CONNECTION

With inflight connectivity added into the mix, these benefits can multiply tenfold.

Connecting application-rich cockpit and cabin crew tablets over available flight deck connectivity links – whether VHF radio frequencies, satellite communications or new generation IP links such as SwiftBroadband-Safety – can facilitate constant information sharing with the ground.

Pilots will increasingly seek the same level of connectivity in the air as on the ground. And it's no surprise why. Those flying with a connected app ecosystem are best-equipped to receive real-time, consistently-formatted uplinked updates from the ground, painting the latest and most complete picture for decision-making. This stands to benefit every aspect of flight, from real-time weather awareness, route planning and air/ground communications, to relaying aircraft health information. With the best and latest information to hand, pilots can better manage disruptions, avoid turbulence, maintain timekeeping and, ultimately, provide a safer, better passenger experience – all thanks to consistent, seamless air/ground contact and data communications.

Connecting cabin crew devices, meanwhile, enables attendants to better synchronize with ground IT and colleagues onboard. Being able to receive connection updates, or relay customer issues or catering stocks information mid-flight, are all ways enhanced communication empowers attendants to support safe and elevated passenger service.

ADVANCING PRACTICES ON THE GROUND

On the ground, maturing digital applications that can speak to those onboard will be integral in advancing aircraft operations activities, collaboration and support.

Take flight tracking. To be able to report aircraft inflight positions every 15 minutes, in line with ICAO recommendations, many airlines have already rapidly adopted new software systems. Incorporating rich global data sources, and automatically generating alerts if an aircraft doesn't report its flight position, are just two ways such systems have enhanced airline dispatch operations.

MEETING YOUR DIGITAL NEEDS

Many airlines recognize a digital shift will remain key to reinventing and rebuilding aircraft operations, flight and the onboard experience, making it safer, more efficient, and more enjoyable. Advancing digitalized operations – leveraged through an integrated, connectivity-ready airline application ecosystem – gives operators the agility they need to address new challenges and demands post-COVID-19.

In order for flight operations digitalization to deliver on its promises of greater time and cost efficiency and effectiveness, airlines need to be able to cut across multiple disciplines and meet best practices. For this, airlines need partners with the expertise to help them achieve digitalization now and long-term, and who are ever-ready to adapt.

To discover our **Digital Day of Operations** portfolio, and how it can benefit your operation, visit sita.aero/aircraft, email worldwide@sita.aero or submit an **enquiry form**.