Pole position: Developing “the most important and largest airport in Central Europe”

Interview: Michał Kaczmarzyk, CEO of Warsaw Chopin Airport, General Director of Polish Airports State Enterprise

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Editorial: Security & Europe: Time to grasp the nettle

MICHAŁ KACZMARZYK, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF POLISH AIRPORTS STATE ENTERPRISE

Pole position: Developing “the most important and largest airport in Central Europe”

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With no end in sight to the migration crisis and both the Metrojet crash and Paris terror attacks sending shock waves throughout Europe, security is more than ever at the top of the agenda. Closely liaising with the EU institutions in charge of assessing any possible impact of these events on our industry, we were relieved that no additional security measures at airports were contemplated. Indeed, the numerous checks in place at Europe’s airports are already fit for the threat as it stands. Given where the available detection technology stands for now, it would be difficult to see how screening could be further enhanced – unless we would decide to become intrusive to a point that passengers would simply no longer accept.

Of course, this does not mean that we should stand still and just go on with business as usual. Just like the rest of society, aviation faces a daunting challenge when it comes to security. The threat is much less “stable” than it used to be. In fact, it is evolving all the time, in a state of constant flux. And unlike what we used to be confronted with, today’s threat is fuelled by unprecedented geopolitical instability on our doorsteps and our failure at socially integrating members of our own society.

This means that to win this fight, intelligence and data are going to be more important than ever. Just as everything gets digitised and big data is now driving the most successful business strategies, security also needs to pursue its own transformative change management process – where cooperation, integration and outreach should be more than just buzz words. There is little doubt that a lot of people are committed to that. Yet, progress is not fast enough.

I am appalled that, 4 years from being initially proposed by the European Commission, the EU PNR (Passenger Name Record) proposal is still being blocked in the European Parliament. The Paris attacks of last January put this proposal back in the spotlight – but we are still waiting.

Many are now asking, how many more deaths do we need for it to be finally adopted?

Looking specifically at airports, despite all the talk about moving towards risk-based security, not much is happening in practice. The security mindset remains much too focused on detection – and not enough on using intelligence and data. Yet, there are ways to make progress.

Looking across the Atlantic, the US has already shown the way with its PreCheck initiative. PreCheck is a successful expedited security screening programme, which identifies passengers that are considered low risk based on information they provide on a voluntary basis. Eligible passengers become ‘known travellers’ and are able to use simplified and quicker screening lanes at airports. To date, PreCheck is available at more than 150 US airports and 1.5 million travellers have registered to be part of it. The results are not just happier passengers and lower security costs – crucially, PreCheck increases security efficiency. It allows resources to be redeployed where the threat is higher, rather than dispersing them through systematic and undifferentiated screening. Security checks become more focused, allowing for the use of new tools such as behavioural analysis and increased deterrence.

So, why are we not looking at developing a European PreCheck programme?

This is one of the questions the President of ACI EUROPE, Augustin de Romanet, asked EU Transport Commissioner Bulc when he met her last October. Naturally, doing this kind of thing between 28 different States is likely to be much more difficult than in the US – where only one jurisdiction is at stake. But this is precisely the kind of obstacle European citizens are no longer willing to accept to justify the status quo.

Security & Europe: Time to grasp the nettle

By Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE
Airports in the news

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Cork Airport

Returned to growth in October 2015.

After a major route development drive, Cork Airport has secured its first-ever scheduled transatlantic services. Norwegian will operate a direct Cork-Boston service from next May, with 4-5 flights per week. It also intends to launch a new Cork-New York service in 2017. A Cork-Barcelona service is also planned from May 2016 with 4-5 flights per week.

Frankfurt Airport

Likely to break the 60 million annual traffic figure for the first time in December.

Frankfurt Airport has opened the first ‘Green Gate’ to showcase low-emission ground handling as part of E-PORT AN, an €8 million government-funded initiative. The E-PORT AN partnership consists of Fraport AG, Lufthansa Group, the State of Hesse, and the Rhine-Main model electromobility region. The project has identified 20 different aircraft service vehicles that can largely be carried out using electric vehicles.

Barcelona-El Prat Airport

Averaged 5.1% monthly growth over first 10 months of 2015.

Barcelona-El Prat has become the 18th airport in Europe to fully implement A-CDM to optimise the management of its air traffic operations. A-CDM is a joint initiative partnered by ACI EUROPE, EUROCONTROL, CANSO and IATA to improve operational efficiency at airports by reducing delays, improving the predictability of events during the progress of a flight, and optimising the use of material and human resources. In Spain, A-CDM is already operational at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas and Aena is working on implementation at Palma de Mallorca.

Bologna Airport

Will remain the seventh-largest airport in Italy in 2015.

At Bologna Airport passengers can now use ‘Bologna Airport Wifi Tv’, a high-tech service providing information and entertainment. Implemented with the technical know-how of H-Media, the new service, which is free of charge, makes it possible to receive live TV from the main Italian and foreign channels, as well as on-demand videos directly on mobile phones, tablets and PC through the airport’s WiFi.

Bergen Airport

Handled over 5 million passengers in the first 10 months of 2015.

Avinor has received a €200 million European Investment Bank (EIB) loan for the expansion and upgrade of Bergen Airport. The EIB will finance the construction of a new Terminal 3 and its associated airside infrastructure, including a light rail station to facilitate public transport links between the airport and the city centre. Construction of the new terminal infrastructure is expected to reduce the energy consumption by 30%. Expected to be completed by late 2017, the new terminal will increase the airport’s passenger handling capacity to 10 million a year.
Riga Airport

Averaged 6.7% monthly growth over first 9 months of 2015.

Riga Airport has completed the first phase of construction works on an expanded non-Schengen area, with three new boarding gates, and more space for arriving passengers. The second phase is scheduled to be finished by autumn 2016. Once complete, there will be 19 new boarding gates, three air bridges and new commercial areas.

Krakow Airport

Host of Routes Europe, 24-26 April 2016.

Krakow Airport has opened an expanded terminal as it aims to modernise the airport, increase passenger capacity and provide improved services. The launch of the new passenger terminal in late September marks the completion of the first phase of the airport’s expansion. The remaining works will be completed in mid-2016, and, after this is done, the airport’s old and new parts will be integrated, providing a total of 56,000sqm. In total, the investment is valued at €96.6 million.

Lyon Airport & Nice Airport

Remain the two biggest airports in France outside of Paris.

France aims to kick off the privatisation process of Nice Côte d’Azur and Lyon-Saint-Exupéry airports before the end of the year. In Nice as in Lyon, the State intends to sell its entire 60% stake of the airport management companies. In both cases, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry has 25% equity and 15% local authorities (region, department and city in equal parts).

TAV Airports

Milas-Bodrum Airport on course to break 4 million annual passengers in 2015.

TAV Airports has strengthened its airport portfolio by taking over the operation of the international terminal at Turkey’s Milas-Bodrum Airport. The move means that TAV will be the operator of the gateway until the end of 2035 as it has managed the domestic terminal since October 2014. Turkey’s State Airports Authority (DHMI) awarded TAV the concession to operate Milas-Bodrum Airport last year after it successfully bid €177 million plus VAT for the 30-year concession.

Greek Regional Airports

Over 27 million passengers handled by non-Athens Greek airports so far in 2015 (Jan-Sep).

Germany’s Fraport is expected to sign a deal by the end of the year to lease 14 Greek regional airports after formally resubmitting its offer. Fraport, named preferred bidder late last year, and its Greek partner, energy firm Copelouzos, agreed to pay a lump sum of €1.2 billion and annual rental fees of about €23 million for the 40-year lease of airports in popular tourist locations, including Corfu. It is also expected to invest a total of €1.4 billion over the period.
Despite the constant increase in the mobility of Polish citizens, air travel still remains at a relatively low per capita level in the country. While in Germany or France every citizen takes an average of 2.5 flights per year, in Poland the average is just 0.7 trips. However, Poland’s Civil Aviation Authority forecasts by the end of this decade this will rise to 38 million flights – equivalent to one for every Pole – rising a further 70% to 65 million by 2030.

Other EU countries may cast an envious glance at a Polish growth rate which is also confirmed by the experiences at the Polish regional airports: Virtually all have experienced record increases this year, with the results of Lublin (+95% year-on-year), Modlin (+40%) and Katowice (+14%) standing out.

“Robust development of air transport in Poland is not going to slow any time soon,” said Michał Kaczmarzyk, CEO of Warsaw Chopin Airport, General Director of Polish Airports State Enterprise, who was appointed in February 2014, and the statistics for Polish Airports’ core asset, Warsaw Chopin Airport, are certainly positive. Warsaw Chopin handles over 40% of Poland’s total air traffic; October was the 13th consecutive record month, and over 11 million passengers are expected for 2015 as a whole while it served 9.7 million in the first 10 months of the year (+6.3%).

While looking at Warsaw, and comparing it to other airports in the region such as Prague or Budapest, one has to take into account the fact that Warsaw has two airports – the main airport Chopin, and the recently-opened Modlin which is dedicated to low-cost carriers,” Kaczmarzyk noted. “Together, the two Warsaw airports will have handled about 13.5 million passengers by the end of this year meaning Warsaw is the largest aviation market in this part of Europe. Our company – Polish Airports State Enterprise – also has a 30% share in Modlin so we’re totally involved with the differing markets served by the two airports.”

“Polish Airports” manages two airports: Warsaw Chopin and Zielona Góra-Babimost. It also has stakes in nine companies, supervising the operation of airports in Kraków (76.19% stake), Szczecin (47.19%), Rzeszów (47.04%), Poznan (40.52%), Modlin (30.39%), Gdansk (29.09%), Wrocław (19.74%), Katowice (16.41%), and Bydgoszcz (8.06%). PPL also holds 100% of shares in Welcome Airport Services (ground handling company) and Chopin Airport Development Company (hotels and real estate development).
There is a clear focus on attracting new airlines and new long-haul routes to Warsaw Chopin to enhance its position as a regional transfer hub. A range of tremendously important new routes starting next year include LOT direct services to Tokyo, Bangkok and Seoul.

One such idea is Chopin Airport City – an office and retail complex planned adjacent to the airport. A specially-dedicated entity – Chopin Airport Development Company – has been established to develop a detailed concept with a timetable for implementation of the project, and to obtain the go-ahead needed for such an ambitious development.

Other change is firmly focused on enhancing the passenger experience. New gate readers have been installed at Warsaw Chopin for automated boarding pass control, while the airport also plans to utilise beacon technology to help passengers navigate through the airport through a Bluetooth connection on their smartphones. “The works are at a very advanced stage and I think that soon we will be able to boast one of the most innovative networks of its kind across Europe,” Kaczmarzyk added.

Warsaw Chopin is also committed to environmental innovation and is accredited at the ‘Mapping’ level of ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation. The airport is now aiming for the ‘Reduction’ level of the programme. The new terminal includes 7,000sqm of roof-mounted solar panels – the largest power plant of its kind in Poland. This allows production of about 100 megawatt-hours of electricity per year. “On sunny days, the panels provide up to 25% of demand for energy in the terminal,” Kaczmarzyk said. “We are also thinking about the next initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint. In the case of the regional airports in Poland, they are also interested in applying to become Airport Carbon Accredited. We really feel our responsibility for the environment; it’s core to our business.”

Warsaw Chopin Airport factbox

2014: 10.5 million passengers

2015 (JAN-OCT): 9.7 MILLION PASSENGERS

2015 PASSENGER TRAFFIC GROWTH (JAN-OCT): 6.3%

KEY AIRLINE CUSTOMERS: LOT Polish Airlines, Wizz Air, Lufthansa

NUMBER OF ROUTES: 80

TOP 3 DESTINATIONS: London, Paris, Frankfurt
Warsaw Chopin: A regional transfer hub

LOT Polish Airlines is, of course, Warsaw’s biggest carrier with 40% of traffic. Accordingly it enjoys the brand new privilege of a dedicated area of the terminal – the LOT Warsaw Hub – which launched in October, providing an exclusive check-in area for all LOT passengers, which minimises the distance from terminal entrance to departure gate. LOT is followed by Wizz Air – which significantly does not have operations at Modlin – with a 14% market share.

Kaczmarzyk articulates a clear focus on attracting new airlines and new long-haul routes to Warsaw Chopin to enhance its position as a regional transfer hub.

A range of tremendously important new routes starting next year include LOT direct services to Tokyo, Bangkok and Seoul, while Air Canada will launch its first-ever Warsaw service – from Toronto.

“Of course the attractiveness of the airport to consumers is dependent on the choice of the carriers which operate there,” Kaczmarzyk said. “Therefore the new long-haul connections are also a catalyst for increasing traffic on the Warsaw hub’s connecting services. We welcome any announcement of a new connection and we hope to get even more. We work hard to convince airlines to consider Warsaw as their destination, and we’re really pleased with the recent results of our efforts. We already have four carriers operating intercontinental routes and we hope to gain more.”

Emirates recently introduced a larger aircraft on its Dubai service (upgrading to 777 instead of A330) and is also reported to be considering a second daily flight. Qatar Airways is also considering upgrading from an A320 to its new showcase 787 on its Warsaw services.

“LOT is also excited to be getting its seventh Dreamliner allowing it to open new viable routes to Asia and America which all shows faith in the potential of our airport and market,” Kaczmarzyk added.

A variety of incentives are offered to new full service and low-cost carriers looking to operate from Warsaw Chopin. For example, any carrier launching a new long-haul connection from Warsaw receives a 99% discount on airport charges for the first two years of operation, and partnership assistance with marketing campaigns.

A key strategic focus is increasing transit traffic, which currently accounts for 20% of the total, with the aim to...
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increase that share to at least 50% over the next five years. “We will achieve this goal primarily with our main partner, LOT, but the effects of this are also beneficial for other carriers,” Kaczmarzyk commented. “For the development of long-haul connections, the attractive geographical location of Warsaw in the heart of Central Europe is of great importance. Warsaw Chopin Airport now serves as a regional hub for passengers from neighbouring countries such as Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Serbia. And thanks to the development of an attractive air connection network, this role will continue to grow in importance.”

Polish regional airports “enjoy investment boom”

Following a successful restructuring last year the workforce at Warsaw Chopin was slimmed down by 35% from 2,200 to 1,400. The resultant reduction in operating costs means that Warsaw Chopin is now, according to Kaczmarzyk, one of the most profitable airports in Europe. Record financial results of Polish Airports State Enterprise (an EBITDA margin above 40%) are now allowing it to think about investing outside Warsaw; and indeed the Polish regional airports are developing rapidly.

Kraków: €120 million

At Kraków, €120 million has been invested in an extensive modernisation including extension of the passenger terminal, new taxiways and apron expansion. The next phase will see renovation of the existing terminal which, once complete, will provide a capacity of eight million passengers (about double current throughput).

Katowice: €100 million

Katowice, which served a record 2.7 million passengers in 2014 and expects to handle over three million this year, is also undergoing the biggest investment programme in its history, totalling €100 million. A new 3,200m runway opened in May, which enables Katowice to handle widebodies, and a new arrivals terminal has also been completed. Other projects underway include construction of a de-icing ramp, while there are plans to develop the airport’s cargo infrastructure, with a new cargo terminal and a dedicated apron due to be ready by the end of May 2016.

Gdańsk Lech Wałęsa: +€15 million

Development projects worth over €15 million have recently been undertaken at Gdańsk Lech Wałęsa Airport. Terminal 2 has been extended by about 30%. The airport has renovated the runway and installed Cat II ILS, and a new rail connection between the airport and the centre of Gdańsk opened in September. Meanwhile, Poznan and Bydgoszcz airports underwent runway repairs this autumn, and Szczecin Airport has resurfaced its runway and completed apron and taxiway works.

Even Zielona Góra-Babimost – Poland’s smallest airport, which handled about 12,000 passengers in 2014 – opened a new arrivals hall in September, with the existing facility adapted to exclusively handle departing passengers.

Looking ahead, there will also be a focus on additional investment in Modlin Airport. Three years after it opened Modlin Airport handles nearly 2.5 million passengers a year and is approaching the limits of its capacity. Expansion of the terminal and a new apron are urgently needed. “The other shareholders unfortunately are not eager to finance these works and it may halt the development of this airport. We could do it. I must admit that I would willingly take over a majority stake in Modlin and create a ‘duo-port’ handling passengers for the central Polish market,” said Kaczmarzyk, who also significantly asserted that PPL could even invest outside of Poland: “We also have the funds for potential acquisitions and equity investments and analyse opportunities on the international market – I think it’s a good time to launch the ‘Polish Airports’ activities in Europe. According to forecasts, Poland’s air traffic will reach 65 million by 2030. We need to start planning now to accommodate the next generation of growth.”
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The Airport Helper: How a good idea is spreading among Europe’s airports

Do not know where to pick up a baggage trolley, where to rent a car or where to eat a delicious meal at the airport? Ask your Airport Helper! Created in 2007 by Aéroports de Lyon, the Airport Helper is a new concept of customer service that seeks to provide passengers with any information or guidance they need at all steps of their journey throughout the airport. By the end of the year, there will be 11 European airports offering this service. Inês Rebelo reports.

On 13 November 2015, Lyon-Saint Exupéry’s Airport Helper Ambassador, a young Chef named Grégory Cuilleron, hosted a flavour discovery workshop and customers were offered postcards to send to friends and relatives to spread kindness everywhere.

Airports are easily recognisable, thanks to an identification badge that they wear on their jacket. They are volunteers from all businesses at the airport that are ready to ensure constant care to passengers and help them find their way around the airport services. They are specially trained on the “welcome attitude” as well as on technical and behavioural aspects so as to be able to efficiently respond to any sort of demands, from giving advice on specific destinations or restaurants at the airport to suggesting activities to keep children entertained. “There are now more than 2,000 Airport Helpers wearing the badge and serving customers at Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport. Over the past 8 years, we have observed that the trend towards “courtesy of the airport staff” in our passenger satisfaction surveys has increased substantially,” Martine adds.

The idea that the Airport Helper facilitates the creation of a strong passenger-centred community is corroborated by Arnaud Pouilly, Senior Manager at the Customer Quality Department at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport: “The Airport Helper initiative has contributed to creating a community that generates a feeling of belonging to a service-orientated entity. It has reinforced links between different service providers from multiple sectors and their staff members, as well as encouraging improved relations amongst individuals across the board.”

Launched in September 2013 at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport, the Airport Helper community has currently over

In 2007, the Quality Committee team at Aéroports de Lyon and its major partners came up with an innovative approach to improve the passenger service at the airport: the Airport Helper. Based on the commitment of the whole airport staff across all businesses on the airport site, the Airport Helper is someone that is on hand to make passengers’ journey at the airport more smooth and enjoyable by answering their questions. As such, the Airport Helper represents a new, crucial element in the passenger quality service chain – it shows how airports continuously strive to improve their services for passengers. “The Airport Helper fosters the feeling of belonging to an airport community that is closely cooperating to achieve a common goal: a high-quality passenger service. It involves the whole community of airport professionals and it creates a true airport culture at the core of which are our passengers,” Martine Fillon, Assistant at Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport in charge of the animation of the concept Airport Helper, points out.

Antonio Pascale, Quality Manager at Naples Airport, corroborates: “The Airport Helper concept is a great way to involve the airport community in welcoming passengers and carry on our strategy based on considering the passenger as a real guest, welcoming him the same way we do for a loved person coming at our home.”

Following the success enjoyed by Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport, which launched the Airport Helper label, other European airports have also been implementing this concept. There will be 11 European airports with Airport Helpers by the end of the year: Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport, Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris-Orly Airport, Rome Fiumicino Airport, Rome Ciampino Airport, Munich Airport, Milan Malpensa Airport, Milan Linate Airport, Naples Airport, Toulouse Airport and Bologna Airport. Zurich Airport and Prishtina Airport are planning to offer this service next year.
An emblematic event of the Airport Helper community at European airports is the World Kindness Day, which takes place on 13 November annually. Organised by the Airport Helpers, this day is fully focused on sharing kindness with the goal of celebrating the sense of service and passenger loyalty at the airport.

For instance, on 13 November 2015, at Lyon-Saint Exupéry, 5,000 red gerberas were distributed to passengers and airport partners. Coffee and cookie tasting were also offered. "Our Airport Helper Ambassador, a young Chef named Grégory Cuilleron, hosted a flavour discovery workshop and customers were offered postcards to send to friends and relatives to spread kindness everywhere," Martine describes.

World Kindness Day: “Let the kindness bloom at your airport”

An emblematic event of the Airport Helper community at European airports is the World Kindness Day, which takes place on 13 November annually. Organised by the Airport Helpers, this day is fully focused on sharing kindness with the goal of celebrating the sense of service and passenger loyalty at the airport. Paris and Lyon were the first airports to organise the Kindness Day. Since then, the other European airports that have adopted the Airport Helper concept have embraced this initiative too.

World Kindness Day has proved to be the perfect opportunity to strengthen the ties between European airports and their passengers by highlighting the actions of the Airport Helper community. It is a moment marked by spontaneity, kindness and joy that remains in the collective memory and greatly contributes to increasing passenger satisfaction on professionalism and courtesy at the airport.

Each airport is free to celebrate World Kindness Day as it wishes according to its budget, infrastructure and any other sort of constraints. However, to mark the spirit of an international community, a common base is essential. For this reason, this year the participating airports shared the following:

- The same slogan – “Let the kindness bloom” – that appears on all communication materials
- An offering of flowers, namely red gerberas, which symbolise kindness
- A press release that informs about the Kindness Day and mentions the participating airports
- And... loads of smiles, hospitality, kindness!

For instance, on 13 November 2015, at Lyon-Saint Exupéry, 5,000 red gerberas were distributed to passengers and airport partners. Coffee and cookie tasting were also offered.

In the case of Paris-Orly Airport, where the Airport Helper programme was launched in 2012, the airport has created an office called "BurO2" dedicated to the Airport Helper community, which now counts 1,140 members and over 40 companies. How does it work? "Airport Helpers meet in this office and have the possibility to relax (massage chair), to learn (language e-courses) or just to discuss with other members of the family. They may also make suggestions for improvement or share the problems they face and we try to find the right answers. This office helps to build bridges for a united family that is proud of working for the airport community and for a better passenger experience," Agnès Nicolas, Senior Manager at the Customer Quality Department at Paris-Orly Airport, explains.

The same slogan – “Let the kindness bloom” – that appears on all communication materials

An offering of flowers, namely red gerberas, which symbolise kindness

A press release that informs about the Kindness Day and mentions the participating airports

And... loads of smiles, hospitality, kindness!

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The Airport Helper has also been a fruitful experience at Rome Airports since 2013. "The feedback received by passengers as well as the airport staff involved in the Airport Helper initiative is very positive," comments Catherine Ballester, Head of Benchmarking at the Service Quality Department at Aeroporti di Roma. "The Airport Helper community at Fiumicino and Ciampino airports now gathers up to 900 employees. They come not only from Aeroporti di Roma and its subsidiaries, but also from State agencies, the Italian Civil Aviation Authority, airlines, handlers, retailers, bars and restaurants, ground transportation companies, etc. In fact, we wanted to involve all “airport families” in the Airport Helper initiative as the passenger. Throughout his experience at the airport, gets in touch with a lot of different categories of staff and skills that all together contribute to the value of his journey," Catherine points out.

For Airport Helpers, the experience is very rewarding and meaningful inasmuch as they feel that they can reach out to passengers, cater for their needs and make their journey at the airport a pleasant and even memorable moment. "The other day I was on the car parking and was about to take the shuttle. At the stop 'Europcar car rental', an old couple entered the bus. The woman asked the driver at which stop she should get off to take a British Airways flight. As an Airport Helper, I immediately offered to help. I got off the bus with them. We looked at the screens together and I could see that their check-in was at gate 19. We took the elevator and I accompanied them to the right check-in desk. They were very grateful and I was delighted to help them on their way." Nadia, Airport Helper at Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport, recalls.

With so much human interaction taking place at the airport, even simple gestures can make a difference to passengers and visitors. "We were offering kindness day
On World Kindness Day this year, participating airports made an offering of flowers, namely red gerberas, which symbolise kindness.

Making passengers feel at home – so they may want to come back any time either as departing, arriving, transferring traveller, or just as a visitor – is a primary goal of the Airport Helper programme at Munich Airport. “The feeling of being assisted is very much valued and highly appreciated by an uninformed or lost passenger. Each of us can contribute to make our passengers feel warmly welcome and comfortable. We want our passengers to carry a first-class reputation of Munich Airport into the world,” Hans-Joachim Klohs, Vice President Central Infrastructure, Traffic and Operational Planning at Munich Airport, stresses.

Munich Airport adopted the Airport Helper concept in 2010 and has developed a specific training programme that intends to enhance the ‘human touch’ amongst its personnel and airport know-how. “We offer 3 Training Modules (3.5 hours each), and usually 2 Trainings for up to 18 participants a month. The Basic Module ‘Hot-Spots’ in the public areas of both Terminals and 2 non-public and security area Modules, one for Terminal 1 and as well one for Terminal 2.” Hans-Joachim Klohs specifies. The airport has already welcomed 1,400 Airport Helpers, over 50% of them joined all of the 3 courses.

Aéroports de Lyon is very happy that the Airport Helper concept took off. “We would like to thank ACI EUROPE for having invited Lyon and Rome Airports in the framework of the ACI EUROPE Facilitation and Customer Services Committee in the beginning of October to give them the opportunity to share best common practices of the airports that have adopted the Airport Helper and kindness Day. We are confident we can count on the support of ACI EUROPE to make ‘Airport Helper’ a true label for customer service,” Martine says.
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Hack the Airport!

Hackathons have become the ‘must have’ in various streams of work and life in general – with a number of European airports allowing themselves to become caught up by the wave in recent months. They sound quite technical and even geeky. For many the word just prompts more questions. What and who does it involve? What are they trying to do? Is it legal? How useful is a hackathon and what is the outcome the participants are working towards? Robert O’Meara reports.

The word ‘Hackathon’ has a curious quality – it manages to sound both dangerous and yet simultaneously community-driven, but what does it really entail? The origins of ‘hacking’ come from the activities of computer coding experts who sought (and indeed still seek) to break down walls and access important, useful or secret information from another person, company or institution. In that context, the practice was/is illegal – however, the verb ‘hacking’ has, over time, broadened and acquired a positive meaning as well.

Type the words ‘Top 10 hacks’ or ‘life hacks’ into the internet search engine of your choice and you’ll be amazed by the amount of free advice on offer, aiming at improving your life through simple tips and solutions. Similarly, if you add the word ‘hack’ to your life through simple tips and solutions. Similarly, if you add the word ‘hack’ to an internet search about everything from career management to personal finance, or from fashion to romantic entanglement, you will see just how much ‘hacking’ now goes well beyond the sphere of information technology, computers and geeks. Once people have a good idea, which simplifies or makes some aspect of life more efficient, then they share it online.

In truth, today ‘hacking’ is as much about the cultural concept of breaking down barriers, as it is about computer coding. For companies, it’s about accessing and exchanging information which may previously have been in silos, and solving problems using out-of-the-box thinking. It has also retained another key original characteristic – the urgency of an intense deadline within which to find solutions. Or to put it another way, all hackathons are a race against time.

Inspiration from Silicon Valley

Among the big name brands, Facebook is the perhaps the most celebrated advocate of ‘hackathons’. It holds hackathons on a monthly basis, at which new ideas are born, people from different teams and departments intermingle and exchange ideas. This allows information and cooperation to circulate, and improves both internal communication and the ‘team’ culture of the company – and all in the space of 48 hours. For the participants, these hackathons are an opportunity to unleash their creativity in the fun atmosphere of an all-nighter, where the clock-is-ticking and the fuel of choice is Chinese food (a tradition dating back to Facebook’s days as a humble start-up). Such has been the success of these events, that very quickly other companies – including other giants such as Google, Apple and others started holding their own hackathons.

So what about airports?

As places of so much activity, information and interaction, airports are perhaps prime candidates to benefit from ‘hackathon culture’. The idea clearly excited a few airport operators in the past year or so, as even some initial inquiry has already yielded several case studies of European airport hackathons.

Following the success of the Dutch Open Hackathon last year in which Schiphol and KLM participated Albert van Veen, Chief Information Officer at Schiphol immediately saw the potential of exploring the possibility of a dedicated airport hackathon: “Sometimes, the market – developers and users of mobile apps – is better capable of serving the multiplicity of customer needs.”

During the summer, Aéroports de Paris and Schiphol Group joined forces for a joint hacking session. Their hackathon was called Hack & Fly and was divided into 2 stages: the launch night on 21 May followed by the hackathon itself from 5 to 7 June. On the launch night, 5 themes were proposed: Waiting/Queuing; Smart Airport; Transportation, Premium and Social. At the hackathon, both airport operators released application programming interfaces (APIs) exclusively for hackers. The hackers could choose to work on mobile, web, smart-watch and connected objects to tackle challenges within the allocated 48 hours. Hack & Fly sessions took place simultaneously in both Amsterdam and Paris, with a grand prize of a trip to San Francisco to attend a specialised hacking conference. There were also local prizes of city trips to Amsterdam and Paris and runner-up prizes of drones. A veritable creative storm took place over the 48 hours of the hackathon: 134 participants and 12 mentors in Amsterdam and 116 participants and 17 mentors in Paris. By the end, 22 projects had been developed in Amsterdam and 28 in Paris. The buzz (and transparency) on
social media was substantial – over 1,500
tweets from 296 contributors.

For its part, Aéroports de Paris is now
following up on the development of five
solutions. One of them is an application
that will alert staff to incidents by allowing
passengers to take a geolocated picture,
which in turn will help the airports organise
a quick response.

Schiphol and AdP were delighted with
the boost Hack & Fly gave to staff
motivation and team spirit at their airports – both
had no trouble motivating employees to
volunteer to participate & to help shepherd
some of the project teams. And needless
to say, as it was the first time a Hackathon
was held simultaneously between two
major airports, they both enjoyed the PR
halo of being pioneers.

Fatiha Saouli, press officer at Aéroports
de Paris is certainly won over: "It was an
intense moment and an incredible experi-
ence allowing to mix different cultures
and different age groups. We will certainly
organize a new event in the near future."

It’s not about size

However, one of the exciting things
about hackathon culture is that you don’t
have to be a big company to embrace it.
At the beginning of October, Cork Airport
in Ireland held its own hackathon, arrang-
ing the event as part of Ireland’s Start Up
Gathering, which drew start-ups and the
brightest minds in digital tech to a week of
entrepreneurial events in Ireland.

With the average preparation time
for hackathons typically taking around 3
months, Cork Airport managed to put it
together in just 6 weeks – a feat all the
more impressive given that it was their
first time. Their #flyhackfly hackathon had
over 50 participants, with 75% of them
coders. 9 hacks were pitched – all of
which were workable improvements to
airport travel experiences.

Kevin Cullinane, Head of
Communications at Cork Airport summed
up the airport’s thoughts on the event:
"It was a very worthwhile and positive
experience. We had huge buy in from our
Managing Director and the senior leader-
ship team, as well as support from our
operational colleagues on the two days."

Their hackathon also succeeded in
engaging quite a lot of media interest,
especially given the national focus on
entrepreneurship under the umbrella of
the Start Up Gathering.

Bright ideas up north

Most recently, Finavia’s Helsinki Airport
hosted a hackathon from 6 to 8 November,
with its main hub operator Finnair. The two
companies already enjoy a positive and
close working relationship in many areas –
all of which helps when co-organising an
event.

More than 100 participants took part in
their hackathon – a good mix of business
and user experience developers and cod-
ers. Over the 48 hours, there were a total
of 30 hacks proposed – with 3 of the best
being accepted.

Eero Knuutila, Head of Service
Development at Finavia is unabashed in
his enthusiasm for the exercise: “We have
seen some really exciting stuff that helps
us to think about the travel experience dif-
derently. This gives us also new ideas how
to communicate our messages differently
both externally and internally as an airport.

Members from our company management,
e.g. our Helsinki Airport director, dropped
by at the hackathon to experience the
‘buzz’ and see the presentations, and to me

Win-win-win

There is a win-win-win with hackathons
at the moment, which the early adopters
have definitely been enjoying: WIN 1: new
ideas for improving your airport; WIN 2:
Improved internal communications and bet-
ter team spirit at your airport; WIN 3: press
coverage highlighting how your airport is
open innovation to improve passenger/
traveller experience. Furthermore, we have
seen a surprising amount of interest and
enthusiasm demonstrated by hackathon
participants, to contribute to this change,”
says BeMeApp CEO Cyril Attia.

Aéroports de Paris and Schiphol Group joined forces for a joint
hacking session. Their hackathon was called Hack & Fly and was
divided into 2 stages: the launch night on 21 May followed by the
hackathon itself from 5 to 7 June.

Better stock up on the Red Bull and
add some books on coding to your
Christmas list!
MEB3 presence at European airports: Near four-fold increase in a decade

By Ralph Anker

The recent announcement from Lufthansa that it plans to end its Munich to Dubai service next April may put additional pressure on the European Commission to restrict market access to the Middle East Big 3 carriers (MEB3) namely Emirates, Etihad Airways and Qatar Airways, which the French and German governments allege operate with unfair subsidies (Emirates does not agree and has formally said so in letters to several governments).

But what nobody can dispute is the huge growth in MEB3 capacity to Europe in the last decade with all three carriers increasing their annual flights to Europe by 9-14,000 (or to 51,500 arriving flights to Europe combined in 2015).

Thanks to the increase in average aircraft size, the volume of annual arriving seats offered has risen by 360% from 3.6 million to 16.7 million. With its impressive fleet of A380s, Emirates is a widebody-only airline, increasing average aircraft size on European routes from 280 seats in 2005 to 400 in 2015. Indeed Emirates now offers 30% more seats on routes to Europe than Qatar Airways and Etihad Airways combined, with both of these airlines using a mix of narrow and widebodies, and only increasing their aircraft size by 35-40 seats.

Last year Dubai was the third-busiest international route from the UK with 5.2 million passengers (compared to Amsterdam, 8.2 million, and Dublin, 7.8 million). Doha and Abu Dhabi are far down the field in 41st and 52nd place with only just over one million annual passengers.

The UK is the biggest MEB3 European market with 88% more seats offered in 2015 than Germany. Aside from the UK,
where there are 2.6 million more seats than a decade ago, in Germany, Italy and France the rate of growth has been remarkably even, ranging from 1.2-1.7 million new one-way seats.

**Nearly 50 European airports served**

The pace of route growth among the MEB3 shows no sign of slowing. But while 48 airports are served across 28 countries, many EU member states are not served – there are no flights to Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia or Slovenia. However, Norwegian has begun competing with Finnair on Helsinki-Dubai services, suggesting that Emirates will soon follow.

It is worth noting that flydubai, the Dubai-based LCC which, like Emirates, is owned by the UAE Government, also operates to a growing number of destinations in Europe. These currently number 22, with all of them in either Central or Eastern Europe. Among EU countries Bratislava, Bucharest, Prague, Sofia and Zagreb are served. Using only 737-800s the airline’s longest sector to Europe is Prague, at just over 4,400 kilometres.

**European carriers growing Abu Dhabi services**

While the MEB3 carriers have been growing their European capacity each year, what about the European carriers serving the Abu Dhabi, Doha and Dubai markets? Analysis of scheduled capacity to these airports by airlines based in Europe for the last decade reveals that Dubai is by far the most popular airport with European airlines. However, since 2008 seat capacity to Dubai by these carriers has remained relatively stable and fell by 6% in 2015 to its lowest level since 2007. Conversely, capacity by Europe’s airlines to Abu Dhabi has grown steadily each year during the last decade, with a significant 24% growth in 2015. While Abu Dhabi has been working hard to attract more point-to-point traffic (and Etihad Airways has developed partnerships with a number of European airlines such as airberlin, Air Serbia and Alitalia), Doha has yet to emerge on the world stage as a significant destination in its own right. In 2015 only KLM, Lufthansa, Pegasus Airlines and Turkish Airlines among European carriers serve the Qatari capital non-stop from their home bases, with British Airways serving the market via Bahrain.
In view of the expected adoption of the new EU Aviation Package on 2 December, Augustin de Romanet, President of ACI EUROPE and President & CEO of Aéroports de Paris, met again with Violeta Bulc, the EU Transport Commissioner on 15 October. He was accompanied by Arnaud Feist, CEO of Brussels Airport Company, and Armando Brunini, CEO of Aeroporto di Napoli – both members of the Board of ACI EUROPE.

The 3 CEOs underlined ACI EUROPE’s support for the EC’s initiative to implement a new Aviation Package, as part of its new political priorities focused on “Jobs, Growth and Investment”, and stressed the need to ensure the strategic competitiveness of the aviation sector. In particular, they advocated that the new Aviation Package should focus on air connectivity, consumers and the economy. All of which is supported by one of the key findings of the ACI EUROPE Economic Impact of European Airports, conducted by InterVISTAS: +10% increase in connectivity is associated with +0.5% increase in GDP per capita.

Commissioner Bulc received the 3 CEOs warmly and spoke of how constructively many of Europe’s airports had engaged with her team during the previous months. The ensuing discussion included exchanges on airport capacity, safety, Open Skies, the Single European Sky and airport charges.

Augustin de Romanet summarised the urgency of the moment: “The Aviation Package is a unique opportunity to reset aviation policy with a strong focus on connectivity, consumers and the economy. The issues that need to be addressed are many, starting from our license to grow and the looming airport capacity crunch. They also include scrapping heavy and unfair national aviation taxes, securing access to emerging markets through Open Skies, delivering the Single European Sky and reducing regulatory cost inefficiencies – in particular within aviation security.”

On the occasion of meeting, the 3 CEOs also presented Commissioner Bulc with a specially designed poster, featuring key route development campaigns from more than 20 airport operators all over Europe. The #AirportsCompete poster was produced by ACI EUROPE and the Commissioner was delighted with it. The diversity and enthusiastic marketing efforts on display in the poster serve as a reminder of just how much market power many of Europe’s key airlines have, when negotiating airport charges with European airports.

On 12 November ACI EUROPE organised a special workshop on the implementation of the EU’s State Aid Rules for aviation and airports in particular. The workshop took place at their offices in Brussels, in cooperation with international law firm Mayer Brown. 55 representatives from airports all over Europe participated. Following on from the publication of new State Aid Guidelines by the European Commission (EC) last year, the workshop was designed to provide a better understanding of the issue, as well as practical guidance on how airports can comply with the new rules.

With this in mind, as well as providing legal knowledge and insights, the day included a special ‘break out’ working session, focusing on the technical challenges associated with securing operating aid. In particular, economic and financial consultants Oxera and AlixPartners provided practical guidance on how airports should put together 10-year business plans, and produce robust traffic forecasts.
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According to the latest EUROCONTROL Challenges to Growth study, Europe would need an equivalent of nine additional runways in the next 20 years. The same source forecasts that there will be 20 airports operating at the same levels as Heathrow currently does. Are we prepared for that?

For congested airports, with an appreciable proportion of large aircraft types in their traffic, or who will see this proportion increase, the European “Re-categorisation of ICAO Wake Turbulence Separation Minima on Approach and Departure” (RECAT-EU) solution is a way to increase runway throughput and efficiency, since it is directly interconnected with the separation minima applied.

The ICAO provisions have been fixed with three categories of aircraft (Light, Medium and Heavy) for over 40 years. Based on aircraft maximum take-off weight, this categorisation incorporates a range of different sized aircraft into each category, and as such leads to over-conservatism. The existing categorisation had been questioned even more with the introduction of the A380 into the ATM world. Meanwhile, EUROCONTROL together with its stakeholders has been researching to gain more knowledge about the wake vortex behaviour in the operational environment. The focus was both on wake generation and the effect of wake encounters on the following aircraft.

The result of this work, RECAT-EU divides the existing ICAO Heavy and
Controller feedback collected during ATC real-time simulation sessions, RECAT-EU should have a positive impact on the controller workload and offer more flexibility to manage the traffic.

The benefits assessment shows that major European airports can achieve around a 5% increase in capacity during peak traffic periods with the deployment of Medium categories into two (Upper and Lower), and formally creates a Super Heavy category, which includes the A380. This new categorisation allows reduction in separation by one nautical mile (Nm) for followers behind weaker wake generator types, or for followers with higher wake resistance, and a reduction of two nautical miles when both are combined.

Safety benefits are also provided for most vulnerable aircraft types, by increasing some separation minima and/or change of category grouping.

A comprehensive safety case had been developed by EUROCONTROL, covering a wake turbulence risk assessment based on more than 100,000 operational wake measurements. In October 2014, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) confirmed that the safety case provides assurance that the RECAT-EU wake turbulence separation scheme can be used by Member States as a basis to update the current schemes, meaning that we are now ready to move to deployment.

During the first quarter 2016, Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport will become the first European airport to operate RECAT-EU. The procedure itself is rather simple to deploy and it is very cost-efficient, requiring a minimum of technology change. Basically the local flight plan processing system needs to be updated so the controller would have the new aircraft category on the flight strips and on their traffic surveillance display. And, as suggested from the RECAT-EU. This represents, for an airport like Paris-CDG, up to 20 additional movements per day available in peak times when traffic is constrained.

The gain in runway throughput can increase further up to 8% as the overall fleet mix is expected to change towards the larger aircraft. RECAT-EU also delivers benefits on operational resilience with reduction in delay recovery and in cumulative delays from adverse conditions. The aggregation of these benefits through deployment at multiple airports is, of course, of interest to the Network Manager.

To this end, EUROCONTROL has assessed and identified 12 congested airports in Europe that could benefit significantly with the RECAT-EU deployment for arrival and/or departure traffic. Following expression of interest, the Agency is already in contact with some of them, expecting that from four to six airports would introduce the new procedures within the next five years.

EUROCONTROL is also working on further evolutions and will soon deliver a concept for using pair-wise separation minima (known as RECAT-2) as well as specifications for the ATC support tool needed for such operations. This tool will also support the application of time-based separations, enabling a further optimisation of runway throughput.

Airport traffic is growing again. The ATM network needs a safe, cost-efficient and quick solution such as RECAT-EU that will bring runway throughput enhancement benefits both for airports and the overall network.
ACI EUROPE launches Alcohol Economic Impact Online Calculator

Wondering about the true economic impact of your airport? Following the release of a study on the Economic Impact of European Airports last January, ACI EUROPE has just launched an Airport Economic Impact Online Calculator. Specially designed for ACI EUROPE’s members, the tool is accessible in the Members’ Room of the association’s website. Inês Rebelo reports.

The ACI EUROPE Economic Impact Online Calculator provides ACI EUROPE’s members with a customised estimate of the economic impact of their airport both in the country within which their airport is located as well as in nearby neighbouring countries, where relevant. “While the positive economic externalities associated with air transport are now well established, it is important to articulate what this means at a local level, for individual airports,” Donagh Cagney, Manager in charge of Economics at ACI EUROPE, states.

The results, which reflect the volume and nature of air traffic at each individual airport, are based on the direct, indirect, induced and catalytic economic impacts. In this way, the calculator is a powerful tool, containing the jobs and GDP contributions of all the airports in Europe with commercial traffic and for which there was sufficient data available. Cagney is keen to underline one of the main challenges of developing such a tool: “It was particularly challenging, devising a methodology to estimate the catalytic impact of individual airports – so the trade, investment, tourism and increased productivity associated with air links. We worked with SEO Economic Research to devise an approach that reflects the actual characteristics, not only of the airport in question, but also of its surrounding catchment area – so for example the area’s population or level of GDP.”

The methodology behind the calculator is explained in two core economic studies: the Economic Impact of European Airports – A Critical Catalyst to Economic Growth (Inter VISTAS, January 2015) and Regional Economic Impact of Airports (SEO Aviation Economics, October 2015). Those wishing to use the online calculator are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with this methodology as well as to carefully read the Guide to the tool, which explains how the results should be properly used. As Cagney points out: “These days it is very important to have numbers which are not just credible but also transparent. It is vital that airports are open with third parties as to how the results were derived, what the figures mean and which impacts are included or not. With this in mind, ACI EUROPE has produced an accompanying ‘Guide to the Calculator’, which serves two functions. Firstly, it allows airports to educate themselves about the tool. And secondly, it allows third parties to scrutinise the methodology that underpins the tool, which in turn empowers them to engage with individual airports in an informed way.”

Although the Online Calculator is not a substitute for a full, detailed and tailored economic impact assessment, it represents an important tool to highlight the wider positive impact of an airport on national economies. The data powering the Online Calculator will be updated in due course, as appropriate.

To find out more, visit www.aci-europe.org and click on the ‘Members’ Room’ button to register/login and access the Airport Economic Impact Online Calculator.
James Cherry has been President and CEO of Aéroports de Montréal since 2001, and is a member of its Board of Directors. He is also the Immediate Past Chair of ACI North America, and he was Chair of ACI World in 2009. He gave Samantha Jenkins a briefing on Aéroports de Montréal’s rising passenger numbers, international route growth, and implementation of advanced technologies.

Developing Aéroports de Montréal’s ‘emerging international hub’

A Montréal native, James Cherry has a wealth of experience spanning more than 30 years in the international aerospace, defence, and rail sectors. His background includes senior executive positions at Bombardier, Oerlikon Aerospace, CAE Electronics, and Alstom Transport.

Cherry has been President and CEO of Aéroports de Montréal (ADM) since 2001, as well as a member of its Board of Directors. Under his leadership ADM, which operates Montréal-Trudeau and Montréal-Mirabel airports, is committed to delivering advanced technologies, sustainable development, and passenger and route growth, as well as strengthening Montréal-Trudeau’s position as an international hub. The figures certainly highlight the success of this strategy – Montréal-Trudeau alone has seen passenger traffic rise by 4.6% this year, with throughput expected to surpass 15 million; the percentage of transit passengers has risen from 6% to 20% in recent years; and the airport now serves over 135 non-stop destinations offered by 30 airlines. Air China recently launched a strategically significant direct service between Beijing and Montréal, which follows the signing of a ‘sister airport’ partnership between ADM and Beijing Capital International Airport, under which the two airport authorities will strengthen cooperation and share best practices. Meanwhile, Iceland’s Icelandair and WOW Air will serve Montréal-TRU, helping to spur our airline interest.

In May 2016, ADM is also lobbying for the construction of a modern, all-electric light rail system to connect Montréal-Trudeau with downtown Montréal. Cherry is adamant that such a world-class rail link is “critical” to the future success of Montréal-Trudeau in creating a “world-class international airport.”

Pioneering approach

Implementation of the latest technologies is central to ADM’s innovative approach. Montréal-Trudeau has been a pioneer in self-service check-in, self-service bag drop and bag tagging, electronic monitoring of passengers and baggage, and automated border control (ABC).

“The airport has common-use check-in kiosks in all sectors, and in its trans-border sector it offers a generic bag drop for all passengers, virtually eliminating queuing,” Cherry enthused. “Today, the vast majority of Montréal-Trudeau passengers check-in using a self-service option, including a high proportion online.”

Cherry also articulated a commitment to mobile technologies and modular technologies, such as the airport’s automated baggage room for outbound flights, which is unique to North America. Montréal-Trudeau is also one of the first Canadian airports to fully deploy a hi-tech, self-service automated border control system. The ABC kiosks are installed alongside a number of CANPASS and NEXUS self-service kiosks, which Cherry noted “allows us to significantly increase the number of arriving passengers we can process at the same time.”

One area in which Cherry is particularly proud is the airport’s high achievements in carbon reduction. ADM is a signatory to the Aviation Industry Commitment to Action on Climate Change, while Cherry was Chair of ACI World, and is one of the few airports in North America with an ISO 14001-certified Environment Management System. Initiatives at Montréal-Trudeau have seen 43,984 tons of CO2 saved between 2004 and 2012, energy consumption reduced by an estimated 40% between 2001 and 2010, and standardised greenhouse gas emissions reduced by over 75% – all under Cherry’s leadership. These efforts have led to Montréal-Trudeau being accredited at the ‘Reduction’ level of ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation.

Montréal-Trudeau now produces a state-of-the-art ethylene glycol recovery, and recrystallisation and reuse of the glycol for de-icing. This will significantly reduce the airport’s environmental footprint while reducing de-icing charges for airlines. “This facility makes us a world-leader in the recycling of ethylene glycol and is an important step in our efforts to promote sustainable development in all aspects of our operations,” Cherry said.

Cherry’s progressive approach is seeing Montréal-Trudeau expand its role as a continental gateway and a dynamic hub for passenger traffic between Europe and the Americas.
Definitely! If Sabiha Gökçen comes to market we would like to buy it. TAV Airports want its foothold in Istanbul.” Dr Sani Şener, CEO and founder of TAV Airports Holding, is talking to Airport Business in his office in TAV’s headquarters at Istanbul Atatürk Airport. He is explaining his group’s determination to maintain its position as the operator of one of Istanbul’s major airports after it withdrew from the bidding process for Istanbul New Airport in 2013.

“We are a global company and there is scope for TAV’s enterprise everywhere”

An interview with Dr Sani Şener, CEO and founder of TAV Airports Holding. By Paul Hogan

TAV had not waited long after this event to show its future aspirations. In the autumn of 2014 TAV moved to acquire a 40% holding in Sabiha Gökçen International Airport when this was relinquished by Limak (itself a major shareholder in the new airport currently under construction). At that time ‘Sabiha’s’ other main shareholder, Malaysia Airports Holdings, decided to activate its ‘first right of refusal’ to buy the Limak shares and it now wholly-owns Sabiha.

But this hasn’t changed Şener’s mind: “If I were them I would sell, it’s tough for the Malaysians not having a Turkish partner – I know this as we operate in many countries and I think it’s absolutely fundamental to have a local stakeholder. But we’re in contact with the Malaysians, and I am sure that they will eventually sell.”

In reality such a move for Şener’s TAV would be much more than just a “foothold” – Istanbul’s second airport is thundering along with sustained 20% growth; it will easily sail past the 30 million passenger threshold next year and is charging towards 50 million by around 2020. Şener agrees that, like other major cities – and at 14 million Istanbul is by far Europe’s largest – Istanbul needs more
than one airport to serve its geographical sprawl as well as its O&D and transit traffic—both of which continue to average double-digit growth.

**TAV buys into “St Tropez of Turkey”**

Meanwhile, outside of Istanbul, TAV continues to grow its portfolio both within Turkey and internationally. In October it won the tender to take over the international terminal of Milas-Bodrum Airport where it has also managed the domestic terminal since last year. The bid price of €717 million is for a 20-year lease but, while the international terminal has a modest current 1.4 million throughput, Şener has high hopes for creating a transformation on the scale of Antalya: “Bodrum is the St Tropez of Turkey, it is wealthy, it is growing fast and it will be the fourth-largest city in Turkey by 2025.”

Just like Antalya before it, Şener believes airport growth at Bodrum will be fed by resort growth with considerable incentives given to developers to build new hotels—possibly 50-year ‘rent holidays’ on development land—particularly on the coastline stretching north of Bodrum towards Didim. Consequently, Şener sees Bodrum as a considerable hope: “We expect the passenger traffic to grow to 10 million in 10 years—3 times the size it is now. We are going to do a lot to develop routes and direct flights in association with the local tourist authorities, hotels and resorts, we are planning to make Bodrum a centre of attraction which will be popular for all 12 months of the year.”

**Is TAV joining the Turkish push into Africa?**

Outside of Turkey many Turkish enterprises have joined their government-sponsored push to invest in Africa, led by the high-profile charge of Turkish Airlines, which will end this year with 48 destinations across the continent. DHMI, the Turkish state airports organisation (and ultimate airport landlord of all 55 Turkish airports) has also announced aspirations to partner with Turkey’s airport operators and construction companies, typified by TAV, to export Turkey’s successful public-private-partnership (PPP) airport model to Africa.

Şener is both cautious about the scale of opportunity in Africa but, at the same time, explains that TAV is pursuing a real presence. “We have been deeply involved in North Africa with our concessions in Tunisia. Elsewhere TAV has entered into new ventures though our service companies—most notably we are operating an airport lounge at Nairobi. These market-entry devices are critical to finding our way and learning about how to work in new countries and with specific new partners, especially in Africa, where you need a great deal of experience—as well as expertise.”

The expansion of TAV’s service companies—everything from the lounges, through to ground handling, duty free, F&B, and loyalty programmes—means that TAV now operates in some form or other on 70 airports worldwide. “We are a global company, and we are going to continue to pursue growth opportunities across the world which enhance the value of both TAV’s airport operations and service companies.”

For further example of this “everywhere” Şener gives the recent successes of its duty free retail subsidiary, ATU.

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**Şener’s selection: Most-desired routes at TAV’s airports**

- **Ankara Esenboğa Airport:** “The Turkish capital gets all the government traffic but there is considerable scope for more links to the main European cities—London, Amsterdam, Berlin and Vienna.”

- **Skopje Alexander The Great Airport, Macedonia:** “Skopje is already a successful Wizz Air base, but we think there is considerable opportunity for more low cost operators.”

- **Madinah, Saudi Arabia:** “More Asian routes—it has plenty of charters, but we would like some scheduled services.”

- **Zagreb, Croatia:** “New York!”
which has just made an important entry into the US market by the winning the duty free tender at Houston George Bush Airport.

Şener reports that ATU is already doing well in Houston “and there is huge room for growth – the Americans are good at science, research and product development, but we have excellent airport service solutions, and we are clearly very interested in being a duty free partner at other US airports. ATU has Heinemann as a shareholder – one of the best duty free shop operators in the world – it’s a big advantage!”

While airport services will continue to play a range of roles in TAV, contributing to the airports directly run by TAV, and opening the doors for new international markets such as Africa and the US, Şener also maintains these activities are of crucial shareholder value and make a significant contribution to TAV’s earnings - he estimates that F&B generates $200 million to TAV Airports turnover, while $400 million comes from duty free activities, and a further $200 million from ground handling.

\textbf{Relations with ADP}

TAV Construction is 49% held by ADPM – the international management arm of Aéroports de Paris – while the holding in TAV Airports is 38%. “We work very well together – they structured their company to a culture of international growth over 40 years ago when they first became involved in airport design all over the world, whereas our core contribution is our construction heritage. We are both top-four European airport operators and together we have 250 million passengers, which easily makes us the largest airport operational partners in the world with unrivalled knowledge and experience. We do things separately, but we also do things together – we each have a stake in the joint venture operating Zagreb Airport, we bid together for the operating rights of the central terminal building of New York’s LaGuardia Airport, and right now we are bidding with ADP again for a PPP for the development and operation of five airports in the Philippines.”

\textbf{23 important partnerships}

In addition to ADP the web of partnerships becomes complex at times: “In all we have 23 important partnerships in all our businesses” – besides ADP and Heinemann, significant relationships include those with Turkish Airlines in Turkish Ground Services, Saudi Öger and Al Rajhi groups in Saudi Arabia, TAV is also involved with Bouygues in Zagreb, while the Pan African Infrastructure Development Fund and World Bank’s International Finance Corporation has an important strategic shareholding in TAV Tunisia (which it defines as central to IFC’s published objectives of “fostering sustainable economic growth in developing countries by supporting private sector development.”) All of these linkages stand in addition to core concession partners covering 14 different airports.

“When you have businesses like these you have to grow them. What we are doing is simple – there is diversity but there is also integration – all TAV Airport businesses are linked to each other for a competitive advantage – and there is lots of competition after all.”

Indeed the competitiveness and capability of the TAV portfolio of eight diversified service companies was recently boosted when the TAV Academy was awarded ICAO-certification. “We have always trained people in-house, but long ago we saw a gap in the market – a chance for a training institute – and now it has ICAO recognition along with only 16 other private sector companies in the world authorised to provide certified civil aviation training; it is also one of just 15 ICAI-recognised global training centres.” Besides its ability to provide training on certified roles “we have a total capacity to train anyone from our very large intellectual platform,” says Şener, who relates that it has most recently coached Chinese airport executives in the field of route development.

As a result of his “across the world” view, Şener agrees that TAV’s markets, and what it does in those theatres, is increasingly diversified. “But we always remain centred and connected with the airport business we know well. And our spread does not mean that we are not realistic and cautious: Africa, Asia and Asia Pacific will all continue with double-digit growth in the coming years, whereas Europe and America are saturated and probably manage mainly 4% – but there is scope for TAV’s enterprise everywhere.”
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Security is, of course, an integral part of the travelling process, and with strict guidelines in place it is crucial that airports have a seamless system to identify security threats in hold baggage, while maintaining an exemplary passenger experience and efficiency. SureScan Corporation, an emerging leader and global company, brings advanced explosive detection technology to the forefront of the security marketplace. Its Explosive Detection System (EDS) – the x1000 Multi-Energy CT EDS Stationary Gantry - is TSA-certified, and in November also achieved European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Explosive Detection System (EDS) Standard 3.

“One, or both, of these approvals is required at most international airports,” explained LeeAnn Levesque, President and CEO, SureScan Corporation. “These approvals demonstrate independent verification that the x1000 provides the highest levels of detection performance with acceptable false alarm rates. The approvals make the x1000 one of the few scanners suitable for most airports around the world, and the only scanner with multi-energy detection.”

The baggage screening system uses multi-energy detectors, fixed position X-ray sources, and a single moving belt with a large rectangular tunnel throughout. Its advanced reconstruction algorithms perform 3D CT reconstruction, and the design allows for estimation of both density, and effective atomic number analysis. Levesque explained that by utilising multi-energy detectors, the estimation of effective atomic number “is more precise than dual energy technology.” The x1000 uniquely uses multi-energy to enable the detection of emerging threats, while maintaining lower false alarm levels. “Many ‘home-made’ or improvised explosive devices utilise common chemicals. We have seen extremist groups increasingly seek to leverage these threats, as the constituent materials may be easier for them to obtain than traditional commercial or military explosives,” Levesque said. “These chemicals require different, more capable algorithms to detect. Multi-energy detectors work in a similar way to spectroscopic detectors, allowing a more precise estimate of effective atomic number.” Once the systems are installed at the airport, the local security authority manages the equipment in line with local laws, which vary by airport and country.

SureScan is also a key research partner of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Earlier this year it was awarded an additional US$1 million in government funding for research into the advancement of explosive detection technology. The funding has allowed SureScan to explore new high-resolution reconstruction algorithms, and work to stretch the boundaries of performance on fixed source CT EDS designs.

The x1000 is suited to the airport environment and is designed with a baggage-handling interface in mind. Levesque highlighted a multitude of benefits for airports, including lower power consumption than competitive solutions, capability of increased detection to meet stricter standards; an efficient footprint; and no rotating gantry resulting in lower lifecycle costs. It can also increase belt speed, and consequently capacity, over the system’s 10-15 year lifecycle.

SureScan systems have been utilised for data collection activities at New York-JFK International Airport, and Boston Logan Airport. The new ECAC EDS Standard 3 has opened up a wealth of potential for the x1000 worldwide, and at this year’s ACI Airport Exchange, SureScan aims to increase brand awareness to the international airport security market. “Due to the EU’s mandates that all EU airports upgrade their primary screening of hold baggage between 2014 and 2020, SureScan Corporation sees a great deal of CT EDS upgrade requirements, as well as several new terminals and airports in Europe and around the world that will require TSA certified and/or ECAC EDS Standard 3 scanners,” Levesque concluded.
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Vancouver Airport Authority first introduced its self-service BorderXpress machines in 2009. There are now over 750 kiosks at airports across Canada, the US, and the Caribbean, with plans to expand to airports worldwide. Linda Schucroft, Director of Innovative Travel Solutions, outlined the future of BorderXpress to Samantha Jenkins.

BorderXpress going global with streamlined border control solution

Providing an efficient and quick border control solution is a vital part of the modern airport. Travellers seek a streamlined process and welcoming arrival, a trend Vancouver Airport Authority is embracing. Its world-first self-service BorderXpress kiosks have been shown to significantly increase international arrival traffic and reduce wait times, without the need to expand terminal facilities.

BorderXpress is in use at 25 airports across Canada, the US and the Caribbean, serving more than 75 million passengers at over 750 kiosks. The launch of a new kiosk, which is complete and ready to be installed, will enable more countries to feel the benefits of self-service border control. BorderXpress Global features an updated and modern design, complete with additional biometric capabilities, and can be programmed to provide service in up to 37 languages. The kiosk can be configured to meet the immigration needs of virtually any government in the world.

The new BorderXpress Global kiosk has an updated and modern design, complete with additional biometric capabilities. The kiosk is fully accessible to all travellers and can be programmed to provide service in up to 37 languages.

The US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) BorderXpress configuration, for example, includes US and Canadian passport holders, US Permanent Residents, travellers from visa-waiver countries, and travellers with a US-issued visa.

The unique two-step process enables passengers to complete the data entry function at the kiosk, which sends encrypted information to a border control agency. Within seconds, the government response is returned and the traveller can progress to a border control officer who verifies the receipt.

“YVR’s BorderXpress kiosks automate the administrative functions of border control, helping to speed up the process by up to 89% with no pre-registration or cost to passengers,” said Linda Schucroft, Director of Innovative Travel Solutions, Vancouver Airport Authority. “This increased efficiency, travellers arriving at BorderXpress-equipped airports experience a much better arrival experience with shorter wait times and less congestion.”

Schucroft highlighted two airports where BorderXpress kiosks have produced exceptional results. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport has seen the average border wait time decrease by 25% between 2013 and 2015 despite significant passenger growth, and average wait times have been reduced by 31.4% at Chicago O’Hare International Airport.

The figures are certainly impressive, and the continued commitment to innovation at Vancouver Airport Authority has presented myriad opportunities for BorderXpress. The latest airports to install BorderXpress kiosks include Portland International Airport, Salt Lake City International Airport, and New York-JFK (Terminal 8). Earlier this year, BorderXpress was also implemented at Canada Place Cruise Terminal at Port Metro Vancouver, which Schucroft enthused is the world’s first self-service border control solution at a seaport.

“We want every border processing facility, whether that is an airport, a seaport, or a land border crossing to offer their passengers a seamless arrivals process with the help of BorderXpress,” she said.

Indeed, with a proven track record, strong market presence and innovative approach, the scope for BorderXpress to broaden its international portfolio is looking very promising. “We have done very well within North America and the Caribbean, securing the most market share, which has been fantastic,” Schucroft concluded. “We are currently working with a number of government agencies and airport authorities in Europe, Asia and Latin America to introduce our technology to their countries and major airports.”
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Miguel Leitmann, CEO of Vision-Box, interviewed by Samantha Jenkins, on how Automated Border Control can provide “a huge leap forward in the passenger experience”.

**Optimising biometrics as “single token to improve passenger experience”**

The expansion of Automated Border Control (ABC) solutions is helping provide a seamless, secure, passenger-centric experience. Today, Vision-Box has already implemented more than 1,000 Automated Border Control (ABC) solutions at land, sea and air borders around the world.

The border control portfolio aimed at airports, airlines and immigration authorities includes solutions addressing a variety of business scenarios, including security checkpoints, and self-boarding and ABC biometric eGates. “Every second, millions of images are being captured and processed by Vision-Box systems, installed right at the heart of the most prestigious organisations who trust our biometric identity and digital video management solutions for their critical applications,” says Miguel Leitmann, CEO of Vision-Box.

Vision-Box operates automated borders at more than 60 international airports, with over 3,000 electronic identity systems deployed across the globe, and Europe can be considered the world reference in ABC implementation. “Our eGates are helping airports and border control authorities in The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, and Denmark, among other countries,” explains Leitmann. “With our global presence and continuous expansion, we are targeting many more international airports and borders, not only to implement ABC solutions, but also broad, integrated ID management solutions that will improve crucial security patterns on a worldwide scale.”

Outside of Europe, one of Vision-Box’s reference projects is the nationwide rollout of ABC eGates at eight major international airports in Australia. Australia’s Customs and Border Protection Services have trialled the ABC technology at Brisbane Airport.

In Brazil, Vision-Box has deployed ABC eGates – as well as Bar-Coded Boarding Pass eGates at the security check-point area – at São Paulo-Guarulhos International Airport, which process over 40,000 passengers daily.

Several international US airports, notably Los Angeles, Miami, Las Vegas, Orlando, Boston, Atlanta, San Diego, Tampa, and Philadelphia, have all also employed Automated Passport Control (APC) kiosks. All of the products in the Vision-Box border control portfolio are linked together through its unique IT platform ‘vb i-shield’, which enables the implementation of an advanced border management system and integrates with advanced digital video management solutions, intelligent biometric and biographic search engines, and danger management functionalities.

Leitmann highlights: “Our solutions are playing a very important social role: in modernising identity processes, making it easier; in improving security levels in border controls, discouraging fraud or illegal immigration; in improving information management; in facilitating travel for legitimate travellers, providing them with a positive travel experience.”

**Self-service trend**

Regular readers will recall our report on the launch of Aruba Happy Flow in the Summer issue of Airport Business. This innovative two-year pilot project serves as a pre-clearance initiative between Aruba and The Netherlands. Happy Flow uses facial recognition technology as the basis of a single passenger token, which recognises passengers at every step of their journey from check-in to boarding.

Vision-Box is the lead contractor on the project, provides the Happy Flow infrastructure, and will showcase Happy Flow at this year’s ACI Airport Exchange. Updating Airport Business on progress since our initial briefing, Leitmann explains: “Happy Flow is about using a single token to improve the passenger experience, and at the same time all the airport stakeholders increase security and efficiency. Airports are intensifying the modernisation of their infrastructure and self-service is the trend that the airport of the future is following.”

In the first six months of the project, over 5,600 passengers from 26 countries have used Happy Flow. “The potential for Happy Flow to be implemented in worldwide airports is massive,” Leitmann adds. “KLM and Schiphol Group are already undertaking a feasibility study on how Happy Flow could be implemented at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.”

In future, there could be a broader goal of expanding the pre-clearance to all 26 Schengen member countries and, according to Leitmann: “There’s no technical reason why it should not be used by other passengers, other airlines and other airports. It’s a question of orchestration.”

Looking ahead, the Happy Flow mobile check-in app will allow passengers to check-in, enroll their biometrics once, provide their Advance Passenger Information (API) early, and authenticate their document before arriving at the airport to be able to use Happy Flow without stopping at the check-in kiosk.
More than 1,000 of Vision-Box’s Automated Border Control (ABC) kiosks and passenger experience solutions have been implemented at land, sea, and air borders around the world, and it operates in more than 60 international airports with over 3,000 electronic identity systems.

**Future challenges**

Vision-Box has a constant drive for innovation and has identified four key challenges. The first of these is automating border control processes through ABC technology in combination with Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) and Passenger Name Registration (PNR). “The results of widespread ABC implementation are remarkable, as it has proved to deliver benefits to all parties involved in the process,” notes Leitmann. “Nonetheless, totally automated processes in airports and border control points is where the greater challenge remains: generalised self-service processes based on paperless travel and touchless interactions.”

Leitmann says the next challenge is the integration of borders at both a national and international level, followed by taking ABC to the next level: “Biometric-enabled ABC solutions may leverage projects that will enhance global security and facilitation, such as the implementation of Smart Borders, Entry Exit Systems (EES), Registered Traveller Programmes (RTP), pre-clearance initiatives, and more to come.”

The fourth challenge, according to Leitmann, is facilitating travel: “While technology can improve processes and overall security, it is crucial that innovative ABC solutions take into consideration the human factor. ABC solutions should be carefully designed to be attractive, engaging and ergonomic, even proactively adjusting to the traveller. Software interfaces should be intuitive and friendly, providing relevant instructions and constant feedback to users.”

**“End-to-end solution to transform passenger journey”**

Looking ahead with a holistic view, Vision-Box is investing in other groundbreaking initiatives, including end-to-end passenger experience solutions to improve passenger flow, and pre-clearance initiatives to enhance the collaboration between countries and improve overall security.

“With a long track record and experience in Automated Border Control and passenger experience, we are certain that self-service is the approach that will become the standard in the coming years. Vision-Box is helping airports around the world to improve passenger processing and it is already anticipating the future with the definition of an end-to-end solution that will transform the passenger journey into a sequence of user-centric service touch points,” Leitmann concludes.
Self-service initiatives play a key part in enhancing the passenger experience, while helping airports to increase the capacity of existing terminal facilities. Borry Vrieling, Founder and Managing Director, eezeetags, described the advantages of using self-service bag tags to Samantha Jenkins.

Self-tagging an “integral part of the future”

Self-service technologies are increasingly prevalent within airports, and self-tagging is one initiative that is experiencing a surge in airports globally. Each self-service initiative has the same aim – to increase terminal capacity, improve the passenger experience, reduce operational costs, and optimise passenger revenue.

This ethos rings true for eezeetags, which offers high-quality bag tags and proudly declares itself as “the future of self-tagging”. Over the last five years, eezeetags has become a proven technology and is being rolled out in airports all over the world. It is present in several airports in Europe, including Amsterdam Schiphol, Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Southampton, Manchester, Belfast, and Luxembourg, and there are plans to expand further into Europe in 2016. eezeetags will also be trialling the tags at airports across the US and Asia, with Seattle-Tacoma Airport confirmed to trial the tags from January 2016.

Most recently, eezeetags have been rolled out in London Gatwick’s North Terminal. “We are very proud to say that just recently, in close cooperation with Materna, we became part of the rollout of what will become the biggest self-service bag drop application in the world at Gatwick Airport,” stated Borry Vrieling, Founder and Managing Director, eezeetags.

Initially the tags were introduced exclusively for easyJet passengers, but from Spring 2016 the tags will be rolled out alongside 48 self-service baggage drop kiosks, which are being installed as common use application.

In combination with a self-service bag drop process, eezeetags create a seamless bag drop experience for the passenger, and provide flexibility for every stakeholder, including airports, airlines, and self-service bag drop vendors. Vrieling explained that bag drop installation vendors actively promote eezeetags because they recognise the benefits of using the tags for the full self-service application. “What eezeetags do is guarantee the airport or airline that the tag will not be the weakest link in the total application. I am confident to claim that eezeetags helps every bag drop application, independent of bag drop supplier or system, and it lives up to the expected KPIs in the business case. I always name this the 1+1=3 effect,” he said.

eezeetags have no backing that needs to be pulled away to expose the adhesive, resulting in a straightforward application and less wastage. Instead, each tag has a “magic adhesive” that sticks to itself and nothing else, ensuring that they are not tagged in the wrong way. The benefits of using eezeetags are myriad – for the customer, they are easy to apply and easy to remove; and for the airports, they are strong enough to withstand baggage handling systems.

The figures reflect the simplicity of the design – 20 million passengers used eezeetags in 2015 alone. Airports, too, showcase positive results in terms of increasing passenger capacity, a smaller footprint, and without the need for more staff. Vrieling also highlighted that as the word gets round, airlines and airports are recommending eezeetags in their self-service bag drop project descriptions. “Self-service bag drop will be a reality in the near future and eezeetags will become an integral part of the future, although the future will be a more hybrid one,” Vrieling said. “Home printed bag tags will be used, permanent bag tags will be used, and terminal printed bag tags will be used. eezeetags will become passengers, airports, airlines, kiosks and bag drop vendors preferred terminal printed bag tag.”
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The opening of Hamad International Airport (HIA) heralded an exciting new chapter in Qatar’s aviation industry, and it is indeed an important economic kingpin for the country. Qatar is going through a rapid process of development, has a rich cultural and historical heritage, and is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. “Our government sees this evolution as a complete equation: to grow the economy, you also need to grow the facilities and infrastructure. Hamad International Airport is an important part of that equation, and was created in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030,” says Badr Al Meer, Chief Operating Officer at HIA.

The eyes of the industry were on HIA on the $16 billion facility’s full commercial opening in May 2014. The unique approach to its development saw national carrier Qatar Airways play a lead role in HIA’s design and delivery, and its impressive traffic performance since opening can largely be attributed to the airline’s rapid growth. HIA handled 28 million passengers in its first year of operation, and expects that figure to reach 30 million by the end of 2015. This can largely be attributed to the rapid growth of national carrier Qatar Airways. “The airport was also built to support the continuing growth of Qatar Airways, which has introduced eight new destinations in 2015 and has already announced six for next year,” says Al Meer. “It is one of the world’s fastest-growing airlines and has added multiple new aircraft over the past 18 months, including the A350 for which it was the global launch customer, and its bespoke A380.”

HIA is, of course, competing with two similarly ambitious and fast-growing hubs in neighbouring Dubai and Abu Dhabi. While Dubai, in particular, has become a destination in its own right, the majority of passengers at all three airports are transiting. Although built to facilitate Qatar Airways’ growth, Al Meer expresses a desire to expand HIA’s hub function and attract new airlines. “Our dual advantage of the country’s growing economy and being conveniently located within an eight-hour flight for more than two-thirds of the global population, provides a distinct benefit for those airlines considering a new route,” he says. “Since our travelling public in the country and region is multicultural, it opens opportunities for a range of airlines to develop routes to Doha.”

“HIA is not just a travel hub, but offers an overall travel experience with our core focus being on passenger engagement. We aim to redefine the passenger experience with high levels of investment in facilities and services.”

HIA is exhibiting at ACI Airport Exchange as a platform “to showcase our state-of-the-art services and facilities,” explains Al Meer. “At the heart of this is a focus on the passenger experience. While the 70 shops, 30 food & beverage outlets, Vitality Spa, and wellbeing and fitness centre, are all part of this, Al Meer says the development of mobile applications and strong digital engagement is of key importance. Free WiFi is available throughout the airport, which also has a “HIA Qatar” app. It engages with travellers through social media, with almost 50,000 likes on Facebook, and a similar number of followers on Twitter (@HIAQatar), and also Instagram.

“HIA is not just a travel hub, but offers an overall travel experience with our core focus being on passenger engagement. We aim to redefine the passenger experience with high levels of investment in facilities and services,” states Al Meer.

Looking ahead, approval has been granted for the launch of the second phase of expansion by the airport’s steering committee – an important stepping stone that will see capacity increased to over 50 million passengers. The design contract is set to be awarded by the end of 2015, so details on what phase two will involve remain unclear, but we do know it will include two new concourses – D and E. The desire, Al Meer says, is to offer a “unique passenger experience that helps redefine the role of a modern airport.”
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Maximising capacity of the future airport

With passenger numbers expected to rise significantly in the coming years, maximising airport capacity is vital. The Safegate Group offers a unique solution, focused on increasing throughput using existing infrastructure without the need for development. Meric Döner, General Manager Turkey, Safegate Group, spoke to Samantha Jenkins.

The Safegate vision is clear – to provide a solution for airports that allows them to increase throughput and maximise capacity, without the need for additional infrastructure. “This is made possible by letting all parts of the airport work together as one unit,” stated Meric Döner, General Manager Turkey. “That way the airport is able to unlock its full potential, increase the throughput, and as a result get more, and safer, aircraft movements. This brings significant savings and earning potential from improved safety, increased efficiency and capacity, and reduced fuel consumption, as well as fewer emissions and a cleaner environment.”

Safegate’s objective is to provide the airport industry with efficient solutions for more and safer aircraft movements. Among its recent developments is an airport in the Middle East, due to be announced in the near future. Safegate will help the airport to be completely weather independent, and increase capacity by five times under LVP (Low Visibility Procedure) conditions.

Airports Consortium’s (SEAC) concept to ‘Follow the Greens’, the SESAR European Airports Consortium’s (SEAC) concept to speed up the taxing procedure of aircraft to and from the runway system. Safegate recognises this concept, which centres on doing more with less, without investing in infrastructure. “Different trials have proven that fuel consumptions can be reduced by as much as 40% and turnaround times can be shortened by as much as five minutes. We really look forward to helping these airports to turn their plans into reality,” Döner concluded.

The Safegate vision is to provide a solution for airports that allows them to increase throughput and maximise capacity, without the need for additional infrastructure.

Airport traffic is expected to grow at significant rates over the next 15 years, and managing the full capacity of airports is vital. At this year’s ACI Airport Exchange, Safegate plans to show airports how they can reach full potential. “With perfect design and operation you can handle 60 movements per runway,” explained Döner. “Most airports today manage around 40 movements. We can certainly help them to close that gap at a fraction of the cost compared to the investment in new infrastructure.”

At the heart of this, Döner said, is the need for a changed mindset. The idea is that airports can do more with what they have – reducing costs, and maximising environmental freedom – using an integrated solution. Air traffic controllers, for example, can use Safegate’s integrated solutions and world class CONOPS in the tower to get information about the fastest route from touchdown to gate. They get full status awareness of equipment, full control over aircraft and vehicle positions, and fewer planes waiting either at the gate, in holding positions, queuing for take-off, or circling in the air for landing.

Safegate also provides expertise in airport lighting solutions on the airfield, combined with the knowledge to solve runway incursion, limited throughput, and maintenance challenges. “80% of airport accidents occur at the apron and gate area. Having a tool guiding an aircraft actively to its correct position, such as providing the pilot with instinctive signals using our 3D A-VDGS (Advanced Visual Docking Guidance System), prevents these accidents,” Döner added.

One notable reference is Hobart International Airport, which was the first to install an LED approach lighting system as part of its major runway and taxiway resurfacing project. “The challenge for Hobart International Airport was to find an efficient and cost-saving solution that would serve the airport’s needs well into the future. Safegate demonstrated the significant financial and environmental benefits of a low power airfield lighting system utilising the latest intelligent LED light technologies,” Döner described.

Looking ahead, the focus will be on the ‘Follow the Greens’, the SESAR European Airports Consortium’s (SEAC) concept to speed up the taxing procedure of aircraft to and from the runway system. Safegate recognises this concept, which centres on doing more with less, without investing in infrastructure. “Different trials have proven that fuel consumptions can be reduced by as much as 40% and turnaround times can be shortened by as much as five minutes. We really look forward to helping these airports to turn their plans into reality,” Döner concluded.
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The innovative energy-absorbing material utilized for Runway Safe greenEMAS® is a lightweight aggregate foam made from recycled glass.

The foam glass is brought out to the site as a loose fill material, poured in place, leveled to the right height and finally covered with the permanent cover layer, facilitating fast installation and easy maintenance. And, being a silica product, the Runway Safe foam glass is environmentally safe, non-flammable, and waterproof.

The Runway Safe greenEMAS® arresting performance has been thoroughly evaluated through full-scale testing, high-fidelity computer modeling, and aircraft deceleration predictions. Based on the validated models, the system can be designed to accommodate varying aircraft and safety area configurations.

Simply put, wherever there’s a need for increased runway safety, Runway Safe greenEMAS® provides a solution – tailor-made, sustainable, cost-efficient, and easy to install and maintain.

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Runway Safe has produced the world's greenest aircraft arresting bed, made from recycled glass. Anders Lundmark, CEO Runway Safe, outlined the unique solution to Samantha Jenkins.

Aircraft arresting systems go green

Aircraft arresting systems provide an effective overrun solution when a runway end safety area is not possible. Runway Safe is the producer of greenEMAS – the world’s first environmentally friendly, FAA-approved, runway arrestor bed.

“The active material that stops the plane in the case of an overrun is made from recycled glass,” explained Anders Lundmark, CEO Runway Safe. “In Scandinavia, we recycle approximately 96% of all glass products in special recycling stations. The foam-glass product has been used as an insulating material for decades, but we’ve taken it into the next century by producing a product that has unique properties to slow down, and stop, an aircraft.”

The first Runway Safe greenEMAS was installed in November 2014 at Chicago Midway International Airport, and is a specially designed system that uses lightweight aggregate silica foam made from recycled glass to arrest aircraft in the instance of an overrun. Foam glass is an inorganic material, which is not affected by the weather and time, resulting in a long life expectancy.

It installed the second of four arresting beds at Midway in 2015. Lundmark explained that in one simple procedure, Runway Safe was able to replace the existing installations, and install greenEMAS. A local contractor was called in to demolish the existing bed, which was transported to the landfill. The site was then cleared for two days before foam glass was installed. A further two days were dedicated to cleaning, and then cement was poured in and cured. The final layer, known as a “rain jacket”, was applied and decorated with Chevron-stripes.

The time it takes to install greenEMAS varies depending on the customer. The first bed at Midway was installed in 56 hours, but at Zürich Airport a bed will be installed over a 40-day period during ordinary night-time closures in order to not interrupt scheduled traffic. The low installation costs and maintenance costs makes the solution suitable for small and large airports.

The construction of greenEMAS is done entirely onsite with the help of local contractors, and much of the material can be produced locally. The system is built in one piece without modules, and in the instance of an incursion, can be repaired within a couple of days. “This makes an extremely short down time of the runway in case of an incursion compared to others on the market, and this is extremely valuable for the airports,” Lundmark said.

He explained that with greenEMAS not only are lives saved in the case of an overrun, it is easy and quick to repair with spare material stored onsite. After retracting the arrested aircraft, the damaged part is cut out and loose fill foam glass is added with cover layers.

“Since the design is monolithic construction and the foam glass is an inert material, the maintenance costs are significantly lower than the competitors. So, not only is the overall lifetime cost low, we provide airports with an alternative green and sustainable solution,” he said.

Looking ahead, Runway Safe will be undertaking a further two installations of greenEMAS at Midway in 2016. It also has plans to expand its solution worldwide.
With over 100 years experience in aviation and airport technologies, Honeywell is a trusted provider of intelligent airport solutions worldwide. Our technological leadership is founded on customer intimacy and the unwavering pursuit of innovation, research and development promoting the highest standards of reliability and efficiency. Although we are proud of our history, we are also excited about our future of innovations in the aviation industry.

http://www.honeywellairports.com/
Honeywell is a major system integrator, deploying complex systems to large airport hubs around the globe. Its turnkey solutions are designed to deliver benefits to all airport stakeholders, including airport operations, air traffic service providers, and ground handlers.

"With more than 100 years of experience in the aviation and airports sectors, Honeywell is uniquely qualified to support growth and development of the world’s airports," explained İlkin Özel, Regional General Manager, Turkey & North Africa, Honeywell. "Our leading-edge technologies make the airport experience safer and more secure, more comfortable and energy efficient, and more innovative for passengers around the world."

Its solutions are present in more than 500 airports worldwide, with the most recent developments including Pristina Airport, Boryspil Airport, Cairo Airport, Diyarbakir Airport, and Antalya Airport. The approach is simple – to deliver smart airside and terminal solutions to better address tough challenges around safety, security, efficiency and productivity to deliver an improved airport experience. In utilising a powerful and integrated platform, operators are able to reduce costs, increase productivity, and make critical decisions.

At this year’s ACI Airport Exchange, Honeywell will be showcasing its broad range of innovations and expertise. Among these is the Honeywell Command & Control Suite, Digital Video Manager (DVM) 600, Enterprise Buildings Integrator (EBI) R430, Attune, Life Safety Solutions, Scanning Solutions, Advanced Visual Docking Guidance System (AVDGS), Airfield Lighting, System Integration & ATC Tower Solutions, and SmartPath GBAS and EGTS (electric taxiing system).

"At airports equipped with these new technologies, aircraft can approach and land at airports in a more efficient way, reducing delays and increasing capacity," Özel said.

SmartPath, for example, is a Ground-Based Augmentation System (GBAS), which is said to enable increased airport capacity, decreased air traffic noise, reduced weather delays, and also offers substantial maintenance and fuel savings. "GBAS technology offers greater environmental efficiencies and reduced airport maintenance costs, potentially saving up to $400,000 per system a year. It overcomes many of the limitations of traditional Instrument Landing Systems (ILS), including susceptibility to signal interference from weather, other aircraft, and rugged terrain," Özel added. More than 20 airports have either installed, or are commissioning, SmartPath systems worldwide.

IATA predicts that airlines will carry 3.91 billion passengers per year by 2017 – an increase of one billion on 2012 figures. Özel explained that Honeywell’s technologies improve the air travel experience from the moment that passengers arrive on airport property to flight touchdown at the final destination. Security solutions such as smart security cameras, advanced video analytics, radar video surveillance and access controls keep passengers and their belongings more secure before they enter the terminal. Its passenger check-in, flight ticketing, and security and baggage handling solutions are used by more than 160 airlines in over 275 countries. In the terminal, meanwhile, it provides building management systems that integrate comfort, security, safety, and energy efficiency. On the runway it offers ground-based solutions that improve the safety of take-offs and landings, and help aircraft to avoid obstacles on the ground and in the air. Finally, Honeywell is onboard almost every commercial aircraft with smart and connected aircraft systems, as well as providing aircraft engines, auxiliary power units, and it has even developed an advanced technology to make green jet fuel.
FLIO
the app for the Trinity

Helps retailers make a sale
FLIO allows the user to redeem the offers and discounts that FLIO promotes on behalf of the Trinity. Users simply unlock and present the FLIO discount to the cashier. Barcodes or retailer specific codes record the transaction.

Helps brands promote products
FLIO supports the airport Trinity as it also carries exclusive retail offers and discounts with key retailers and food and beverage operators at the airports in which they trade around the world.

Helps airports help passengers
FLIO provides comprehensive, up-to-the-minute airport information, insider tips and advice and details about service-friendly facilities such as recommended activities for layovers, the fastest route into the city, smoking areas, kids’ areas.

FLIO’s own new, proprietary technology gets users easy access in seconds to free airport public Wi-Fi because it removes the first step of entering their personal details.

FLIO currently supports more than 130 free airport public Wi-Fi networks and provides information for a total of 200 airports.

We are on target to double both these numbers by the end of the year.

For more information visit getflio.com

FLIO is available as a free download for iPhone. An Android version is set to launch later this year.

FLIO
The global airport app
Launched in August, FLIO is described as the first global airport app for Apple’s iPhone (an Android version will be launched at the end of the year), and the traveller’s one-stop source for “all things airport”. Ross Falconer spoke with Stephan Uhrenbacher, the CEO and founder, to check on FLIO’s progress since its launch.

**FLIO: The app for “all things airport”**

FLIO combines easy access to free WiFi, arrivals and departure information, insider tips, and exclusive retail offers and discounts with key retailers, food & beverage outlets and passenger service providers at airports around the world. Progress has been remarkably swift. FLIO’s process of automating connections to public WiFi is enabled by its own proprietary technology. It gets users online to airport public WiFi in seconds by removing the step of entering personal details. In just three months, FLIO already supports public WiFi networks at more than 180 airports, so will exceed its initial plan to bring this to 200 airports by the end of 2015.

**Q**: Are you getting industry support and participation?

**A**: Very definitely. The large travel retail companies like WDFG, Heinemann, and ARI, and food & beverage companies like SSP and The Restaurant Group were very quick to work with us. Airport operators recognise that their passenger experience is paramount and have invested huge amounts to improve their performance in this area. Airports are also under ever-increasing pressure to maximise their non-aeronautical revenues. The FLIO app helps on both counts.

As a frequent flyer, I wanted something to take the stress out of my time at the airport and help me locate the information and services I cared about. For airports this is a unique opportunity to improve passenger perception. With no investment into their own app and no marketing expense for the airport, FLIO can provide passengers with a world-class mobile experience even for mid-size airports. We are also having very successful discussions with some of the largest airports as we help their global passengers discover their often fantastic offerings well before they actually arrive. We’re also now selling services directly on the app, which we are using to sell CIP lounge access, fast-track and ground transportation.

**Q**: What have been your latest successes?

**A**: Getting Heathrow Express and Swissport Aspire lounges on board are our most recent successes. What has really attracted them to FLIO is our new in-app payment functionality. Users are now able to store card details and pay for services at the touch of a button. So in the case of Heathrow Express, FLIO users can now book their ticket directly in the app which is the most convenient way to get a ticket. Swissport Aspire lounges are the first lounges that we sell within the app, with many more to come.

**FLIO fact file**

- Populated with the most accurate data direct from airport sources.
- Already supporting more than 180 airport public WiFi networks.
- Gives users real-time security queuing wait times for more than 20 airports.
- Currently promotes exclusive offers and special discounts from a number of airport duty and tax free retailers and food and beverage operators, including World Duty Free, Gebr. Heinemann, SSP, and TRG.
- Partners with Heathrow Express and Swissport UK Lounges.
- In-app payment functionality.

**Q**: Finally, what would your message be to airport operators?

**A**: I think it’s a very simple one. Airports should think of FLIO as essentially a free, additional global marketing platform that helps passengers discover and buy into the services that make their airport a better experience for their passengers.
Does your Airport needs more terminal capacity?

- Within 6 months from sketch to operation
- As a turn key project
- According ICAO and IATA recommendations
- Schengen / Non-Schengen Split Operation
- Inexpensive
- Low operation costs
- Life cycle of 15 to 20 years

Airport Operation Improvements / Optimizations

The goal of our improvements / optimizations is to gain at least a plus of 20% in capacity and revenue in line with a better service quality for airlines and passengers.

We proved many times that we always reached these goals at our respective projects.

Airport Infrastructure Improvements

We do airport's infrastructure improvements or optimizations without airport operational interference.

Another success of our improvements is, that our consultancy service is run by sustainable visions to offer the best trend-setting infrastructure.

Airport Management Coaching

We come to your airport and advice and train your Manager during their daily work on tailor-made Airport Management for your airport.

Please contact our office if you want to have a presentation or an offer, focused on your airport, how Aviation Consultants International can support your airport to gain more revenues, capacity and passengers comfort.

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Aviation Consultants International is an aviation consultancy firm, delivering service goals such as temporary terminal facilities, airport operation and infrastructure improvements, and optimisations, airport management coaching, and Airport Quick Check. It was founded in 2014 after merging with Aviation Consultants Ehmanns, taking over all of its consultancy contracts and patents.

“The main philosophy of Aviation Consultants International is to focus on airports of up to 15 million passengers per year for master planning, improvements, and optimisations,” commented Johannes Ehmanns, General Manager, Aviation Consultants International. The organisation was started with a team of four highly experienced aviation consultants and has a team of freelance aviation consultants to call upon. Each consultant has a degree in aviation, management or engineering, and at least five years experience in an aviation management position.

A new successful field of activity for Aviation Consultants International is the provision of temporary terminals, built within six months and developed from sketch to operation, as a turnkey product. The terminals are constructed in partnership with the temporary facility company, Röder HTS Höcker, developing standards and concepts which allow it to provide additional terminal capacity for airports within a very short timeframe.

A recent development was a project at Nairobi Airport in Kenya. It provided a 10,000sqm temporary terminal facility in time for Kenya Airports Authority to use it for a combination of national and international departures, arrivals, and transfer operations. The terminal complied with IATA Service Level Code C, and was built under one roof. The project also included the training of operational and maintenance staff for this facility by certified trainers.

The temporary terminal facilities are totally in line with ICAO and IATA recommendations, as well as adapted to fulfil the respective national building regulations. The six-month period is for a temporary terminal facility for up to 2.5 million passengers per year, as a turnkey product. The price of such facility is about €15-20 million, depending on the demands of the employer,” Ehmanns said.

Aviation Consultants International is also committed to developing concepts and strategies that optimise and improve airport operations and infrastructures. Such strategies are deeply rooted in helping airports and stakeholders to gain more profit and revenue, as well as providing more comfort for the passengers.

All infrastructure projects are undertaken based on the concept that changes and extensions can be made without interfering with existing passenger or aircraft operations. It has also put a focus on offering sustainable airport infrastructure.

“We evaluate the possibility of introducing up-to-date sustainable materials like eco-friendly construction materials or equipment, as well as energy saving installations,” Ehmanns described. “For example, trend-setting ways of generating power or designing optimal airside infrastructure for bringing the aircraft faster to the gates or to the runway will enable the airport or the operator to save a lot of money, and protect the environment against emissions and noise.”

Looking ahead, the focus will be on developing the business of its temporary terminal solutions, which Ehmanns added is a solution that has generated a lot of interest. It is motivated to remain as a small consultancy firm, allowing it to react and act more efficiently on new issues in the aviation market.
Increasing occupancy and total revenue from airport parking assets

Non-aeronautical revenues are increasingly important for airports, and a core part of this is maximising parking assets. Iván Rodríguez, Chief Business Development Officer, Parclick, told Ross Falconer how airports can increase occupation and total revenue.

Parclick provides online reservations for long-stay parking in official car parks. In the case of airports, it is a strategic partner of non-aviation managers aiming to increase car park occupation and total non-aviation revenue. Parclick’s end-to-end online car park reservation solution has two components – the booking website and central reservation system. Iván Rodríguez, Chief Business Development Officer, Parclick, explained that these two components work together as a complete booking channel, but the central reservation system also accepts bookings from third parties too. “This means that airports can embed the booking process into their websites while our central reservation system handles everything else,” he said. “For airports that already have a booking website, we provide an alternative, high-performing, booking channel.”

He added that Parclick’s objective is “to become the ‘e-commerce team’ for our partner airports working at a success fee out of each reservation made. As simple as that.”

Regarding parking assets, Parclick provides support in two major fields: Increasing occupation, and increasing total revenue. “We manage to increase occupation by bringing new customers that are currently using other solutions like low-cost car parks, taxi, city shuttle or rides from friends or family,” Rodríguez commented. “In the particular case of airports, we found out that price perception plays an important part when booking. As an example, in a recent study we did in Portugal we found out that Portuguese drivers believe official airport car parks to be twice as expensive as their low-cost competitors, although being actually cheaper! For that reason, some of our airport campaigns are aimed at setting up the real, up-to-date value for money when using official car parks.”

In terms of increasing total revenue, Parclick’s solution allows airports to do things like setting up a reservation fee in car parks with high occupancy ratio; use yield management techniques to increase prices in peak seasons in order to maximise revenue; or reduce prices in off-peak seasons to attract new customers with a lower willingness to pay.

“It does not end there, our solution also helps to increase other non-aviation revenues,” Rodríguez asserted. “Right now airports can use it to promote shops, restaurants or other non-aeronautical services. And soon it will allow the sale of products such as fast track, baggage wrap, VIP Lounge or WiFi. These products combined can create a competitive advantage over low-cost car parks, and help double non-aviation average tickets.”

The collaborations with Nice and Brindisi airports provide two excellent examples of the solution applied to different environments. In June 2014, Brindisi was Parclick’s first collaboration with an airport. “Our system made it possible for travellers and travel agencies at Brindisi to book car parking in advance. Our success was immediate, and soon occupation levels, and parking revenue, rose on all car parks thanks to online reservations,” Rodríguez noted.

There are plans to partner with 10 major European airports by the end of 2015, and with the 50 busiest European airports by 2017. “The best formula to achieve the objectives we set for 2015, 2016 and 2017 is to make sure that we keep generating great results for our current and future airport partners, and letting them speak for us within the sector,” Rodríguez said. “From here, our strategy relies on two pillars: Innovation and leveraging our assets. Regarding innovation, we aim to offer the best end-to-end solution for online car park reservations and other non-aviation online product reservations. Our R&D team is completely devoted to this endeavour. By leveraging our assets we mean to use our knowledge both in the online market and software development, our customer base, geographical presence and affiliate network, to provide the best-in-class solution for the top management to increase non-aviation revenues.”
Iceland’s WOW air has grown rapidly since its inaugural service to Paris in 2012, carrying its one-millionth passenger by December 2014 and this year welcoming 840,000 travellers. It now connects Reykjavik with 20 destinations across the US and Europe and, with the launch of several new transatlantic services next year, it expects its traffic to more than double to 1.8 million in 2016.

Airport Business met with Skúli Mogensen, WOW air’s CEO and founder, the day after the airline announced it is to incorporate three A330s into its fleet, enabling it to develop new links with Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Before founding WOW air, of which he is the sole shareholder, Mogensen (47), a serial entrepreneur, spent 20 years in the technology, media and telecoms sectors, making his fortune in mobile phone software. After co-founding OZ Communications while still studying philosophy at the University of Iceland, OZ went on to sell over 100 million copies of its messaging software to all the major handset manufacturers and mobile operators, before Nokia bought it in 2008, giving Mogensen the capital to start-up WOW air.

Keflavik’s “transatlantic hub”

The ultra-low-cost carrier will begin flying to the US West Coast in summer 2016. Los Angeles and San Francisco will be its fifth and sixth destinations in North America, following the launch of transatlantic services from London Gatwick to Boston and Washington DC (via Reykjavik) earlier this year, and the announcement that WOW air will begin flying to Montréal and Toronto in May 2016. “This is a game-changer for WOW air as we cement ourselves as the industry leader in the ultra-low-cost, long-haul category,” says Mogensen. “This move is strategically-important and now is exactly the right time to do it. Iceland is perfectly-located to act as a transatlantic hub between Europe and the US, which is evidenced by our current services to Boston and Baltimore/Washington performing so...
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Advanced wayfinding signage works with the M4s to quickly guide parkers to open spaces. High-tech kiosks can help find their vehicles upon return.

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Strategies for attracting and retaining airline customers

The addition of widebodies had been on the WOW air radar for well over a year. It had already incorporated the A321 last year, allowing it to test the transatlantic market on the routes to Boston and Baltimore/Washington with a capable single aisle aircraft, before transitioning to the three A330s. When identifying airports he would like to serve with this expanded fleet, Mogensen comments that WOW air does not need to try and serve primary airports: “Over the past decade secondary airports have themselves become primary hubs – take London Gatwick for example – the low-cost market has grown Gatwick from being a secondary airport to a primary airport and shows that primary airports can embrace the low-cost carrier model.”

Mogensen says being a young, and still relatively small airline means WOW air can be ambitious about the airports it would like to serve, while it also has the flexibility to launch in new markets at short notice. “We are always looking at the opportunities. At the moment our focus is on transatlantic operations, but anything is possible!”

Secondary airports becoming primary hubs

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Recognising progressive ideas in action transforming airport performance and reputations

INNOVATION SHOWCASE

Extensive terminal upgrades, inventive initiatives and premium services are helping to improve the passenger experience across Europe, as Ryan Ghee reports.

Finavia has completed the €13.5 million investment in upgrading Ivalo Airport, which has seen the introduction of state-of-the-art facilities to improve passenger processing and the overall airport experience. In addition to the introduction of a new wing, the existing terminal building has been completely renovated, improving the passenger waiting rooms and F&B facilities was a key objective of the project, and Finnish touches have been added to create a sense of place.

For instance, bespoke lighting has been installed and part of the terminal includes a segment of wooden wall with a fireplace. Joni Sundelin, Director, Finavia, said: “Finavia’s €13.5 million investment at Ivalo Airport is the largest single input in network airport development in the last few years, and as the work is now complete, we are very happy. By making Lapland airports more effective and smooth, we have also otherwise invested extensively in Lapland tourism, and in that way, we are promoting the operating preconditions of the region’s tourism operators.”

Finavia unveils Ivalo Airport upgrades

Finavia’s new “Bedtime Stories” installation can be found in the gate areas at Frankfurt and Munich airports. (Photo: Lufthansa)

Lufthansa’s Bedtime Stories studios at FRA and MUC help to ease business travel for parents

Lufthansa’s Bedtime Stories studios at FRA and MUC help to ease business travel for parents

To help relieve the emotional strain of being away from home on business, Lufthansa has launched a “Bedtime Stories” installation – a moon-shaped mobile recording studio that has been placed at the boarding gate areas in Frankfurt and Munich airports. Travellers can choose a bedtime story, record it in the studio and send it to their children at home via email or SMS. When the recipient clicks on the link, they are directed to the microsite, where they can stream or download the recording. “Travelling is always an emotional experience: farewell and greeting, a change of place and culture, wanderlust and homesickness,” said Alexander Schlaubitz, Head of Marketing at Deutsche Lufthansa AG. “We want to make every passenger feel as though they are in good hands. The new Bedtime Stories installation continues the series of innovative and surprising ideas for our passengers.” The carrier has teamed up with a number of publishing companies on the initiative, which also allows passengers to further personalise their story with a note and a photo. If time is running out at the gate, travellers have the option of sending a pre-recorded story along with a photo.
**Gatwick Airport launches Premium Passport Control to speed up arrivals process**

Gatwick Airport has launched Premium Passport Control, which allows passengers to pay for fast track processing through the UK Border Force checkpoint upon arrival. The service is available to all passengers and costs £12.50 (£17) per person, per journey. To ensure those who pay for the service are guaranteed fast track processing, it is limited to 50 passengers per hour.

Guy Stephenson, Gatwick Airport’s Chief Commercial Officer, said: “The availability of this new Gatwick Premium Passport Control service to all our arriving customers will provide a more predictable, speedy and relaxed arrival into the UK.”

Sue Young, Border Force Regional Director, commented: “Border Force has worked closely with Gatwick Airport to introduce the Premium Passport Control service, which will allow business travellers and those on tight schedules to make the most of their stay with the shortest possible wait.”

**Passenger experience a priority in new Munich Airport satellite terminal**

Munich Airport has released details of what travellers can expect from the new satellite terminal, which is due to open in April 2016. All of the waiting areas will feature various zones, such as quiet zones and areas with reclining seating, while WLAN access and power outlets will be readily available for those who wish to work or charge their electronic devices before flying. In an effort to make the new facility as family-friendly as possible, children’s play areas will be available, while baby changing tables will be available in both the women’s and men’s restrooms. There will be a dedicated lounge for passengers with reduced mobility, as well as a lounge for unaccompanied minors, which will include a football table, PCs, a play corner and large cushions to relax on. When the satellite terminal opens in April 2016, passengers travelling in first or business class will be catered to passengers.

The new satellite terminal at Munich Airport will be a family-friendly facility and will include a dedicated lounge for unaccompanied minors. (Photo: Munich Airport)

**Alitalia’s ground-based passenger focus**

Since the acquisition of a 49% stake in Alitalia by Etihad Airways in December 2014, the highly regarded customer experience of the Abu Dhabi-based carrier has been rubbing off on its Italian equity partner, and now Alitalia has announced a raft of ground-based customer-focused enhancements. Among them is a new chauffeur service for premium passengers, new VIP lounges and upgrades to existing lounges, plus a renewed focus on improving customer service at its Fiumicino Airport base in Rome.

The executive chauffeur service will be offered to business class customers travelling to Abu Dhabi from Rome, Milan and Venice, as well as to New York JFK from Rome and Milan. Refurbished and new airport lounges will be completed in Rome, Milan Linate, Milan Malpensa, Naples, Catania and New York JFK within 12 months. In addition, 1,820 Alitalia employees have been enrolled in Etihad Airways’ Training Academy in Abu Dhabi, while the new Alitalia Excellence Training Centre will soon be opened. According to Alitalia Chairman Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, Alitalia is on track to meet its objective of reaching profitability by 2017. He said passenger-focused upgrades will “help to transform the travel experience for customers flying with Alitalia”.

**easyJet ground staff to trial wearable technology uniforms**

easyJet, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in November, has announced a trial of new uniforms featuring wearable technology. The ground staff uniforms will have LEDs in the jacket cuffs to help with aircraft movement on the ground, while the new engineer uniforms include a variety of inventive features. LEDs in the jacket hoods will help to illuminate work areas and leave both hands free for aircraft inspections and maintenance, and the multiple reflective laser cut decoration will aid visibility on the airfield. In addition, in-built video cameras will allow for remote diagnosis of technical issues, and a microphone will enable instant communication with colleagues. The uniform will also include an air quality sensor and barometer to help engineers monitor their work environment and create a map of air quality in different cities, which can be communicated to passengers.

Ian Davies, Engineering Director, easyJet, said: “With features like the LED hood and video streaming and communications capability these amazing designs offer very practical solutions for engineers working on the ramp whilst enhancing safety at the same time.”

Winter 2015 | Airport Business
A wave of start-up activity is driving rapid evolution across the travel sector. Often referred to as ‘disruptors’, many of these start-ups, Uber and Airbnb being two well-known examples across the wider travel sphere, are having a powerful impact, which is being most keenly felt in the way they engage with consumers.

Indeed, Keith Mercier, Ecosystem Partner Advocate Leader, IBM Watson, tells Airport Business that: “Personalisation has become an essential industry imperative. We need to reimagine the way that we connect, transact and engage with passengers and guests to create brand value.”

IBM’s Watson is essentially a technology platform capable of answering questions posed in natural language. It is most famous for competing against two former champions – and winning – on the US quiz show Jeopardy! in 2011. Mercier describes it as a “thinking machine”, explaining that Watson and other cognitive computing systems like it represent “a seismic shift in technology”. This shift is one to machines that can crunch massive amounts of data, continuously learn, and understand natural language – ‘customers can thereby engage in a conversation with Watson through the platform,’ Mercier says.

While the field of big data software may already be somewhat crowded, Watson’s simple, natural-language format is empowering the next generation of big data for travel. By opening up Watson via its Watson Developer Platform, a community of start-ups, entrepreneurs, and established businesses are embedding cognitive computing into brand new apps and services.

One such start-up in the travel sector is WayBlazer, whose app leverages Watson to create a travel concierge, analysing data within the context of the user’s needs to offer personalised travel tips and recommendations. Meanwhile, Go Moment is using Watson to power its mobile guest engagement app, Rev1, which uses Watson’s ability to crunch big data to help hotel concierge and front desk staff quickly address guest needs and inquiries.

Keith Mercier, Ecosystem Partner Advocate Leader, IBM Watson, interviewed by Ross Falconer.

“In the travel industry this technology could help with a number of issues from predictive maintenance of equipment, to better targeting travellers with the right offers based on a better understanding of their preferences,” says Mercier. “Having a platform that can think and learn over time creates the foundation for connecting in the right way with customers and augmenting employee decision-making. This is what it means to embrace the transformation to cognitive.”

Having opened Watson up to the world through its Watson Developer Platform, IBM has also allocated $100 million for venture investments to support the community of start-ups and businesses building cognitive applications powered by Watson. WayBlazer, the first IBM Watson Ecosystem Partner focused on travel solutions, is one of five companies to have so far received investment support.

Specifically focusing on air travel, it was recently announced that Etihad Airways has signed a $700 million 10-year technology services agreement with IBM, which will give the airline access to IBM’s Watson cognitive technology. “We are in the early stages, but I can say that we will deliver a range of secure and efficient technology services, allowing Etihad Airways and its partners to transform their IT infrastructure into global, flexible and agile cloud-based platforms,” comments Mercier.

It will be interesting to see how Etihad uses Watson to help achieve its stated desire to “enhance the guest experience, develop world-class infrastructure and security, and improve efficiency”, and how other airlines, airports, and travel industry stakeholders embrace the possibilities of this next generation of big data.

Mercier points to “rapid evolution in the travel industry”, and his challenge to airports is: “What will you do with Watson?”
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