Editor’s note

Dear Colleagues,
As we all struggle with the current economic climate, some companies are pooling their knowledge and assets and collaborating to bring innovations and products to market in cost-effective ways. Unisys is no exception: at our recent Airports 2009 conference in St-Paul-de-Vence, we provided air time for partner companies like Vidient and NeuroPie to present their respective solutions for security and airport management. At this year’s Passenger Terminal Expo (PTE), we shared floorspace with NEC to allow them to show their cutting-edge mobile solutions. This type of collaboration makes business sense. Collaboration in the airline and airport business also makes sense. Our lead article focuses on collaborative decision making within the airport. Essentially, bringing the information necessary to operate the business and make day-to-day decisions from all parties to all parties. This sharing of information is what enables all stakeholders to make decisions based on accurate data. My own presentation at PTE again focused on technologies that can bring benefits to security and passenger processing, providing the main stakeholders collaborate on various processes in the passenger journey. More of that in future issues.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue, full of new and follow-on topics. For example, you may recall in our 2nd quarter 2008 AirCore NEWS publication we introduced our “Of Global Interest” column to highlight “green” projects in the travel industry. We continue that series in this issue citing Virgin Atlantic but we started the topic with a spotlight on Yachana Lodge in Ecuador. I am delighted to report that out of 319 entries from 83 countries, Yachana Lodge was one of the 3 winners of the 2008 National Geographic Geotourism Challenge. Congratulations Yachana!

Regards,

Mike McNamara
VP and Partner
Unisys Passenger Services Solutions

Airport collaborative decision making

By Jürgen Weder CEO NeuroPie Solutions AG

Each organisation is responsible primarily for its own survival. Therefore, organisations always focus on optimising their own processes and their own IT systems, a difficult task if the businesses along the value chain are not in sync. To secure a high quality product, collaboration across organisations will become ever more important as they pull together and the business and technology become more intertwined. Airport operators, airlines and ground handlers have become aware that collaboration and technology can be used to make their business more efficient and, as a value chain, become more competitive and profitable.

Main challenges

Firstly, though airport operator, airlines and service providers (e.g. ground handler, catering, etc.) share airport infrastructure and resources, the airport operator, as the responsible party for the overall “product”, cannot directly influence the service levels. For one airline, late baggage delivery may be an issue, for another airline it is not. For the passenger affected, late baggage delivery means a lousy airport performance. Secondly, airport processes are complex, dynamic, intertwined and time critical with many handovers and dependencies between organisations. Managing the overall quality and performance can be a difficult task. Thirdly, the frustration of business users is most often stated as ‘information arrives just too late to be really useful’. There is too much information that lacks real insight and, in view of its sheer volume, rarely enough time to identify all important information.

CDM goals: Punctuality, process quality, continuous improvement

Airport collaborative decision making (CDM) is not only about Air Traffic Management (ATM) and managing TOBT (Target Off Block Time) but also about reducing delays, managing service quality and optimising the utilisation of resources. Why is punctuality important? Delays impose considerable cost on the travelling public, airlines and airport operator. Anyone who has travelled through a busy airport recently and faced interminable queues and delays will agree that passengers knowing what to expect have a lower stress level. The business plan of an airline is based on productive aircraft seat hours. Delays increase the unproductive aircraft time and thus increase the cost per work load unit. Airport operator and ground handlers are forced to keep more reserve capacity because of the over-utilisation of their resources.

CDM tools: Processes, governance, IT

The prerequisite for CDM is the availability and the sharing of accurate, relevant and up-to-date information. Only with a transparent view of the partner’s intentions, operational status, process quality and performance, operations management can become more efficient. To achieve this, current legacy systems have to be integrated and partners must adjust the way they operate today, which can result in changes to procedures and to service level agreements.

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CDM means extensive communication between involved partners to reach a shared understanding about how to tackle operational, performance and quality issues. A common Airport Operations Control Center with participation of all relevant functions of the different partners will facilitate this communication. By channelling the information flow through this center the access to important information will be facilitated for all partners. The knowledge and experience about airport operation obtained can then be passed to dedicated committees where airport partners can devise measures for a sustainable improvement.

The following screenshots have been taken from the ZEUS application, one of the first CDM solutions in the market. They illustrate how integrated and visualized data from disparate systems can help to manage the operation from a CDM perspective.

1. **Situational Awareness**
   Most of today’s airport systems display their information in form of tables or bars (Gantt charts). But bars and tables have a common weakness: the overview diminishes as soon as the amount of information exceeds a certain level. The ZEUS Airport Map is a cartographic overview that provides real-time updates on critical elements of airport-wide data in a graphical, easy-to-read format. Colour coding and highlighting help the user to see important deviations from plan immediately.

2. **Exception Management**
   Users often complain that information overload caused by applications makes it impossible to determine which information is important and which is not. Eventually, users will simply ignore all of the alerts because there are just too many. ZEUS’ exception management liberates users from data bombardment and allows them to remain pro-active and respond quickly to critical alerts.

Situational Awareness. With a clearer picture of the situation at the airport, operational decisions can be made a lot earlier.

Exception Management. Manage critical exceptions in collaboration with partners and guide users through actions with checklists.
3. Process Monitoring
The ZEUS Value Chain Dashboard
measures and presents the quality of the
overall processes such as Passengers,
Baggage and Aircraft processes at a
glance in the form of a heat map. The
process performance is derived from
process key performance indicators.

System Integration
System integration must not be expensive
as much of the data exists already in one of
the many airport systems and can be made
available as a single element or combined
with other information. Its underlying data
source should not be affected by the
integration process. An increasing number
of systems support a loosely-coupled
integration which will result in standardisation
and simplification of the integration task for
an airport.
For more information about NeuroPie and
Zeus go to: http://www.neuropie.com/

Selling ancillary services through AirCore

Gone are the days when an airline’s
only focus was to sell tickets from
point A to point B and perhaps a
tour or lounge membership. With
high fuel prices and the economic
crisis, airlines are driven to find
new ways to generate revenue.
One of those ways is unbundling
their products and services, and
establishing a la carte pricing.

For the airlines, a la carte pricing helps to
achieve higher yields and has the potential
to open doors to competitive differentiation.
From a customer standpoint, a la carte
pricing enables the traveling public to
purchase only those services they intend
to use, and has the potential to offer a
broader range of services as these offerings
become revenue generators for the airline.
Special service requests (SSRs), historically
offered by the airline at no extra cost for
the most part, are now evolving into revenue
generating ancillary services that can be
sold at all steps of the passengers traveling
experience from the initial booking process,
through to airport check-in and, finally,
while in-flight.

AirCore offers a modern foundation for
selling ancillary services. AirCore SSR
handling provides the tools to be creative
and flexible in associating fees to IATA
industry standard or host airline-specific
SSRs. The AirCore back office utility
automatically includes a preloaded table
of IATA SSRs. These flight segment-based
SSRs can be assigned on a per passenger,
or per passenger, per flight basis. Offices
can be assigned to each SSR. With AirCore
you have the flexibility to queue all SSR
requests to a central office location, or
decentralize them for local office handling.
With a couple of keystrokes or clicks of a
mouse, you can quickly associate a fee to
any IATA standard SSR in your local currency.
For example, fees can be added for cabin
baggage, or a special meal. In addition you
have the ability to create your own host
airline SSRs for things like an airport lounge
pass, an in-flight blanket, pillow, or movie,
with an added service fee if desired.
All SSRs can be further customized by
assigning a date range, and marking it for
domestic or international travel for better
sales management of service offerings.
Once fees and rules are set, the SSR can
be activated with a simple click of a button
and immediately enabled for selling as part
of the booking or check-in process.

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