



Plane sailing with lighter paper load

case study | Jetstar

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WITH plans afoot to jet into exotic locations such as Phuket and expand its aircraft fleet, budget airline Jetstar needed to overhaul its back office processes to grow while keeping headcount constant.

The project to improve efficiencies in crew records, accounts payable, customer services and human resources will save the low-cost carrier more than \$1 million annually.

Jetstar chief information officer Stephen Tame says many airline companies would need to increase passenger numbers to accommodate new routes and more aircraft, but the Qantas-owned company is planning to boost business without increasing its headcount.

Electronic business systems will cut paperwork so the workload increases can be dealt with by the same number of people with ease. By the time the project is fully introduced, costs should be about \$200,000, and payback is expected within six months, Tame says.

The first phase, already in use, puts Jetstar ahead of its competition, as the first airline in Australia with an electronic crew records system.

Before the electronic system was set up, books were maintained manually, Tame says.

Papers for about 1000 staff were filed in this system.

If information about a crew member was required by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, it could take three people up to a week to find the information, Tame says.

"I could go to a book and remove a page and there would be no audit trail," he says.

"Or we could have a fire and we could lose all the books. This is a far better system."

The system went live last October and ran in parallel with the old system until November.

CASA has approved the system. "The regulator agreed that as well as reducing administrative overheads, the security, management and integrity of an electronic

document and records management system was far better than using a book."

Tame says about 30,000 items were scanned to build the system.

"The funny thing is most of the information came in electronically anyway, so we were printing it out and adding it to the book."

Tower Software's Trim Context ECM platform is also being used in the accounts payable area.

Under present conditions, adding 10 long-haul flights by mid-2008 would mean a dramatic increase in the amount of paperwork flowing through the accounts payable area.

However, Jetstar is extending the document management system into this area.

Instead of paper invoices moving about the office for approval, invoices will be scanned on receipt and forwarded by email to the appropriate manager for electronic sign-off.

One of the biggest costs for a service organisation is the customer service area. "The propensity for problems is proportionate to the number of passengers you carry," Tame says.

With the introduction of the content management system to the customer service area the organisation does not expect it will need to increase staff numbers beyond the current number.

Tame says he is scoping the project for a start date of mid-March and working with the six staff in that area.

The last area to be revamped will be human resources.

Tame envisions a number of "smart processes" to minimise workloads.

Given that Jetstar has a small technology team, the whole project will be set up by Tower partner Alphawest.

The cost of the project has been kept low because the number of concurrent users has been kept to a minimum.

When the system is extended throughout the airline, only 20 staff will be able to access it, Tame says.

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