

Success Story

Britannia Airways—Keeping the crews flying high

Britannia Airways is one of the world's largest holiday airlines, offering award-winning service on a network of holiday flights from the UK and Europe to destinations around the world. Britannia has established an international reputation for operational and technical excellence over the past four decades. To help maintain its position as the UK's premier charter airline, Britannia Airways has developed a portal-based cabin crew briefing system that is accessible to its 2,000 member cabin crew from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The system is based on Livelink ECM®, Open Text's™ leading collaboration and knowledge management software for the global enterprise. Britannia's Livelink ECM-based cabin crew briefing system went live in April of 2002.

Organization

Britannia Airways is part of the 'World of TUI' group of companies. Covering over 90 percent of the European tourism market, TUI AG is the world's leading tourism Group, which also includes the UK's largest tour operator TUI UK and Lunn Poly, the UK's biggest travel agency. For the last three summer seasons, Britannia Airways has been recognized by the Air Transport Users Council as the most punctual of the leading holiday airlines.

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John Gough,
Britannia Airways'
E-business Program Manager

Situation

The airline industry is fiercely competitive, and profitability depends on a combination of factors. Passenger carriers must maintain consistently punctual departure times to preserve customer satisfaction and sustain high

efficiency levels. They must also travel with as near full capacity as possible, as often as possible and in the shortest amount of time possible. Anything that can be done to eliminate delays and achieve on-time performance is welcomed.

In order to protect the safety and integrity of the flight, airlines are legally required to brief cabin crews with information relating to their scheduled flight prior to departure. Specific flight information, as well as the CAA regulated safety information, must be distributed to all crews in a limited amount of time. Current processes for assembling cabin crews according to a roster can require additional preparation for crews who have not worked together in the past, further limiting pre-flight briefing time.

Prior to implementing Livelink ECM, Britannia Airways used manual methods of delivering the information required for each flight. This paper-based process inundated staff with paperwork for a variety of routine administrative tasks. According to John Gough, Britannia Airways' E-business Program Manager, "Britannia had over 120 forms related to the flight. We urgently needed to rationalize the amount of paperwork we were generating and the efficiency of our business processes around that paperwork."

Weighing its options, Britannia Airways examined several software solutions before deciding on a Web-based solution that would provide the crew a single point of access to existing systems. "We have a substantial investment in proprietary systems that work perfectly well from an operational perspective and into which we wanted to provide a window," said Gough. Britannia Airways recognized that an effective system would need to be based on document management principles, and include strong workflow capabilities to ensure the right staff received the right documents at the right time.

Industry

Transportation

Customer



Business Challenges

- Competitive industry requires few delays and maximum efficiency
- Limited time to brief cabin crews pre-flight
- Routine administrative tasks inundated staff with paperwork
- Proprietary systems operated disparately
- Paper based processes

Business Solution

- Livelink ECM™

Business Benefits

- FlightCrew.net keeps cabin crews informed and knowledgeable
- Portal strategy to deploy collaboration and knowledge management capabilities
- Aggregates disparate backend systems to protect Britannia's substantial IT investments
- Secure single sign-on protects critical flight information

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Making the system easily accessible and readily understood would help keep end-user training to a minimum. Applying a portal strategy to deploy knowledge management and collaboration tools meant Britannia Airways could fulfill a number of requirements at the same time. Gough's team identified the following requisite capabilities:

- Secure single sign-on
- Workflow management incorporated directly into document management system
- Electronic flight pack, crew and safety notice dissemination
- Forums where staff can discuss initiatives and provide feedback
- Access to other systems, such as email, roster management, and passenger information, etc.

Based on these requirements, Britannia Airways selected Open Text's Livelink ECM to form the foundation of its cabin crew briefing system. In order to alleviate the complexities of maintaining numerous passwords for multiple applications, Livelink ECM provides secure single sign-on access to existing applications. Britannia also regarded Livelink ECM's document management and workflow capabilities as the strongest in a market where functionality is rapidly changing. "We looked at Livelink ECM's core competency and open architecture, and realized we could build a highly functional solution without having to consider alternative offerings," said Gough.

Solution

It is sometimes difficult to meet IT project criteria in full because customer demands are unique and packaged applications do not normally have the depth of functionality or flexibility to match every requirement. A deficit of functionality means that customers are usually faced with selecting products on the basis of making business compromises. Unlike solutions with lesser functionality, Livelink ECM is noted for its highly scalable, robust architecture. Offering a range of modules for specific needs, Livelink ECM customers can easily customize their solutions to fit their particular circumstances. Procurement was completed in December 2001 and the entire Livelink ECM system was made available within three months and on budget.

"The Livelink ECM implementation at Britannia was a great example of how, despite the complexities of numerous, concurrent IT projects, Open Text was able to help us deliver a project on time, with the required look and feel," said Gough.

Benefits

The benefits of Livelink ECM were immediate. Driving on-time performance and maintaining the company's premier position has been materially enhanced by the new system. The cabin crew can get all the information they need printed out with the touch of a single button on their screen. The cabin crew briefing can be completed in only ten minutes and staff still have access to the system should the need arise. Form handling has been automated, including routing uniform requests directly to external suppliers. By automating processes and online workflow functionality, Britannia believes it is not only able to sustain its competitive advantage but it is also able to differentiate itself in the airline industry.

The success of the initial Livelink ECM project for a cabin crew briefing system meant Gough's team was able to rapidly move towards the next phase. Providing flight crews with the information they need to prior to the flight, FlightCrew.net went live in June 2002. Another of Britannia's objectives is to digitize the essential flight manuals that all flight staff are required to carry with them. "As part of a trial, we're using laptops to gain access to flight manual information on the flight deck and are considering how we can extend this information to Personal Digital Assistants," said Gough. At the same time, the company is looking to link information collected on flights back to transaction and other systems within the company.

Softer benefits of Britannia's Livelink ECM solution have been realized through the improvements in employee relationships and employee satisfaction: "Providing cabin crews with online access to a range of things they need to do has made their lives easier. We believe there is a lot more that can be done," says Gough. Britannia Airways has plans to provide facilities for booking time-off requests through the Open Text solution, and further down the line, the company is also considering automating the workflows to other parts of the business, such as Engineering and Finance. "The Livelink ECM project has opened up many possibilities for us — we're really only at the start of where Livelink ECM could take Britannia," said Gough.

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