

# How Airbus has embedded field service management in its customer operations



Field service mobility – as a function – has a different role at Airbus compared to most companies, which has to do with both the operating model and scope of portfolio. Mobility is embedded with the company's customers, whereby Airbus staff have an office within its customer facilities. **Philippe Mengual, Field Service Director at Airbus**, says a leased line is used for contact internally between staff.

"We don't use the internet or telephone line, mainly for security reasons as well as speed, because our encrypter will not support the telephone line speed. Every office is set up with a leased line, and we are moving from a digital connection to an optical setup across the globe. This will be a cheaper solution for us and allow for faster data transmissions," he notes.

But because Airbus staff are located at customer offices, site access is more complicated as a result. They need to obtain authorisation to conduct infrastructure re-wiring. Once they're granted permission, it's simply a matter of having the technician perform the appropriate tasks. And the second part of this transition relates to having staff from *Orange* – the main supplier – install the connection routers.

Most major airlines have one or more Airbus technical advisors in their facilities, and an SAP platform was recently installed to support technical requests that are submitted by airline technicians and engineers.

"Enquiries go through this tool, and answers are provided by our appointed specialists. That's essentially what makes my team different from conventional mobility portfolios. Our field service staff are not hands-on and don't touch equipment. They analyse and advise the engineers and technicians who work for the airlines," Philippe explains.

The SAP platform was also integrated to plug a knowledge gap in long-term sustainability of the field service function at Airbus. Philippe mentioned that as various individuals resigned or moved on from the airline, they took a significant amount of project knowledge with them.

This made it harder for information exchange with clients regarding specific job orders and aircraft componentry issues. As a result, the SAP platform also acts as a data warehouse, from which airline and Airbus staff can extract information.

"It's certainly a new tool; we launched it about six months ago and there are some initial limitations that we're working through. The field service teams – including our customers – have many ideas how the tool should be run and what it should contain. So, we're collecting their thoughts and incorporating feedback into our engagement with SAP," Philippe notes.

Customers can access this tool and submit an enquiry directly to Airbus' engineering department, flight operation department and documentation department. With that in mind, field service advisors are not always the 'middle man' receiving enquiries.

If requests or questions are related to the other departments, field service advisors can pass them on accordingly and focus on other jobs that need attention. The SAP platform is enabling advisors to manage their time more effectively, because they can re-direct tasks efficiently.

## AirbusWorld

Airbus has another repository exclusively for customers called *AirbusWorld*, which is a secure internet portal that provides different online services from a single access point.

“From technical documentation to news and future technical events, the portal is frequently updated to satisfy airline expectations,” Philippe says. “They have access to different levels of information. When they log into AirbusWorld, they will have access only within parameters of their customer profile.”



*AirbusWorld interface, courtesy of Philippe Mengual*

At a more granular level, access is differentiated based on which department is logging into AirbusWorld. Engineers would be presented with different sets of data to those from the maintenance portfolio, for example. Airbus nominates an administrator for each customer, who is tasked with deciding profile access.



*TechRequest interface, courtesy of Philippe Mengual*

“It’s very important that we control the information for the safety issues. We don’t want to provide a line mechanic with information that he will think is useful for him when he doesn’t have the background. He might do something that shouldn’t be done on the aircraft prior to his airline engineering approval,” Philippe adds.

The field service portfolio has a high engagement return at Airbus, consistently reaching the top of customer satisfaction surveys year-on-year.

Field service was formerly a centralised group function based in France. But as the company expanded across 12 regions over the years, it became intentionally de-centralised.

“I’m the head for one region, being Asia Pacific, and the fact we’ve become de-centralised as a group function is what I want to share at the FSM Summit. I’d like to impart insight on how we’re changing the role of field service from being a technical engineering advisor (cost centre) to a commercial opportunity for the business.

“It’s all about incremental innovation, because there are many ideas in field service that we want to harvest. For that, we have created a dedicated process exclusively for field service embedded in the existing toll *IdeaSpace*. For example a 15kg saving on the A320 fleet will represent over \$50 million (USD) saving in fuel-burn per year.”

*Be sure to join Philippe Mengual at **FSM Australia 2016**, where he will deliver in-depth presentations on going global with field service management and technical design. [Download the brochure](#) or visit [www.fsmaustralia.com.au](http://www.fsmaustralia.com.au) to know more.*