In recent years, an increased degree of price transparency, combined with deregulation in many markets has led to intensified competition while new players are entering a not-always level playing field. Meanwhile, customer expectations are increasing, much of which is due to carry-over effects from other industries where customer centricity and service, strongly supported by digital technology, have matured quickly. Because of these two converging forces, airline managers all over the world face the dilemma of having to structurally reduce costs, while investing in the customer experience.

The Accenture Aviation Experience Accelerator helps mitigate this issue and demonstrate that reducing costs through improving operational efficiency and delivering a superior customer and crew experience can go together.
AN AIRLINE’S DAILY CHALLENGES

DISRUPTIONS ARE A FACT OF LIFE FOR AIRLINES AND THEIR CUSTOMERS. NO MATTER WHAT EFFORT IS MADE TO PREVENT THEM, DELAYS, DIVERSIONS AND CANCELLATIONS WILL HAPPEN AND THEY HAVE AN UNINTENDED NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON BOTH THE AIRLINE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

However, like any bad experience, a disruption may also be an opportunity to make a good impression, if handled in the right way, where the right communication is key.

This is where airlines can go right.

Nothing is more powerful for a passenger than being taken seriously, for instance because:

- the airline representative can confirm delays before external sources such as Flightradar24;
- the gate agent can tell passengers in advance if their bag has not made the connection;
- customer care is informed enough to reach out about what happened when a seat broke during a flight because flight attendant witnessed it.

These situations are common and are just as important to the airline staff as they are to the passenger. Cabin crew and gate agents are confronted with questions they must be able to answer. The Operations Control Center sometimes requires full process information to make the best decision and Customer Care must understand the real circumstances behind a complaint.
Airline operations are complex and so is managing customer relations. Over the course of a single flight there can be dozens of plan-altering interactions that create a complex web of data. Passengers, crew, ground operations, sales, marketing and customer service need to be able to make informed decisions on this vast amount of data to serve the passenger.

Airline executives that participated in a global Accenture survey indicated that the challenge to keep up and deliver a delightful customer experience results from:

- Operational flight and passenger information scattered among different sources and silos
- Crew, ground handlers, agents and other staff unable to access relevant information
- Customer service agents limited to making changes on the fly due to a highly complex IT landscape
- Operational Control Center only being able to be reactive to operational disruptions

“WE ARE SITTING ON OLD INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT TO PULL ALL OF OUR CUSTOMER DATA TOGETHER INTO AN ACTIONABLE ENVIRONMENT AND THEN PUT IT BACK OUT INTO THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY TOUCH POINT IN AN ACTIONABLE AND INTELLIGENT WAY.”

North America Premium Carrier

“WITHIN THE AIRLINE, EACH DEPARTMENT HAS ITS OWN CUSTOMER VIEW. BREAKING DOWN THE SILOS AND LOOKING AT THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY AS A WHOLE AS OPPOSED TO, SAY, WHAT WE SEE IN THE CHECK-IN SYSTEM, OR THE BOOKING SYSTEM, OR THE CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM...IT’S A BIG CHALLENGE.”

Middle East Carrier

Reference: Accenture Executive Airline Study
The opportunity is ripe. Important contributors to the passenger experience are very similar to key performance indicators of the operational performance. Examples include:

- on-time performance (#1 factor influencing airline brand perception*);
- percentage of missed connections;
- percentage of lost bags;
- efficiency of customer claims processing.

The link between these indicators is that to get them right, people and processes in different parts of the airline and its partners need to be better synchronized. In real-time.

How can airlines ensure real-time information is consistently getting to the people who need it, connecting customers, employees and operations?


Against this background, the same executives stated their top challenge toward creating a delightful customer experience is “how to make it happen”.

The Next Frontier is taking down the silos to benefit from more collaboration in a process-oriented way throughout the airline. Introducing the Accenture Aviation Experience Accelerator, enabling airlines to orchestrate the customer experience, at scale, while improving operational performance.
The Accenture Aviation Experience Accelerator (AAEA) is a single, airline-wide platform that connects data, passengers, employees, and business partners in real-time to optimize the airline’s processes, sales and services. By seamlessly combining data from operations, customer service, marketing, and sales, airlines are empowered to provide a seamless and improved customer experience while ensuring optimal operational efficiency. The results are streamlined operations, enhanced customer experiences, and better business decisions.

In addition, AAEA allows airlines to connect with the broader travel ecosystem to deliver a more delightful customer experience based on data provided by different parties in that ecosystem. Several airlines and airports are opening their platforms and share relevant data on, for example, flight status, baggage belt information and delivery times, as well as commercial offers.

AAEA is intended to accelerate the airline initiatives to realize these improvements and creates synergies in doing so. By connecting Operations and Commercial departments, plus potentially information provided by other parties in the travel ecosystem, AAEA provides more relevant information to passengers and employees.

AAEA is built on Pega® Platform from Pegasystems and leverages AI technologies to execute decision strategies that meet customer expectations and align to airline operations. Offers made to customers can be commercial (to sell ancillaries, for instance), but also operational (disruptions) or simply information (weather, wayfinding).

Starting from the Transavia vision, the carrier and Accenture worked closely together to design AAEA. This solution will help Transavia to lower costs, drive revenue and improve on-time performance using analytics, automation, cloud, and mobile technologies.

ACENTURE AVIATION EXPERIENCE ACCELERATOR

COMET TOGETHER | THE REAL-TIME AIRLINE TAKES FLIGHT.
AAEA helps provide digital self-service capabilities to passengers on their preferred devices, enabling them to take control in case of disruption and make quick decisions on flight re-booking.

Similarly, it can be accessed by ground crew, flight crew and office staff through the device that is most appropriate for them.

The Accenture Aviation Experience Accelerator is not just a piece of technology, it enables the transformation of every aspect of the airline business.

“When a flight has to be towed, we have mechanics working, flight attendants working, a gate attendant. Right now, they do not communicate as a team. I’d love everyone to have the same information and be collaborating.”

North America Premium Carrier

The five characteristics of AAEA ensure a more seamless operation allowing an airline to run in real-time.
Based on the unified Pega® Platform which combines industry-leading case management, business process management, robotic automation, artificial intelligence and decisioning, mobile and omni-channel user experience, AAEA can be tailored to fit the requirements of individual airlines. The initial functionality offered is focused around on-time performance and customer service (complaints management). Accenture will work in close collaboration with its airline clients in adding new functionality over time.

Some examples of functionalities offered by AAEA include:

**PRE-FLIGHT**
BEING PRO-ACTIVELY INFORMED TO SET THE RIGHT EXPECTATIONS
- Disruptions predictor
- Commercial flight value
- Real-time delay notifications
- Omni-channel communication
- Aggregated customer profile
- Personalized offers

**AT DAY OF FLIGHT**
EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DIGITAL COLLABORATION & PROCESS ORCHESTRATION
- Real-time integrated flight-view
- Real-time flight status
- Real-time passenger insight
- Insights in passenger list and preferences
- Turnaround monitor
- Real-time collaboration (extended) employee issue reporting
- Personalized crew schedule
- Personalized offers

**DISRUPTIONS**
BEING THERE WHEN ASSISTANCE IS MOST NEEDED
- Flight rescheduler
- Automated notifications
- Decision support
- Commercial flight value
- Network impact
- Third party collaboration
- Frontline staff servicing
- On-the-spot service recovery

**POST-FLIGHT**
SERVICING THE PASSENGER ON DEMAND
- Case and claim management
- Personalized offers & servicing
- Baggage locator
- Self-service issue resolution
- Integration with transport and travel services
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ABOUT ACCENTURE

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 401,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.