Gulf Air's AirWatch-Enabled EFB Project Achieves Tangible Benefits

The Mission

Gulf Air is the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain and one of the longest serving airlines in the Middle East. Having started in 1950 as a small scale commuter service, Gulf Air today is a major international airline with an expanding network that serves over 40 destinations in 24 countries, transporting millions of passengers yearly across Africa, Asia and Europe.

To ensure flight operations are successfully carried out in a seamless manner, it is critical to provide the latest information to pilots about aircraft manuals, flying procedures, flight plans and weather charts. Gulf Air looked for a cost-effective and more streamlined process that would ensure such information is provided in a timely manner while increasing efficiency.

To reduce printing costs, improve access to up-to-date flight data and optimise pilots' productivity, Gulf Air decided to adopt an IT solution capable of enabling pilots to securely access the latest flight documentation electronically. After researching the enterprise mobility management (EMM) market, the airline chose AirWatch® by VMware® to manage devices as part of its electronic flight bag (EFB) project to bring pilots remote digital access to critical international maps, flight paths, passenger information and payload data.

Solution Overview

- Client: Gulf Air
- Industry: Transportation
- Geography: Africa, Asia, Europe
- Solutions: MDM, MAM, MCM, MEM
- Infrastructure Integrations: ActiveSync, SharePoint, Airbus Flysmart, Jeppesen, Citrix, Moodle
- Devices: 400+

The Results

AirWatch® Enterprise Mobility Management has helped Gulf Air transform its aircraft operating efficiency and achieve tangible business benefits since the airline rolled out the EFB project in 2014. "Gulf Air is committed to all new technology that streamlines our operational performance through integrated solutions for advanced information management in the air and on the ground," said Captain Nasser Al Salmi, chief operating officer, Gulf Air. "Our systems reduce paperwork, increase efficiency and improve access to information for our pilots where it is most needed. The AirWatch-managed electronic flight bags meet these requirements, helping bring technological advances of computer information delivery and management to the flight deck."

Gulf Air pilots routinely review planned flight maps and flight paths, devise contingencies and inspect passenger and cargo information to optimise operations. With AirWatch® Content Locker, Gulf Air's aircraft manuals and flight documentation are now easily accessible to pilots in a central

repository on their iPads. Moreover, the centrally managed repository provides the airline with robust workflows, a transparent audit trail and reduced liability, leading to streamlined aircraft operations. "The goal was to simplify pilot access to essential flight information by replacing burdensome flight bags with lighter, remotely-managed mobile devices," said Captain Al Salmi.

From a productivity perspective, the EFB solution has enhanced the performance of Gulf Air's pilots by reducing the time previously required to obtain critical flight documentation, as the required flight data is now searchable on the iPads and synchronised over-the-air. "To enable our pilots to make the most of mobility, we've had to revamp our entire internal processes to integrate the EFB in our flight operations," added Captain Al Salmi. The airline also uses AirWatch® Catalog to push aviation-specific productivity applications to help pilots with take-off and landing calculations. "With enhanced mobility, our pilots can now take their examinations online, submit paperless reports and respond faster to flight changes," remarked Captain Al Salmi. "As a result, their productivity has markedly increased, and we are delighted with the outcome to date."

Furthermore, by adopting an EFB solution managed by AirWatch, Gulf Air reduced paper printing by 50%, saving around 500,000 sheets per year. "Replacing traditional flight bags with AirWatch-managed iPads has delivered significant cost savings in printing, while AirWatch Content Locker allows users anytime, anywhere access to essential flight data," confirmed Dr. Jassim Haji, director of information technology, Gulf Air. "The iPads can also be updated in-flight with the latest versions and flight data changes, and they can be remotely secured in case of loss. Additionally, we have leveraged our hybrid cloud to ensure service availability and seamless service provisioning."

Up Next

With the successful implementation of the EFB project, Gulf Air intends to increase its managed device count from 400 to 750 devices by the end of 2016 to extend mobility to its field engineers and other operational areas. The airline has also begun the process of equipping cabin service managers with managed iPads to handle passenger preferences, meal arrangements and travel plans to elevate the customer service experience on board its aircraft.

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> Chief Operating Officer
> Gulf Air