Why Gatwick Airport placed P2W at the heart of its Site Smart ambitions

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When you aim to be the preferred London airport of choice and set out a ten year plan to bring that ambition to life, you have to begin by knowing that ambience and fluidity will be amongst the key determinants of the customer experience which will ultimately endorse or deny your success.

So, making Gatwick Airport an enjoyable and safe place to be or pass through are operational imperatives for its management team. But, so too is the requirement to maintain this enormous asset, through which 32 million passengers pass each year.

Add to this the responsibility for over 200 companies operating on-site, a retail environment bigger than most British malls and the safety of over 24,000 employees and contractors who help to operate and maintain the asset and you have a Risk Management challenge which requires Gatwick Airport to defy probability.

Since 2010, under the banner of Site Smart, Gatwick Airport's safe maintenance programme, it has embedded *safety* right across its business. In doing so, it's raised awareness of risk management and adverse event prevention and engaged its business partners in upholding it's new, non-negotiable, approach to safety and security.

However, managing a safe system of work within an asset with the equivalent footprint of a modest English town inevitably brings its challenges, exacerbated only by Gatwick Airport's continuing success.

With growing airport movements, ongoing physical expansion and increasing passenger numbers, visibility and control of Gatwick Airport's contractor community had become challenging. *"Who was doing what, where, when and why?"* was further complicated by the diverse mechanisms used to manage this expanding workload.

To uphold Gatwick Airport's Site Smart ambitions, more visibility and control of contractors was now required.

Invaluable ingenuity

One of the first signals of Gatwick Airport's conviction towards establishing a new "Safety Gold Standard" was manifest in its creation of a dedicated Contractor Support Centre, a new "front desk" concept, providing 24/7 support to its contractors. With the ultimate responsibility for authorising work, contractor inductions, conflict checking, tracking progress, site auditing and signing-off, the Contractor Support Centre is now established as the first and last point of contact for all contractors tasked with both landside and airside works at Gatwick Airport.

But, with a multiplicity of mechanisms used historically to manage these activities, Gatwick Airport recognised the need for change which included the benefits to be derived from a new fully automated safe system of work to manage and bring consistency to its workplace policies and processes. Such a system should consolidate current best practices, plug gaps and where appropriate introduce new levels of efficiency. And, crucially, provide an indelible record of Gatwick Airport's devotion to regulatory and legislative compliance.

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Control - the new culture everyone is learning to speak fluently

The solution for Gatwick Airport was found in P2W, the ingenious work authorisation software tool from GEMsoft7, which has effectively become the beating heart at the centre of the Airport's Site Smart programme and the catalyst for a new workplace culture which embraces the safety interests of employees and contractors alike, while protecting the asset, passengers and Gatwick Airport's corporate reputation.

Initially P2W was used to manage only the most hazardous, permit raising tasks, including the collection of critical data such as risk assessments and method statements. These

numbered around 100 per week in 2010. Having worked closely with its contractors through this change transition, today P2W handles over 800 contractor work requests per month and is now as well regarded by contractors as it is by Gatwick Airport's own management.

P2W flies in the face of a common misconception that "exerting more control, slows down work and breads inefficiency". Nothing could be further from the truth.

Gatwick Airport accepts P2W has helped them raise the safety bar by instilling new work disciplines in

its Contractors. This has incurred a marginal slowing of the work authorisation process. However, resulting increases in operational efficiency and safety outweigh any time differential, with work requests now more considered than ever before and authorisation times cut to days, instead of weeks and months.

And, all made possible because P2W provides Gatwick Airport and its contractors with the same high quality of live data simultaneously, from which consequential decision-making around the tasks in hand and the risks they present can be reliably shared and managed in close cooperation.

Cutting out waste and cost

Contractors are now able to plan work remotely; submit work requests; attach Risk Assessments and Method Statements; have competency checks ratified; review the scheduled workbook to detect potential conflicts; and obtain work authorisation well ahead of their arrival at the Contractor Support Centre.

This has removed any prospect of wasted time, waiting for permission to carry out unscheduled or unapproved work and ensures Gatwick Airport doesn't incur time penalties resulting from poor scheduling or conflicts.

All of these actions are communicated and managed via P2W which helps to smooth the day, making working at Gatwick Airport more productive, safe and hugely economical.

Simplicity not complexity

One of the many redeeming characteristics of P2W remains its ease of use. It's a completely intuitive experience, so system administrators don't have to be computer "whiz-kids" to navigate their way around it. Familiarity is evident from day one because all the processes contained on P2W are owned by Gatwick Airport and have been in use previously, only now they are presented and executed in a more disciplined and efficient way, to help avoid human unpredictability.

Gatwick Airport is just one of many great examples where, with the minimum of training, the least IT literate individuals have proven competent to operate P2W to great effect, as all the Airport's Facilities Management information is presented on just two computer screen pages. So, managing workload, flow and risk couldn't be simpler!

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On time, every time

P2W is arguably the most flexible Work Authorisation software solution in the world. But, without doubt it is the quickest system of its type to install. Against a typical deployment backdrop of around three months start to finish, Gatwick Airport with a minimal resource, had its P2W system configured and deployed within just five months, with further personalisation and functionality added over a further three.

Add GEMsoft7's agility and responsiveness to the fact its P2W system hasn't fallen over once in its six years of worldwide deployment, across the widest markets and sectors and Gatwick Airport and its contractors have every reason for enormous confidence in P2W's level of reliability which would be the envy of any airline, never mind Airport.

Conclusion

Gatwick Airport is a dynamic environment, with big plans to help it stay this way. P2W is now central to reinforcing this operational reality so that everyone who comes into contact with the Airport enjoys a consistently safe and positive experience.

From a software perspective, P2W is a proven, highly configurable system which has met all of Gatwick Airport's immediate customisation challenges while providing it with the flexibility to grow as the asset and its businesses do.

Consequently, Gatwick Airport's CEO, sleeps easy at night knowing P2W is helping to provide the protection his asset needs and the corporate reputation of his company is as safe as the people within it.

For Information

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