

# Committed to operational excellence

Dutch-based **Quintiq** is a leading supplier of supply chain planning and optimisation solutions. *Future Airport* catches up with Rob van Egmond, vice-president EMEA, to find out about the group's unique approach to providing airport customers with safe and cost-efficient operations, predicated on innovative software, flexibility and bespoke services.



The company's airport expertise ranges from aircraft maintenance to managing resource allocation for flight catering trucks and check-in desks.

**How long has Quintiq served the aviation industry? What specific factors need to be taken into consideration in contrast to the other sectors in which you are present?**

**Rob van Egmond:** Quintiq has served the aviation industry since 2002 when we first helped KLM Catering Services improve its delivery performance from 98% to 99.5%. More recently, we have seen the pressures on the aviation industry reaching a level where they really require advanced planning and scheduling to prevent inefficiencies. This has led to increased interest from players looking to solve the challenges of larger numbers of airport services and airlines.

I would say that there are two major differences when it comes to serving our airport customers. Firstly, there is a much greater dependency on time delivery. The second relates to the dynamics, which tend to be broader – namely,

ensuring that the aircraft is always on time, which is a massive challenge.

**Could you describe your ground services and airport resource allocation solutions?**

We provide a number of solutions for managing airport resources, but in general we are able to manage all resource allocation scenarios, such as flight catering truck allocation, stand and gate allocation, check-in desks and human resource planning. Some of these can control the whole supply chain, such as planning all steps for the meals from production to delivery, while others are more specific, like the actual task assignment related to instance security checks.

Quintiq has a very flexible planning platform, which can also be applied to a number of ground services. Our approach is based around a solution that is flexible enough to address any



Quintiq delivers cost benefits for its customers, but insists that ensuring the aircraft is always on time is the biggest challenge it has to face.

resource allocation issue. It is something we are focusing on very heavily with our customers, as it is one of their primary concerns.

So, we do not have a single restricted solution. We have a multifaceted approach to resource allocation and can adjust our solutions to align with the specific needs of the customer.

### What cost benefits can you offer your clients?

It is obviously important, but we do not only provide cost benefits – we also focus on improvement in operational excellence and also minimising over and undercapacity. Specific examples include KLM Catering, as I mentioned, where we reduced the required resources by 3%.

LSG Sky Chefs' primary goal was cost reduction, so we reduced its value-added network service (VANS) by 35% and labour by at least 20%. Another satisfied client was the airline Transavia; by combining aircraft maintenance planning with the planning of all the company's required resources, we were able to extend the maintenance interval by more than 10%.

### In terms of supply chain optimisation, do you have a flagship product or technology that you deploy?

We use the Quintiq application suite, a generic platform and software product for the creation and deployment of supply chain planning and optimisation solutions, which is capable of solving multiple industry issues. Our focus is on making sure we address bottleneck resources in the airport, while at the same time analysing the potential flexibility of the solution. We are able to deal with the combination of multiple resources.

Of course, airports have a lot of key technologies and flight schedules that need to be translated into different systems – our software is able to integrate with all of them. Quintiq expertise is always used strategically where it brings the highest value.

### How important is time efficiency?

It is essential. Think of it this way: if an aircraft comes in late, that means that the meals have to be there later; which, in turn, means that resources need to be elevated later, creating an impact on where those resources will go next.

If a flight gets delayed, there also are several potential ramifications regarding the number of people needed at a certain point in time. That is the biggest challenge. When you look at our industry, you have to look at performance, but it is much more about making sure we deliver on time.

### Do you offer any training?

Yes. An integral part of our methodology is to make sure that we have a happy, productive customer. That means providing training on the job, but also making sure that the solution is 100% fitted to their needs and that any future training requirements are matched. We make sure that the product is aligned with the customer.

### How will Quintiq continue to stay ahead of the curve and support its customers? Do you have any projects in the pipeline?

Yes. One thing we are doing right now is helping airports to assimilate larger amounts of infrastructure and resources. This is one of the specific reasons why we were approached by Brussels Airport, a growing regional airport catering to an increasing number of smaller regional airlines.

Of course, with more customers, there was a big concern around the amount of check-in desks they would have to buy, but with our solution they have been able to efficiently manage those desks – as well as other infrastructure changes – and allow their growth to continue, all without the need for new infrastructure.

In terms of what is driving us forward, I believe it goes back to the fact that we are able to provide airports with flexibility, as opposed to the array of single solution commonly found on the market. This is what differentiates us from our competitors. ■

#### Further information

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