Future-proofing airport worker on-boarding to cope with demand

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Introduction

Airport pass offices are a fundamental cog in the wheel of an airport’s day to day operations. The pass office team in airports of all sizes have the responsibility to securely on-board every individual that requires access to work in the airport, either on a temporary or permanent basis. As with passenger numbers, staff working at airports fluctuate according to seasonal demand.

But the additional challenge that many airport pass offices face worldwide is the impact of large new infrastructure projects to address the projected long-term increase in passenger numbers. With major construction projects comes high volumes of contractors that require access to the airport environment. If the pass office isn’t working efficiently, it can have severe repercussions on the rest of the airport, affecting timings of construction projects, staff shortages and perhaps most importantly, the passenger experience.

Key Points

- If the pass office isn’t working efficiently, it can have severe repercussions on the rest of the airport.
- A multifaceted approach must be taken which technology can facilitate.
- Airports must work smarter and utilise the technologies available in order to alleviate the growing pressures of demand.
- By investing in future-proofed technology, airports are able to streamline daily operations and reap the rewards of efficiency.
A paperless solution

The traditional approach of checking every paper-based application and individually contacting each signatory when inaccuracies are found is an inefficient use of resources and for many global airports is no longer feasible due to the volume of applications. In order to efficiently and effectively manage the high volume of pass applications and complex requirements of each airport, a multifaceted approach must be taken which technology can facilitate.

There are systems available that can automate and streamline the process of airport pass applications. This technology helps to alleviate the burden on the airport pass office, speeds up the turnaround time to process applications, and in turn, reduces costs for the airport through greater efficiency.

Automation systems, such as MTrust (a Human Recognition Systems product), send automatic online notifications and updates to signatories that have applied for passes, meaning there is reduced need for direct communication and involvement from the pass office. The time spent on each application can be significantly reduced for both the signatory and the pass office. MTrust also facilitates compliance with regulations, by making the worker’s profile accessible and checkable online and automatically flagging any errors or inaccuracies in the information provided, reducing the headache of compliance and audit.

Streamlining the process

MTrust enables time-saving efficiencies to be achieved, providing the ability for signatories to print temporary passes once applications are approved. This means workers can go straight to their designated area of the airport, rather than to the pass office to collect their pass in person, which could never have been possible with the paper-based system. This ability is particularly beneficial when airports need to employ temporary staff at short notice, during large infrastructure projects, for example.

Typically, temporary passes provide access to the airport for 1-5 days and a maximum of 12 passes can be issued each year per individual. By moving to an online platform, the system can be set up to customise the pass access, according to requirements. For example, London City Airport gained approval from the Department of Transport (DFT) to issue a 120 day pass for a particular construction company and MTrust was tailored to implement this rule.

Another key advantage of automation systems is integration with third party systems. For example, MTrust can be integrated with background checking systems or local Police platforms to speed up the process of validating identity. Another key integration is into the access control system at the airport. This means that all the data provided in the initial pass application, such as the access areas required, is automatically passed to the access control system. An additional layer of administration by the pass office is therefore removed and the process is streamlined.
This integration was important for Keflavik International Airport, who had been particularly impressed with the interface between MTrust and the access control system and its automation efficiencies during a visit to a major UK airport. Keflavik was experiencing year on year growth, which inevitably led to a parallel growth in employees and therefore an increase in the number of airport pass applications. They looked to MTrust in order to achieve their objectives of making the process quicker and easier and achieve greater efficiencies.

These efficiency benefits were also critical for Gatwick Airport in the restructuring of its pass office. Automation provided through MTrust means that less temporary staff are needed in the pass office to cope with fluctuating seasonal demands. This provides significant cost-savings for the airport whilst also maintaining quick turnaround times for passes.

Reaping the rewards

Airports must work smarter and utilise the technologies available in order to alleviate the growing pressures of demand. This includes being smarter about the technologies applied to the whole airport, including staff as well as passengers.

By investing in future-proofed technology, airports are able to streamline daily operations and reap the rewards of efficiency. Ultimately, automation enables improved turnaround time for applications so that workers can access the airport to carry out their jobs within a timely manner, ensuring high customer service levels are maintained and reducing costs for the airport.

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