



Aviation: Maintaining flight operations with professional methods
AT CONDOR, FACT24 “FIRST ON THE SCENE” IN ALERT PROCEDURES

Client



Sector

Transport (Aviation)

Problem

At Condor, immediate response to any disruption of flight operations caused by, say, technical or weather problems, is paramount. A particularly critical factor is rapid response by the internal crisis management team within the first hour of disruption. Timely implementation of appropriate countermeasures is the only method of enabling normal flight operations to be resumed as soon as possible.

Solution

Condor introduced **FACT24** Notification and Conferencing Service for the event of disruption to flight operations. A focal part of the service is the automatic arrangement of spontaneous conference calls enabling the internal crisis management team to assess the situation and decide on follow-up action. Additional groups, e.g. local on-site representatives, can join the conference call if the situation requires.

Benefits

- Notification of specialists via telephone, mobile phone or SMS
- Spontaneous conference calls for emergency task force
- Communication solution can be deployed at international level
- High system stability

CONDOR was founded in 1955 in Kelsbach, Germany, under the name “Deutsche Flugdienst GmbH” and renamed “Condor” in 1961. Today the company is part of travel corporation Thomas Cook AG. Condor is a charter airline serving a wide range of destinations and operating a fleet of 37 aircraft with total seating capacity of 8,000. Until the end of the 1990s Condor was a subsidiary of Lufthansa. In 2002, in the course of the merger of Condor and Neckermann Touristik, the company was renamed Thomas Cook Airlines, reverting to the name Condor after rebranding at the end of May 2004. In 2006 Condor will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

BASELINE POSITION AND CHALLENGE ::

Since Condor’s foundation the airline’s top priority in case of disruptions to flight operations has been to implement rapid response and immediate launch of appropriate action to restore operations as soon as possible. The hub of this rapid response plan is the Operations Control Center (OCC), a communication centre operating 365 days a year around the clock, which is responsible for informing all responsible parties in the event of disruption to flight operations. The crisis management team analyses the situation and implements follow-up action. Previous emergency procedures, where the OCC had manually telephoned a personnel contact, had tied up key personnel resources at the OCC during the first hour of an emergency. In 2000, Condor began to investigate professional methods of automating notification and alert processes.

SOLUTION ::

Although Condor had originally envisaged an internal communication solution,

the contract was finally awarded to **F24**, thus eliminating unnecessary blockage of Operations Control Center resources for notification procedures in emergency situations.

F24’s FACT24 service supplied the solution to all Condor’s requirements. Location independence and international availability were further benefits of the **FACT24** service that clinched the decision in its favour. Both the system administration and the full range of alert messages can be customized to the desired languages – an essential advantage for an international airline.

REALIZATION ::

Condor launched the **FACT24** project phase in 2003. Thomas Bolten, Head of Crew Planning, was responsible for internal operational planning. Entry and mapping of the possible emergency scenarios in the **FACT24** systems was completed rapidly and smoothly, and the system was fully set up ready to go in only a few days.

Now, as soon as, say, a hurricane begins to brew in the Caribbean, requiring flights to be postponed or diverted or hotel rooms to be organized for stranded passengers, the coordination centre in Frankfurt launches the appropriate predefined alert process. The internal crisis management team, comprising representatives of the company’s various units, is notified in all alerts; depending on the scenario additional groups, e.g. local representatives in the region affected, can be notified.

Notifying Crisis Management Teams

When the crisis management team is notified by telephone landline, mobile phone or SMS, a message is relayed giving specific information on the emergency,



First on the Scene

« In the event of disruption to flight operations, **FACT24** lightens the load for the Operations Control Center in the all-important first few minutes by taking over reliable notification of the crisis management team. The smooth, fast arrangement of global conference calls helps the crisis management team to get the situation rapidly under control and enable normal operations to be resumed as soon as possible. »

Thomas Bolten, Head of Crew Planning at Condor

such as flight number, crew and number of passengers etc. Depending on the situation, notification or alert procedures are launched or a telephone conference called. In the event of an alert, persons contacted acknowledge receipt of the message via their telephone keypad by entering their estimated time to reach the scene or the Frankfurt head office. The alert process can take account of priorities, deputizing arrangements or working and leisure hours. The emergency operations planning team at the Operations Control Center is supplied with ongoing information about the alert status via e-mail or fax (arrival time of individual staff members, etc.).

Conference Calls Spanning the Globe

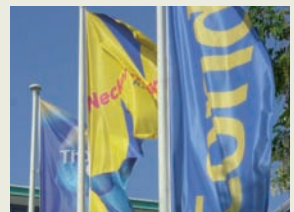
For Condor, the most important function of **FACT24** is the conference call service. The faster the crisis management team can be assembled in a conference call, the faster and smoother the response. At the touch of a button and without the need for preparation time or manual dialling, the service establishes spontaneous telephone conferences between the members of the crisis management team, corporate management and specialists. The necessary contacts are called at their landline or mobile numbers and automatically merged into a conference call, establishing personal communication between the participants within minutes. Condor thus saves valuable time in the event of an emergency.

Depending on the situation, the conference call can incorporate additional participants. For example, if a hurricane rises in the Caribbean, Condor's North American headquarters in Chicago or local agents

at airports in the regions affected can join the call.

Rehearsing for Emergencies: Realistic Test Alerts

Condor must always be prepared for all eventualities, and staff must be well-versed in implementing the procedures in place for alerts and disruption. For this reason, the company conducted an introductory **FACT24** training course for responsible staff members, and since then has prioritized regular test alerts. Normal test alerts are held twice a year; in addition, every two years an unannounced test alert is held in which a realistic emergency scenario is simulated.



Pictures: Condor



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