Time to rethink ground handling

Providing the same high quality at lower and lower prices is a tough task to master. It is an issue on which airlines and ground handlers tend to have differing views, too. So, perhaps it is time to ask a few basic questions about major changes that might be needed.

THE CURRENT CRISIS situation is only adding – and adding substantially – to the pressure being placed on ground handlers from all quarters.

On the one side are the airlines who are now willing to embark on electronic auctions to negotiate their handling fees as low as they can go; on the other are the ground handlers who are striving to secure the critical mass they need to survive, while also seeking their own salvation through productivity increases and acquisitions (or both).

It is a dangerous spiral and one that may end up inflicting severe damage to all concerned. When services are degraded to little more than commodities and financial results become the be-all and end-all of the business, we are entitled to wonder and worry just where our industry is heading.

This is especially so in a service industry where success depends first and foremost on the extra efforts of frontline staff.

So, instead of blaming one another and permanently locking horns over the cost/benefit equation, perhaps the parties involved should ask themselves some new questions: what services do we expect to obtain for a certain price? And what services are we able to offer for the price concerned?

It is a crucial consideration: with financial resources clearly limited, it is even more vital to offer and obtain the right service package.

That is why it can no longer be enough to simply demand the lowest price; asking for the best possible package for a particular amount could be a far more viable approach. After all, a youngster in a shop with a dollar in his hand must also decide how to spend his valuable but limited funds!

In fact, some airlines are already going a step further and asking themselves an even more basic question: is it really worth doing so much ourselves? Would it not make more sense to entrust certain services to a specialist provider? The outsourcing issue is one that is sure to concern us increasingly over the coming months.

Swissport welcomes all these new thoughts and trends; and we will be doing our utmost to provide innovative solutions in response. After all, a partnership approach to optimising our operations offers us all far better prospects than the current cost/benefit spiral and expectations that have become increasingly difficult to meet.

So, let us use the present difficulties as an opportunity to ask new questions. And let’s work together to find the best answers – for everyone concerned.

Stephan Beerli
Network know-how

When Swissport International acquired Cargo Service Center in October 2002, it gained a company with an outstanding network of stations around the world – the power of which is nowhere better illustrated than in Germany.

IT HAS BEEN a roller coaster few years for Heath White, General Manager at Swissport Cargo Services (SCS) Germany, formerly Cargo Service Center. Since arriving in 1995, White has worked under four general managers as the handler developed from small beginnings into one with the strongest network of any operator in Germany.

And now it is White’s turn in the hot seat. In January 2002, he took over as General Manager from previous incumbent and fellow Englishman, Paul Arnold. Some 14 months on, White leads a young, dynamic team of station managers with its sights set firmly on the next stage in the company’s development.

Today, SCS operates a powerful network that allows White to cross-sell services the length and breadth of the country. Currently, SCS provides terminal warehouse operations at nine airports: Berlin Tegel, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover, Munich, Nuremberg and Stuttgart.

It also partners with airport companies at a further six, smaller locations: Bremen, Cologne, Dortmund, Leipzig, Munster/Osnabruck and Hahn.

Carriers such as Austrian Airlines and KLM have already taken full advantage and turned to SCS at up to 15 locations. In addition, most customers have multi-station contracts, with all the associated benefits of simplified administration, a standard base of services and one point of contact.

SCS handles close to 130,000 tonnes of cargo in Germany with Frankfurt, the company’s showcase station, accounting for roughly 40% of all revenue.

“Every station contributes to the network’s overall strength, but Frankfurt is the absolute centre of our activity,” explains White.

Currently, SCS handles close to 50,000 tonnes per year at Frankfurt, of which 15% is transit cargo.

“Our customer base comprises 10 key flown and trucked cargo carriers for whom we provide full document and physical handling services as well as distribution products throughout Europe for import and export cargo,” explains Toralf Sonntag, Station Manager, Frankfurt.

In just four years, SCS has nearly trebled the amount of cargo handled at Frankfurt. However, from 1 April, the company will increase total volumes by a further 50% when it begins handling Swiss WorldCargo.

“To handle Swiss, we will increase our warehouse space from 6,000 square metres to 8,300 square metres and add 30 employees,” explains delighted Sonntag. “Swiss fits very well in to our operation as we have a lot of experience with such a hub product.”

Network integration

SCS has always adopted a flexible management structure with station managers working to a general service framework for basic contracting, but free to suit the product to the local market.

This approach will continue as integration with new parent Swissport enters its final stages – a process made even more challenging by Swissport’s additional acquisition of the German ground handling business of Menzies (see Swissreporter, Issue 9) last year.

This move added operations at 10 German airports – including three that were new to Swissport – as well as two specific cargo operations, in Hanover and Hamburg. For SCS, the incorporation does not add any new locations, but it does bring several important airline customers.

White’s task is to bring the old Menzies stations on board and integrate the additional customers.

“We offer everything from planning complex distribution products for our largest customer, KLM, to simple acceptance products. Most importantly, we give our customers the flexibility, speed and care they require; quality is not just what we talk about, it is what we actually give. Unquestionably, there have been difficulties in arriving at the position we are in today, but we were strong enough to obtain operational stability and a solid customer base. Now we can continue investing in our position and good name.”

“SCS Germany

The Munich station has grown to become one of SCS’s top five stations in Germany. This has proved challenging, but we have won our fight to obtain all necessary licences. Today, we have direct ramp access and offer full physical and document handling from our 1,500-square-metre facility. In the spring, Lufthansa will open its new terminal, which will help Munich develop further as the airline’s second hub in Germany – a development that makes it even more crucial to keep in close contact with potential customers.”

TORALF SONNTAG – STATION MANAGER, FRANKFURT

KAY SCHWARZ – STATION MANAGER, MUNICH

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Meanwhile, full integration of the former Menzies operations into Swissport Cargo Services Deutschland GmbH should be finished by 1 April. It is part of a wider reshuffle that will result in the amalgamation of all Swissport businesses in Germany and the neat packaging of passenger, operations, ramp, cargo and other related services into separate, limited companies.

At Frankfurt, where the business is predominantly flown cargo, much is made of the need for direct ramp access to attract customers. Having begun operations off-airport, SCS moved three times before gaining the ramp access required to handle flown products.

“By taking Swiss we know that our current building is where we will spend at least our middle-term future at Frankfurt,” notes White. Although the current warehouse is in a constant process of change, White points out that SCS has kept to its original handling style, with the focus on operating a quick, efficient warehouse building.

“We have not restricted ourselves with high-flown technical systems which would compromise our edge. Throughout our network, we work in the same way with a strong but highly flexible product at our core.”

In Frankfurt, as elsewhere in the network, White is keen to attract additional key accounts. Already, both Cathay Pacific and Korean Airlines have agreed to sample the SCS approach at seven stations across Germany.

One important reason for their coming to SCS, says White, is that his team can deliver all the required IATA computer-messaging through an in-house IT system, Cascade.

“More and more carriers require real-time information on the status of their shipments,” explains White. “We are not only highly effective in our warehousing, but also in the transmission of information via SITA or the internet.”

Meanwhile, in other initiatives, SCS has already developed a series of in-house performance measurement tools and is now implementing the quality certification AHS 1000.

“These efforts will be used to really bind us to customers and resolve any weaknesses in the handling chain,” explains White. “Above all, they help us to change.”

Working with KLM has already allowed SCS to become experts in hub handling at Frankfurt and Hanover, while contracts with Austrian Airlines and Qatar Airways have enabled SCS to develop distribution products throughout Germany and Europe.

With an outstanding team in place, the SCS boss is clearly looking forward to the year ahead.

“The most important thing I learnt in 2002 was how strongly bonded our Germany team is,” explains White. “We all stuck together during good times and bad, with everyone helping each other as a matter of course.

“It was fascinating and so positive. I don’t know of any other company that works so well together.”

Richard Rowe

JOHN BAIZE – STATION MANAGER, STUTTGART

“SCS Stuttgart began life with a small operation that was limited by the airport’s monopoly on airfreight handling and space. However, with the implementation of EU handling liberalisation, we pursued all actions necessary to obtain our service licence and the space issue was finally resolved in June 2001 when we moved into a larger 1,000-square-metre warehouse at the newly constructed Air Cargo Center. Today, after a difficult period for the whole industry, tonnage is building back to previous levels.”

FLEXIBILITY

White is now examining the opportunity to sell ramp, passenger and cargo operations as a package throughout Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

Such creative selling will add to SCS’s reputation for flexibility, an important attribute that has helped the company secure a foothold in a challenging market.

The situation is particularly interesting at larger airports such as Frankfurt and Munich where airport operators not only function as SCS’s main licencing contacts, but also the company’s chief competitors.

“Throughout our network, we work with a strong but highly flexible product at our core.”

Heath White

Just a click away

http://www.swissport.com

OUR MAN IN GERMANY

Having graduated from the UK’s Birmingham University with a degree in German and History, Heath White moved to Germany in 1992 and pursued a two-year Ausbildung, or apprenticeship, in economics.

He subsequently landed a position performing documentation work at SCS’s Berlin operation, but was soon representing the company on a variety of domestic and overseas projects.

When SCS changed from regional to country management in 1997, Heath was made Operations Manager, based in Berlin. In 2001, he was appointed acting General Manager and then given the position full time.

Today, at just 33, Heath manages 260 people and oversees one of SCS’s most interesting and challenging operations.

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Swissport scoops industry Oscar

After a challenging 12 months, Swissport is delighted to announce its success in winning the Institute of Transport Management’s Global Ground Handler of the Year Award 2003 – for the third time in a row.

BY THE TIME HOLLYWOOD announced this year’s Oscar winners, Swissport had already picked up a similarly prestigious award in its own highly specialised field.

Starting the New Year as it left off, Swissport has won the Institute of Transport Management’s (ITM) prestigious Global Ground Handler of the Year Award for 2003. This follows similar success in 2001 and 2002.

According to Patrick Sheedy, Chairman of the ITM’s Aviation Committee, Swissport scored highly in each area, although special mention was also made of the outstanding customer service provided by staff around the world, as well as the excellent reputation of Swissport’s management teams.

“We appreciate the contribution that our aviation manager members have made to the awards programme and endorse their selection of Swissport for this prestigious accolade,” says Sheedy. “It is a true reflection of the high esteem the company enjoys within the industry.”

“You could say that the first time was lucky, while the second was a kind of confirmation,” adds Beerli. “But to win the award for a third time in a row proves that we definitely hold top spot in the industry.”

It was a year during which Swissport has achieved success through innovation. The handler has worked hard to develop flexible ground handling solutions for an airline industry that now more than ever demands higher quality services at lower cost from their ground handling partners. And as the ground handling industry continues its turbulent ride, Swissport remains steadfast in its commitment to groundbreaking customer service.

“We should feel immense pride, but also be realistic,” warns Beerli. “We now have even more of an obligation to meet our customers’ requirements at all our stations, every day and on every single flight.”

Now with the integration of CSC and the formation of Swissport Cargo Services almost complete, Swissport is better placed than ever to provide a full menu of ground solutions for airline customers. Carriers can benefit from a broader range of services across an even wider global network.

Beerli warmly congratulates Swissport’s more than 18,000 staff around the world, but also throws down an additional challenge. “Winning an award is one thing, but to continue justifying it is entirely another,” he says.

“If we fulfil our pledge to continue meeting our customers’ expectations in the best possible way, then we really will deserve the crown again and again.”

Richard Rowe
Rising to the challenge

AS I WRITE these lines, the whole world is worried about what is happening in the Middle East and its impact on the global economy. The airline industry, again, seems to be particularly exposed in this context. Carriers are taking action already, reducing their capacities to equip themselves to cope with a worst-case scenario.

With all the current uncertainties, it is all too easy to adopt a policy of defeatism and pessimistic passivity. We think, however, that critical situations like the one confronting our industry today should be considered as opportunities to secure our future success.

Despite worries about the war and all the bad news surrounding the world of air transport, Swissport is preparing itself for the upcoming challenges of a once again growing industry. And we are doing so daily through a variety of activities.

Those activities include assimilating the recently acquired cargo company CSC into the Swissport service portfolio, launching our franchising concept, expanding our network through our collaboration with Cambata in India, responding to airlines’ outsourcing enquiries, striving to create an even better and more professional sales organisation and much more.

It is the kind of attitude and approach that we all need to adopt if we are to master the challenges of tomorrow and lay a sound foundation for our future success. That same approach may also be the reason Swissport has just been named best global ground handler for the third year in succession.

Needless to say, we will carry on making every imaginable effort to secure our – and your – success. So, thank you for the confidence you have placed in us. We look forward to continuing to repay your trust in the months and years ahead.

Joseph In Albon
President & CEO
Swissport International Ltd.

INNOVATION

Local strength, global support

Franchising has become more and more of a topic for the ground handling sector and especially for smaller, local providers keen to secure a stronger regional or even global, market presence. Swissport has devised a mould-breaking new partnership model for this promising field.

THE GROUND HANDLING sector has a variety of major changes and challenges ahead. Liberalisation, deregulation and consolidation are daily topics in many parts of the world. Airlines are under massive pressure to minimise their costs. In future, they are sure to want to rely even more heavily on bigger partners that can offer global solutions for their ground handling needs.

So how can a small, local ground handler fit into this scheme? Or perhaps they can’t? It could be that extensive local knowledge and professional niche management is no longer enough to remain attractive and competitive in today’s ground handling market. Maybe their very survival in the medium term is under threat?

Swissport is well aware of the changes the industry is going through. But our aim is to turn such changes to positive effect by promoting collaboration in a shared new direction. That’s why the group has developed a new franchising concept – an innovative approach that could prove excellent news for some smaller ground handlers. It could even help secure their long-term corporate futures.

The franchising system is simple enough, but is one that should help both parties reach their respective business goals. Smaller ground handlers will derive the full benefit of the brand and product profile, advertising, training resources, expertise, central support and management system of a global leader in the ground handling sector.

At the same time, however, they will continue to bear responsibility for their own operations and provide such services with that valuable local thrust.

Swissport, on the other hand, will benefit from collaborating with professional local partners, expanding its own network while avoiding the kind of risky investment that is often required for a brand new “start-up” operation.

It’s a win-win situation. And that’s why Swissport will approach a number of competent, smaller ground handlers over the next few months to discuss this new franchising-based partnership concept in more detail.

All in all, we believe the new model is an excellent response to the challenges ahead, and one that skilfully combines two key ingredients in any successful business: local responsibility and strong global support.

If you would like further details about Swissport’s new partnership concept, mail us at franchising@swissport.com

Stephan Beerli

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British Airways recently invited suppliers to bid for its ground handling business at several stations in France using an online auction – a valuable procurement tool used to rein in costs and add value to operations.

Since first introducing its eAuction procurement tool in 2001, British Airways (BA) has used the concept to buy a variety of goods and services including IT equipment, training modules and third-party fuelling contracts.

The procurement solution – designed to identify the best value for money supplier – plays an important role as part of a wider strategic sourcing policy. BA reports savings of almost £5 million since eAuctions were first introduced.

In February, BA extended the programme into ground handling for the first time when several pre-selected ground service providers, Swissport included, entered bids online to win the carrier’s business originally at three stations in France: Lyon, Toulouse and Bordeaux. However, following initial responses from prospective suppliers, the airline decided to proceed with an eAuction for services at just Lyon and Toulouse.

Ambitious

“Until now, BA had not performed anything as ambitious as an eAuction for ground handling,” explains Jo Harvey, Station Operations Sourcing Executive. “Ground handling is a notoriously complex business, so it was a real challenge.”

Operating as part of a central sourcing team, Harvey has a broad procurement remit that covers most on-airport goods and services. For this particular eAuction, Harvey worked closely with Darren Mayes, the BA executive charged with identifying opportunities and working with buyers through the preparation stages of each eAuction.

“In the case of ground handling, three criteria must be met before an eAuction is even considered: the market has to offer sufficient ground handling competition; BA has to be able to develop a clear specification for handlers; and the airline must be able to establish a pricing model for suppliers to bid against.

If anything, says Mayes, it is a process that enhances rather than diminishes a supplier relationship. This is because of the reliance on transparency, thorough preparation and a rigorous follow-up procedure.

Take the recent eAuction in France, for example, which saw intensive advance preparation. Harvey worked locally with station manager, Claude Hervault, to examine the market and pinpoint BA’s specific needs.

During the review, Harvey pasted specific station requirements on to BA’s generic ground handling agreement to create a clear RFP for potential suppliers.

“If we can help suppliers understand what we are asking for upfront then that makes life a lot easier further down the line,” explains Mayes.

As with all eAuctions, interested suppliers were contacted and taken...
through the process step by step. The preparation included the issue of build-up sheets that outlined BA’s specifications for each station and enabled suppliers to consider their pricing strategy.

“We stressed that handlers should think about their opening price and a walk away price,” explains Mayes.

“The auction is about how close they get to that walk away – we are not looking for a ‘win at all costs’ bidding mentality.”

Suppliers were asked to bid a per annum price for a total ground handling package over a fixed three-year period for the French stations. Those with an eye on offering services at multiple stations were also encouraged to provide details of any incentives available.

**Groundwork**

With all the groundwork performed beforehand, the eAuction itself only took around 30 minutes. Harvey admits it must have been a nerve-wracking experience for suppliers; during the online auction, each handler sees just its own bid on screen and a rank based on the lowest price.

But with suppliers challenged to move closer to their walk away positions, BA sees the process as a much easier and far quicker means of arriving at a market price rather than through more traditional methods of negotiation.

“The really positive thing to emerge is that when I go to those shortlisted suppliers for the follow-up, I don’t have to worry about price issues,” she confirms.

“I must stress, however, that it is about the total cost of ownership and not just the cheapest price – there is little point in buying the cheapest option if the quality is not there.”

With discussions ongoing for the French stations, BA says it is too early to tell what cost savings have been achieved, but is confident that the eAuction process has identified “the market price”.

This is a procurement approach that, by definition, favours full service suppliers. “One of our strategic goals is to reduce our number of suppliers, so we are not looking for multiple suppliers for different ground handling services,” confirms Harvey.

It is also a process that focuses the mind of all parties; handlers have to do more homework up front, while Harvey admits that the process of pulling together an RFP was even more thorough than before because of the need to be highly specific to facilitate the eAuction.

While BA admits that handlers will take time to adjust to this method, the carrier remains convinced that auctions will not only foster best procurement practice but also allow it to work more closely, and productively, with preferred suppliers.

“Holding an eAuction is just a way of achieving market price at a location rather than batting backwards and forwards on price,” comments Harvey.

“I think it definitely helps in terms of building strategic partnerships.”

BA plans to carefully assess the results of the inaugural ground handling eAuction before deciding on adopting a similar tactic elsewhere.

“This was our first eAuction for ground handling and we need to take away the learning from that,” says Harvey.

“I found it a very interesting process and hope the suppliers enjoyed it. I would definitely use it again given the same criteria.”

Richard Rowe
Swissport recently became a majority shareholder in Unitpool, a Swiss company that offers a variety of ULD management services to airlines around the world.

**Swissport Confirmed** an agreement in March to provide ULD supply, management and pooling services together with fellow Swiss company, Unitpool.

Under the agreement, Unitpool will retain its independence, but will look to establish close links throughout the Swissport station network.

Unitpool is now in a strong position to accelerate its expansion by tapping into Swissport’s global reach, while Swissport is able to add comprehensive ULD management expertise to its service menu.

“ULD operations are dependent on good performance by ground handling agents,” explains Philip Hill, Unitpool’s Managing Director and CEO. “By combining our efforts, we will be able to provide improved ULD services to all of our customers.”

Unitpool was established in April 2002 following a management buyout of the former SAir Group company Globepool. Since then, Unitpool has focussed on relieving the many ULD-related headaches that plague airlines such as loss, theft, unnecessary damage and stock imbalances.

Together with Swissport, Unitpool is now the industry’s biggest name in ULD management. Unitpool currently offers either a full service where it takes over an airline’s ULD supply, repair, control and tracking, or a management control only service. Unitpool also maintains global contracts for ULD repair.

Already, says Hill, Unitpool has received enquiries from a variety of airlines, large and small.

“Airlines might contract globally with many different ground handling agents,” explains Hill. “However, we work across the ground handling divide by cooperating with all agents in an airline’s network.”

Current customers include Air Europe, Sobelair, Aeris, Volare, SN Brussels Airlines, Euralair and, most recently, Aer Lingus.

Now with Swissport on board, Unitpool plans to broaden its appeal and extend its global pool of ULDs.

“We look forward to working closely with Swissport and generating further global awareness of our services,” says Hill.

Richard Rowe

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Together with Swissport, Unitpool is now the industry’s biggest name in ULD management.
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SUPPLY CHAIN ■ Performance management

Trouble-free GSE

Despite the turbulence that has beset the industry, Swissport continues to position itself for a bright future thanks to careful planning in areas such as ground support equipment (GSE) management.

E V E R  W O N D E R how many ground support vehicles are not quite in tip-top shape at an airport? Ground handlers certainly know and the number is often higher than hoped. When Swissport took a look at various airports around the world recently, it was clear that many vehicles could benefit from additional maintenance to increase their serviceable life and overall reliability.

Additional industry figures certainly suggest room for improvement – particularly when you consider that equipment failure between scheduled downtimes reduces the dispatch reliability of GSE, overall performance and, of course, return on investment.

While performance and dependability may not necessarily top the priority charts like safety, ground handlers surely tempt fate when they operate unreliable vehicles. It is crucial therefore that GSE owners and operators stick to maintenance schedules and recommended maintenance intervals to keep equipment up and running.

As Swissport continues to streamline and optimise its operations, knowledge management increasingly plays a key role in planning and execution.

We need the ability to forecast manpower requirements, schedule maintenance, analyse parts inventories, develop budgets, and gather historical information on each piece of equipment in order to maintain the expected high standards.

Promoting excellence

As Swissport continues to streamline and optimise its operations, knowledge management increasingly plays a key role in planning and execution. Intelligent metrics in maintenance operations and asset performance are critical to ensure predictable and consistent overall operations.

With this in mind, our GSE maintenance bases in Basel, Geneva and New York have implemented an important maintenance tool that provides a powerful yet flexible knowledge management capability that enables us to measure Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across our maintenance operations.

Of course, the new software would be worth little if our shop staff were not comfortable using it. As such, we also invested in many hours of training to ensure that our primary users understood the system and were fully comfortable with it. These people have now become our functional experts and are able to help out less frequent users.

Customer benefits

Enterprises today are focussed on operational and procedural efficiencies to make them more competitive and responsive across the board. Systems must address business needs both now and in the future, and be suitable for use not only within the organisation, but also together with partners and customers.

With the implementation of our new maintenance system, Swissport International is one such enterprise that is confident of meeting the efficiency needs of customers worldwide.

Mark Salathe

Walk this way: Swissport’s new maintenance system allows the measurement of key performance indicators across its maintenance operations.

It is crucial that GSE owners and operators stick to maintenance schedules and recommended maintenance intervals to keep equipment up and running.

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Some of the more than 650 customers served by Swissport International around the world include:

- Adria Airways
- Aer Lingus
- Aeroflot Russian Intl. Airlines
- Aerolíneas Argentinas
- Aeromexico
- Air 2000
- Air Algérie
- Air Canada
- Air China
- Air India
- Air Japan Airlines Co Ltd.
- Air Jordan
- Air Japan Airlines Co Ltd.
- Air Madagascar
- Air Malta
- Air Mauritius
- Air Seychelles
- Air Transat A.T. Inc.
- Alitalia
- All Nippon Airways
- America West Airlines Inc.
- American Airlines Inc.
- American Trans Air Inc.
- Anatolia
- Arizona Fueling Facilities
- Arkia Israeli Airlines Ltd.
- Asiana Airlines
- Atlas Air Inc.
- Austrian Airlines
- Avianca
- Aviorthex
- BAX Global Inc.
- Belga Airlines AG
- Biman Bangladesh Airlines
- Boston Fueling Corporation
- British Airways
- CargoBeacon Airlines International
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- China Airlines
- China Eastern Airlines
- Conair Flightdepot GmbH
- Congo Airlines
- Continental Airlines Inc.
- Copa Airlines
- Croatia Airlines
- CSA – Czech Airlines
- Cyprus Airways
- Delta Air Lines Inc.
- DHL Worldwide Express
- Emery Worldwide Airlines Inc.
- Emirates
- Ethiopian Airlines
- Eva Airways Corporation
- Federal Express Corporation
- Fellow
- Fort Myers Fuel Committee
- Frequentis Airlines A.S.
- Ghana Airways
- Gol Transports Aéreos
- Gulf Air
- Iberia
- Icelandair
- Japan Airlines Co Ltd.
- JAT – Jugoslav Airlines
- KLM Royal Dutch Airlines
- Korean Air
- KTHY – Kibris Türk Hava Yolari
- Kuwait Airways
- Lacsa
- LAN Chile S.A.
- Lasair Air
- Libyan Arab Airlines
- LOT – Polish Airlines Co
- LOT International Airlines
- Lufthansa
- Malaysia Airlines
- Malaysia Airline System
- Malaysian Airlines
- MEA – Middle East Airlines
- Mesra Airlines
- Mexicana Airlines
- MNG Airlines
- Nippon Cargo Airlines
- North American Airlines Inc.
- Northwest Airlines Inc.
- Northwest Oil Facilities
- Olympic Airways
- Orlando Sanford International
- Pegasus
- PIA – Pakistan Intern. Airlines
- Polar
- Quantas Airways Ltd.
- Qatar Airways
- Royal Air Maroc
- Royal Jordanian
- Saudi Arabian Airlines
- Scandinavian Airlines System
- Singapore Airlines
- SkyMasters
- SN Brussels Airlines
- South African Airways
- South American Airlines
- Spanair S.A.
- SriLankan Airlines Ltd.
- Swiss International Air Lines
- TAAG – Angolan Airlines
- TAP – Air Portugal
- Thai Airways International
- Swissair
- United Airlines
- United Parcel Service
- United Arab Emirates
- United Postal Service
- US Airways
- Varig – Brazilian Airlines
- Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd.
- Virgin Express
- Volare Airlines SpA
- World Airways Inc.
KEY FIGURES FOR 2003

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<th>SWISSPORT</th>
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<td>Number of customers</td>
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<td>Number of employees</td>
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Latest contracts signed

- Atlanta: JAL
- Basel: Onur Air, Euro Ops/Euro Jet
- Berlin: LTU, Air Transat
- Brussels: Air Lingus, Antinea Airlines, British Midland Regional, E.A.E., Malmo Aviation, Nordia Airlink, THAI
- Cancun: Air Nostrum, Iberia
- Chicago: Air Lingus, Aeromexico, Air Jamaica, Apple Vacations Inc, TACA
- Frankfurt: Air Transat, Northwest Airlines, Swiss Cargo
- Geneva: Air Lingus, Antinea Airlines, British Midland Regional, E.A.E., Malmo Aviation, Nordia Airlink, THAI
- Hanover: Air Nostrum, Iberia
- Johannesburg: Phoenetus Apollo
- Las Vegas: Omni Air International
- Liège: TMA Cargo
- Lima: Avianca
- London: Swiss Cargo
- Los Angeles: Air Lingus
- Miami: Alaska Airlines, Pan American
- Newark/EWR: Active Aero, BAX Global
- New York/JFK: Austrian Airlines, Ghana Airways, Malev, Pakistan Intl. Airlines, Universal Airways
- Puerto Plata: Westjet Airlines
- Punta Cana: ZTA
- Santo Domingo: Jet2Go
- São Paulo: AirEuropa, Lapa
- Seattle: American Transair, Scandinavian Airlines System
- Thessaloniki: British Royal Air Force
- Vienna: Air Lingus, Air Valee S.p.A., Iberia
- Washington/IAD: Austrian Airlines, TACA
- Zürich: Germanwings, Hahn Airlines, Volare
PEOPLE  ■  The oil in our machine

A day in the life of ...

So, you think you’ve got what it takes to become part of Swissport’s worldwide pool of talent? Here’s how two outstanding people use their skills to make a difference for customers every day.

**Crime busters**

As Swissport Kenya’s Security Manager at Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Paul Rungu oversees the largest team of security staff in the Swissport network.

It is a complex operation and Paul’s security team has already grown from 50 to 80 agents in three years.

Prior to his arrival, damage to passengers’ property and pilferage from sort areas and aircraft holds was common at the airport, as was petty theft from the aircraft cabin itself.

But Paul came to Swissport after 11 years in the Kenyan police force and knows crime prevention inside out: by the time Paul left the force he had risen to the rank of superintendent in charge of training at the CID headquarters in Nairobi.

The combination of investigative, administrative and public relations skills that typify modern-day police work helped Paul adjust to life at Swissport.

“That exposure has been key to my easy integration into the Swissport family,” he says.

Nonetheless, Paul still had to adapt from a background in military training to a civilian management role.

“This meant dealing not only with local customers, but also international clients, which requires a very open mind to different ideas,” he adds.

On arrival, Paul reorganised the security department, unified the workforce and channelled the collective energy of the group towards creating a safer, more secure airport environment.

Today, strict measures are in place to combat petty crime, including thorough body searches for all personnel allocated duties at certain points.

“We now have a highly motivated, disciplined and well-trained security team, which is the envy of many at the airport,” explains Paul. “What brings me great happiness is the fact that we have managed to bring theft and pilferage cases down to almost nil.”

Of course, as terrible events in Mombassa last year demonstrated, the threat in Kenya and other parts of the world involves much more than just petty theft.

“The fact that Kenya has been hit by international terrorists twice means that we have a very delicate and tough job to do,” admits Paul. “That’s why we don’t compromise on security matters.”

While the government has beefed up airport security, Paul believes Swissport has made the airport airtight. “We ensure that 100% passenger and baggage screening takes place, while aircraft are guarded to the hilt and no unauthorised persons are allowed near them,” he explains.

**Paul Rungu**

Paul is 41 years old, married, with three children. Brought up in rural Kenya, he graduated from Kenyatta University with a Bachelor of Education. Paul taught in a secondary school and then spent 11 years in the Kenyan police force prior to joining Swissport in 2000.

“A serious security person is on duty 24 hours a day,” believes Paul.

Here is a typical day at Nairobi International Airport:

6.30 am: Arrive at the airport and look through the security report book. Any incidents noted are followed up with the supervisor/agents on duty
8.00 am: Visit the ramp area for the morning flights and oversee operations
11.00 am: Return to the office for administrative duties
2.00 pm: Back to the ramp area to direct operations for the afternoon
5.00 pm: Speak with duty staff about night operations. Impromptu personal visits to check the team guarding equipment overnight sometimes continue to 1.00 am

**FAST FACT**

Swissport security customers at Nairobi include South African Airways, British Airways, El Al, the British Royal Air Force, Alliance Express, SN Brussels Airlines and Swiss.

Paul Rungu with Security Supervisor Josephine Wambua.

The hard work has definitely paid off and Paul is quick to congratulate his staff: “We can now boast a unified, committed team that is doing a really commendable job for all of our customers.”

Ready for action: Paul Rungu (centre) together with colleagues Francis Koimburi and Josephine Wambua.
Cana – but is considered one of a kind. First, it is the only station in the Dominican Republic where Swissport provides a full menu of ground services that includes passenger, ramp and executive aviation handling.

But it is also a full service with a twist. What really makes La Romana unique is that Swissport is also the only company entrusted to provide full passenger and baggage handling for cruise ships at the nearby port. Airlines such as Condor operate fly-cruise packages, and Swissport coordinates all of the passenger and baggage handling between the air and seaports. On other occasions, however, there is no onward connection at the airport and Swissport operates as a 100% cruise ship handler – a non-aviation related service that is unique within the Swissport network.

Work began with the cruise ships in December and Swissport handled more than 2,470 passengers in the first month. “We currently provide the service four days a week,” explains Hector. “The high season for cruises runs between the end of November through May.”

Thanks to Swissport, passengers connecting from Condor flights enjoy a smooth journey from the airport – about 20 minutes drive by road – before sailing away on ships bearing evocative names such as Romantica and Millennium.

“We meet the cruise ships and deliver passengers and their baggage from the pier to the airport and back again,” says Hector.

For Hector, variety really is the spice of life and it is balancing the two operations, air and sea, that is perhaps the greatest challenge.

Plane sailing
Most Swissport managers expect to oversee the handling of aircraft during their day-to-day work. For Hector Mercedes, however, this is only half the job: as Station Manager for Swissport Dominicana’s La Romana station, he is also in charge of a thriving cruise ship handling operation.

Swissport has only operated at La Romana since November 2002, but Hector and his team have quickly built the largest handling operation at the airport, serving 80% of all traffic.

La Romana is Swissport’s fourth station on the island – after Santo Domingo, Puerto Plata and Punta Cana – but is considered one of a kind. First, it is the only station in the Dominican Republic where Swissport provides a full menu of ground services that includes passenger, ramp and executive aviation handling.

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Our Swiss division now has its own page in Swissreporter to update readers on all the latest news and developments from the largest national organisation within the Swissport International Group.

**Swissport Switzerland at work**

Swissport Switzerland – the amalgamation of our three stations in Basel, Geneva and Zürich – has now become a reality, even if the foundation of an “AG” Swiss joint-stock company has been postponed.

Following our coming together, several working groups are now exploring ways to exploit the synergies available in our various marketing, finance, IT, HR and training units to ensure that we provide such services faster, more efficiently and even more cost-effectively.

**Zürich**

Zürich’s centralised load control

Swissport Zürich has discovered that the ability of CUTE to allow the performance of handling services via a variety of IT systems does not just impact on passenger services; it poses quite a challenge for Zürich’s load control operations, too. And innovative solutions are being devised in response.

Lufthansa, for example, introduced new centralised load control from Frankfurt via its Lufthansa Load Control System on 8 January – the day the airline’s check-in also switched to the Starcheck system.

The centralised solution has already been successfully pioneered at Frankfurt and Düsseldorf and we are proud that Zürich has become the first non-German Lufthansa station to adopt this centralised load control procedure.

Under the new arrangement, all basic data on the flights is stored in the Lufthansa weight and balance system. The relevant cargo, passenger and baggage data is also processed in Frankfurt, with the responsible coordinator at the aircraft confirming it has actually been loaded. Frankfurt then transmits the ACARS load sheet directly to the cockpit crew.

The cutover on 8 January went smoothly thanks to a preparation phase that saw a true collaborative effort between all parties involved: Lufthansa, Sita, EDS, Airport Authority Unice and Swissport.

The “simple” procedure had a few snags to be ironed out, as discovered following implementation. The arrangement also demands extreme flexibility from our staff who no longer have all the data in their own hands, but are now reliant to some extent on other parties.

We are confident, however, that the new arrangement not only meets a customer demand, but also helps us perform our work more efficiently.

**Pushback milestone**

The date 15 November marked a milestone in the Zürich station operations when, at 12.30 pm, a Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 became the first aircraft to be pushed back from its stand by a Swissport Zürich pushback tractor. Previously, this service was only provided by SR Technics.

Pushback services were conducted in advance of the new operation, especially in the training of our pushback drivers. Having completed six weeks of theoretical and practical instruction in Basel (by Swissport Basel) and Zürich, our drivers are now applying what they learnt to ensure operations are as smooth and safe as possible.

The full operation started on 1 January and 47 airlines are currently under contract to be pushed back by Swissport at Zürich. A lot of our customers are still parked on remote stands where pushback is not needed, but this will, of course, change with the opening of the new Midfield Terminal.

Today’s situation means that we only have an average of 40 pushbacks per day. First experience shows that the efforts we put in training and equipment have paid off and a reliable and efficient organisation handles our customers’ precious aircraft.

This new pushback service adds a further component to the full range of ground handling products offered to our airline customers in Zürich.

**Basel**

Swissport Basel is pleased to announce:

- The signing of new handling contracts with Air2000 and Inter-Sky
- The extension of our present contract with Hapag Lloyd for a further term to 2005
- The return of Korean Air Cargo with one weekly full-freighter service
- Extensive preparations were conducted in advance of the new operation, especially in the training of our pushback drivers. Having completed six weeks of theoretical and practical instruction in Basel (by Swissport Basel) and Zürich, our drivers are now applying what they learnt to ensure operations are as smooth and safe as possible.

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INTERVIEW: EUROPEAN COMMISSION

GROUND HANDLING DIRECTIVE ■ First report card

Liberalisation under the microscope

UK consultant SH&E recently completed a study reviewing the impact of the European Commission (EC) Directive on ground handling at European airports. The study involved visits to stakeholders at 33 airports as well as a postal survey conducted with a further 48 airports. Swissreporter asked Roderic van Voorst from the EC (DG Transport and Energy) Airport Policy and Security Unit about its findings.

Swissreporter: Please explain why the EC undertook this first report on the impact of the Directive.

Roderic van Voorst: Article 22 of the EC Directive on ground handling (Council Directive 96/67/EC on access to the ground handling market at Community airports) requires that the Commission draw up a report on the implementation of the Directive a number of years after its coming into effect, and that this report be accompanied by proposals for revision. The study enables the Commission to draw up that report.

Who was involved in the review and how well was it received?

SH&E met with representatives of the airport operator, the Airport Users’ Committee, the Airport Operators’ Committee, independent handlers and self-handling airlines. At several airports, the consultant also met with worker representatives.

I would say it was welcomed positively, and for two reasons: first, stakeholders felt it was appropriate and timely to undertake a survey some years after the coming into effect of the Directive; and, second, they praised the consultant for the high quality and the accuracy of the study.

And how did the stakeholders provide input?

Stakeholders, as well as Member States’ authorities, contributed by providing SH&E with all the information necessary to assemble the relevant data and facts. This was done through questionnaires and face-to-face interviews.

Also, the Commission organised an in-between meeting with SH&E and stakeholders to provide an opportunity to comment on interim results reflected in a draft final report and to provide the consultant with corrections and additional information.

What were the key findings of the review?

The main findings are that, in general, airport users (i.e. airlines) have noticed an improvement in the provision of ground handling services since the introduction of the Directive in terms of quality and especially price.

However, it is viewed that it is not just the Directive that has brought about changes in the ground handling market. Changes in the industry and the market itself, such as continuous cost cutting of airlines and some movement towards consolidation among handlers, have also had a significant impact on quality and price.

Does the study highlight Member States where liberalisation has either gone too far or not nearly far enough?

Rather than singling out particular countries or markets, the study finds that in those places/airports where the implementation of the Directive a number of years after its coming into effect has been the losers in the liberalisation process as their existing monopolies were most affected.

The airlines and also the handlers, however, are very positive. As far as the Commission is concerned, the main objective of the Directive i.e. gradual liberalisation has certainly been met. The findings, which follow an extensive survey among all stakeholders, confirm this.

Certainly, there is always room for improvement and the Commission services will instigate the necessary preparations for this.

What happens now in terms of future action and policy decisions?

The Commission services will prepare the report and a proposal for a revision of the Directive. Before doing so, it is likely that a consultation paper will be discussed with Member States and stakeholders first, so as to test the Commission’s ideas for amending the Directive.

Interview: Richard Rowe

On a more cautious note, it was found that at airports where the ground handling markets have been completely opened (at the initiative of Member States and/or airports themselves) such as at the large UK airports and Amsterdam Schiphol, there has been a sudden rise in service providers, hence a drop in prices, but also in quality. Then, over time and after a “shake-out”, the situation became balanced again.

Also, some Member States have been reluctant to fully and faithfully transpose the Directive into their national legislation and as a result liberalisation in these Member States is limited. With regard to these countries, the Commission is forced to take legal action.

To your mind, how successful has liberalisation of ground handling services been in Europe?

We should bear in mind that any negative comments have come mainly from the airports, which may have
After several rounds of meetings over recent months, the independent ground handling community now has a new vehicle for highlighting industry concerns and pursuing best practice.

THE INTERNATIONAL Aviation Handlers’ Association (IAHA) is up and running. The new organisation is the successor to the Independent Aircraft Handling Association, but promises to be a more dynamic and broader-based body.

Its formation is based on the firm objective of highlighting key industry issues and helping drive our sector towards the best possible solutions.

The new IAHA is the product of several meetings over the last few months in which key players in the ground handling industry have sat together to determine where the sector is heading and how they could create an industry-wide organisation to represent their interests and concerns. In doing so, the IAHA aims to put a special focus on the needs of independent ground handling companies.

But that’s not all. Further aims of the new IAHA include:

- Representing the ground handling industry in the world air transport and airport sectors
- Providing a forum for exchanging views and concerns
- Developing industry-wide standards and solutions
- Cultivating contacts with other associations
- Training its members to further raise the industry’s professional standards

Membership of the new IAHA is open to any ground handlers around the world that are not owned or controlled by an airline or an airport.

IAHA aims to put a special focus on the needs of independent ground handling companies.

The IAHA board has already been established and comprises a broad base of senior members representing ground handling companies from the US, Europe and the Middle East.

In addition, IAHA has also established several key working groups, which means that the association is now fully functional and ready to begin its work. Current plans call for two general meetings a year together with regular communications to all members.

The IAHA is keen to emphasise, however, that it has no intention of violating any anti-trust legislation or engaging in any anti-competitive activities.

For further details and information on how to join, please visit the organisation’s website at www.iaha.info

Stephan Beerli
Network News and Views

**SWISSPORT EUROPE**

**European management changes**

John Mc Donagh will succeed Jean-Didier Savioz as Head of Division Europe from 1 April. Mc Donagh, former CEO of Cargo Service Center and currently Head of Swissport’s cargo operations, will be responsible for all European operations from his base in Frankfurt. He will be supported by Michel F. Jansen as the new CFO Europe.

Meanwhile, Jean-Didier Savioz moves to Nice to assume overall responsibility for both cargo and passenger handling, effective 1 June. For his regional and local cargo managers, Bertsch will in future be further supported by two dedicated key account managers.

Swissport also continues to assess candidates for the position of CEO in Germany following the departure of Thomas Neff to take up an executive management post at a Swiss public transport company.

Finally, Paul Arnold, former Country Head of CSC, has been designated CEO of Swissport UK with overall responsibility for all cargo activities. Former CEO Mike Maguire will take over new assignments within Swissport International.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

**Swissport and NFS part ways**

Since April 2000, Swissport International and Saudi-based Makshaff Services have enjoyed close levels of cooperation. Much of this centred on a management agreement with National Flight Service (NFS) that involved jointly exploring further business opportunities at three stations in Saudi Arabia.

After nearly three years of working together, the two boards of directors have decided not to prolong the cooperation and terminated the existing agreement, effective 1 February.

Claude Badan, currently General Manager and the representative of Swissport, will remain in the country for two months to cover the busy Hajj period and to ensure a smooth hand over.

**GERMANY**

**Wireless communication**

Swissport Germany is busy testing a cordless headset for communication between ground, cockpit and tow truck during pushback and engine start – the first use of such equipment in Europe.

The headset is a noise-compensated heavy-duty communication unit. This kind of cordless equipment gives ramp agents greater flexibility, not least because they are able to move around the aircraft or in the office without the limitation of a cable.

Station Manager Irene Grell admits that her colleagues even think she has attached her beauty case to the aircraft – as this is what the equipment resembles! Once she has retrieved her belongings, Irene will be more than happy to provide information on the equipment to interested parties at other stations (contact: irene.grell@swissport.com).

**MEXICO**

**Mexican inroads**

In 2002, Swissport Mexico made great strides towards reaching its goal of market leadership in the country. Thanks to outstanding teamwork and forging strong relationships with current and potential customers, Swissport Mexico’s customer portfolio increased 87% in the second half of 2002.

In the period July – December 2002, Swissport Mexico picked up a variety of important customers, including Lauda Air, Eurolly, Lloyd Aero Boliviano, KLM, Belair and Air2000.

Judging from customer feedback, Swissport Mexico is now really reaching the desired quality levels.

“We would like to communicate that after initiation of our handling operations with Swissport we have seen excellent results,” reports Iberia’s Station Manager in Cancún.

“Swissport provides services with characteristics of security and quality which have never been provided to us by another company.”

Silvia Fernández, Da Silva
Avanza salutes Swissport Spain

The Avanza Business & Communication Group has granted Swissport Handling S.A. Spain its Avanza Quality Award in the Category Gold.

The Avanza Award acknowledges Swissport Spain’s continuous effort towards quality, leadership and technological innovation.

Maria Luz Doce

New VP for IT Management

Joachim Aschoff has joined Swissport International as the group’s new VP IT Management. The 38-year-old Aschoff has spent more than a dozen years in the airline and travel industries and worked with high-profile organisations such as Lufthansa, General Electric and Swissair.

“My aim at Swissport is to help the group reach cost transparency as well as develop and implement a company-wide IT strategy,” he explained.

Stephan Beerli

Cambata collaboration

Swissport has expanded its operations to the high-potential Indian market in a multi-year cooperation agreement with Cambata Aviation Pvt. Limited.

Cambata, founded in 1959, is one of the largest and best-known ground handlers in India. The company handled some 8,000 flights on behalf of 18 airlines at its Mumbai and Delhi stations last year.

Swissport aims to use the new partnership to establish itself as a global provider on the Indian market, developing both partners’ position in India and representing Cambata all over the world.

“We are very interested in further collaboration with high-quality companies in the region,” said Joseph In Albon, President & CEO, Swissport International.

Stephan Beerli

India

Congratulations Alinghi

The success of Swiss challenger Alinghi in The America’s Cup saw the prestigious sailing trophy return to Europe for the first time in 150 years!

Swissport was extremely proud to handle the Malaysia Airlines B747 that brought the team back from Auckland via Kuala Lumpur.

Beat Ruchti

Customer Contact

New sales structure

As part of an ongoing endeavour to enhance contacts with customers, Swissport plans to introduce a new sales organisation on 1 April. Under the new concept, local Station and Country Managers will also assume commercial responsibilities, assisted in their duties by an eight-strong specialist Global Sales Team.

The eight new Sales Directors, who will report directly to their divisional heads, will also be involved in global key account management and in further enhancing sales activities all over the world.

The new Global Sales Team will be led and coordinated by Tony Ivey from his Washington base. Stephan Beerli remains Executive Vice President Sales & Marketing, based in Zurich.

At the same time and with immediate effect, Dirk Jan de Roo, former COO of CSC, will take over the responsibility for all operational issues (including quality) as Vice President based in Zurich.

Stephan Beerli

Geneva

Congratulations Alinghi

The Geneva Airport fire brigade welcomed the victors home with a special fire hose salute on 8 March.

Editor’s note:

We are always happy to highlight positive feedback and include in this issue a note from KLM Cargo’s representative in Mexico City to the former CSC de México team (now part of Swissport Cargo Services).

Dear All,

I was pleased to read the following article in the recent KLM Cargo News cast, an email newsletter distributed by CEO Michel Wesbrun. It is clear that these awards are only given to airlines with a reliable air and ground product, hence I felt that this award should be shared with CSC de México.

“On the evening of 6 December, KLM Cargo-Mexico received the yearly award from the Mexican Association of Cargo Agents (AMACARGA) for first place in Air Quality Service among domestic and international carriers.

“Maria Angin, Director of Sales and Service – Latin America, was present at the award ceremony and heard personally from the agent community about their appreciation for the excellent service received from the Mexico Sales and Service Team.”

Therefore a special word of thanks to the entire former CSC Mexico team – Aaron, Ignacio, Jorge, José Luis, Lilia and Pablo – for their contribution to the substantial increase in KLM Cargo’s market share, and in achieving recognition as the best performing carrier over the Atlantic.

Well done and thanks for your contribution to winning this award.

Nico van Wieringen, KLM Cargo
For a professional service provider there is a mantra that drives quality like no other: The best judge of value for money is the customer. So for Swissport the ultimate measure of success is customer satisfaction. Drawing on 40 years of international experience, we take a professional 360-degree view of our customers’ interests, because ultimately those interests are identical with our own. In the past it was our focus on customer needs that led our transformation from ground handler to full-service provider. Today that same focus shapes our portfolio of professional services. Becoming a one-stop source of ground handling, cargo, logistics, and executive aviation services is Swissport’s professional response to evolving customer needs. Swissport: real value for money.

To harness our professionalism, contact Ms. Nicole Schneider on +41 1 812 4954 or contact@swissport.com. Or visit www.swissport.com

* “Global Ground Handling Company of the Year” three times in a row. Accredited by the ITM Air Transport Committee.