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The Cloud is exactly the right place for FlightDataPeople's innovative Safety & Risk Management Solutions

A cloud based solution has proved to be highly appropriate in both name and performance for FlightDataPeople (FDP) and its two safety and risk management products for the aviation sector; SMS 360 and FDM360. Both solutions use information derived from the aircraft black box (Flight Data Recorder) along with data from safety occurrence reports submitted by flight crew and other operational staff alongside findings from safety and quality audits. With an intuitive interface and powerful analysis capabilities SMS 360 users have full oversight of their organisation, are able to promote a more effective safety culture and take a proactive approach to risk and safety management.

The First Steps

With extensive experience in the aviation sector, the team at FDP were aware of the need for a simple but effective tool to improve the management of safety and risk. "Simple and effective are not mutually exclusive as some software suppliers would have you believe. The reality is that an easy to use tool will be more effective than an overly complex one because people will use it more," explains Eddie Rogan, Sales and Marketing Director at FDP. He continued; "Any safety management system is at its most valuable when the data is distributed in a timely and effective way to those 'who need to know'." FDP recognised that they would need to take a fresh approach

to this niche market and develop a new solution that was free of legacy issues, but one which would provide the accessibility and necessary future proofing in terms of growth and technological change. The obvious solution was to opt for a cloud based offering and this was the catalyst for the partnership with SIRE.

Working Together

FDP and SIRE have different areas of expertise which have proved extremely complimentary in their working relationship; FDP has extensive knowledge and expertise in aviation safety management and flight data monitoring, whilst SIRE has extensive IT knowledge and expertise in cloud services and data hosting. The companies started to work together in April 2013 and since then the partnership has gone from strength to strength. "We have established a high level of personal and professional trust and confidence and that has been of paramount importance to FDP as we turn to SIRE for the SaaS (Software as a Service) element of our unique offering," explains Rogan. The two companies rapidly established, and continue to operate, a very fluid and transparent relationship where there is excellent day to day communication, backed up by more formal reporting processes to ensure that the project evolved, and continues to evolve, in the desired timescale and direction. (No doubt further helped by the fact that both companies are based on the Wellington Business Park in Crowthorne, Berkshire.) It was imperative to the success of the development that FDP and SIRE each found a way to bring their own specialist knowledge to a common meeting point.

In the case of FDP this was an awareness of the global aviation market and the risk and safety requirements of airlines in the context of stringent international regulations. Russell Cook, MD at SIRE explains more about how his company's knowledge has dovetailed with that of FDP. "Both the aviation market and the cloud operate ostensibly on a global platform however within that market the cloud is subject to very different regulations. We understand how the cloud is regulated in different territories and were able to advise FDP how this may impact on the final functionality of their software and tools and suggest alternative, more viable solutions, in terms of data storage and retrieval options."

A fully integrated solution

All of the information from SMS360 and FDM360 is processed and analysed to produce risk registers which means that an airline can monitor and mitigate its top risks. The intuitive interfaces allow key personnel to drill down in a manner most appropriate to both their level of operation and their area of concern. They can then extrapolate the relevant information, take the appropriate action and generate the necessary analysis and reports. This is achieved by adopting the approach of IaaS (Internet as a Service) and the cloud based element is the key to this success. As a result of choosing to host SMS360 and FDM360 on the cloud, FDP's customers benefit as they have a solution that is accessible, future proofed in terms of growth and technological change, and one that is also highly secure. Airlines using the system have a far clearer understanding of the top risks, which in turn enables them to manage in a more dynamic and predictive way; risk awareness and management is ameliorated. FDP also offers a "Safety Office" service which is ideal for smaller airlines, business jet operators, flying schools etc. who many not have sufficient in-house safety expertise and/or resources to manage their own SMS and FDM.

Other ROIs

The primary reason for an organisation to choose SMS360 and FDM360 is to improve its safety management and reduce its safety risk. However, both solutions will also produce additional Return on Investment (ROI) from savings in operational costs that are associated with incidents such as aircraft/equipment damage, staff and passenger injuries, and operational disruptions such as air turnbacks and delays. SMS360 records the costs associated with an incident and the built-in analysis tools can show where these costs are most prevalent. One of the aims of SMS360 is to address the root causes of incidents and to avoid any unnecessary recurrence, which will also lead to a reduction in incident-related costs. FDM360 can also provide data extracts for Engine Health Monitoring (EHM), Aircraft Performance Monitoring (APM) and Fuel Efficiency Monitoring, all of which can make a significant impact on cost savings. It is also becoming increasingly apparent that implementing the highly effective FDM and SMS solutions is looked upon favourably by insurers and may attract lower insurance premiums.

Finally, SMS360 and FDM360 are hosted solutions which mean that implementation, set-up, operational and maintenance costs are minimised, another positive effect on the ROI.

There is no doubt that the strength of the relationship between the two companies has helped FDP to achieve strong recognition in this niche market, such as evidenced in the following; "FlightDataPeople have excellent technical expertise and a very responsive support service to ensure the integrity of our FDM system is maintained," Keith Dyce, Flight Manager SESMA & ATQP — British Airways.

The next step will be to offer further integration of SMS360 and FDM360 and FDP also believes that there is scope to take the functionality and capabilities of the software into other industries e.g. marine, energy and rail. Both companies are keen to build on what has already been achieved and to ensure that anything that happens in the traditional clouds can be safely, securely and effectively recorded and subject to robust analysis on the 21st century cloud.

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Background

With over twenty years experience, SIRE has established itself as one of the leading providers of innovative business continuity systems and processes, that make a real difference to the organisations it works with. Using IBM's TSM and its own Reviver product, SIRE enables its customers to focus on their core activity whilst they manage the infrastructure on which it is based. By using a combination of the latest cloud computing techniques and virtualisation, SIRE provides organisations with a reliable, flexible and financially viable IT infrastructure coupled with a robust Business Continuity Plan, that is scalable and future proof.

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