

# GROUND SUPPORT

## WORLDWIDE

A combination of old-fashioned discipline and new technology helps ground service handler win business

# JETSTREAM

## Prepares For Takeoff

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Ramp Safety:  
**Professionalism:**  
A 'Must Have' For  
All Aviation Workers

Everyone on the ramp can take a few daily actions to ensure safety on the job and air transportation at large

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New COO builds 'predictability' into JetStream's services.



# Go Green

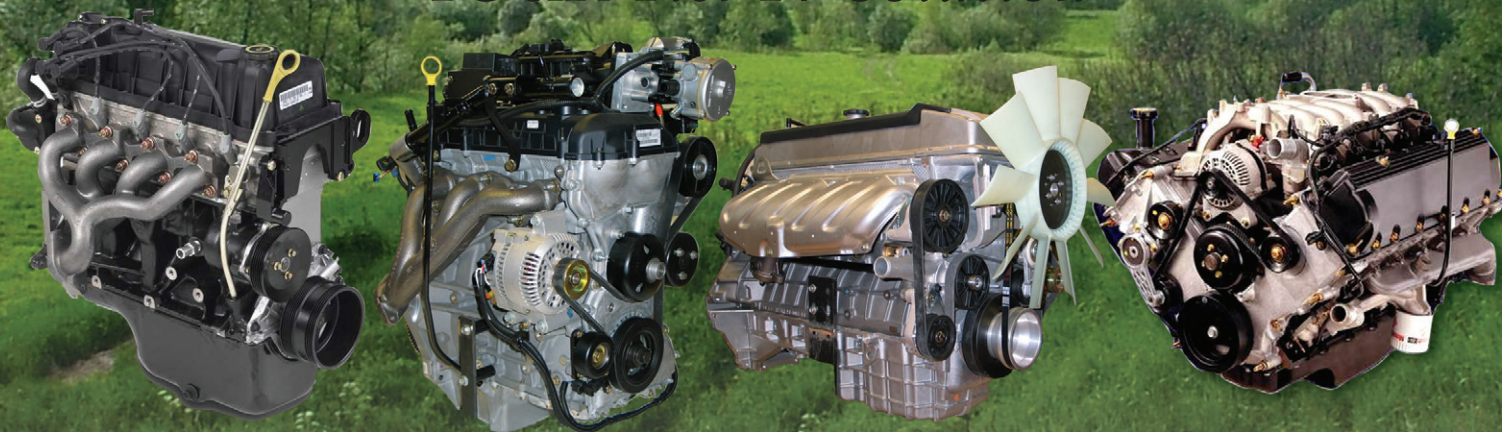
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# GROUND SUPPORT WORLDWIDE

## PUBLISHER

**Missy Zingsheim**  
920.563.1665 • missy@AviationPros.com

## EDITOR

**Steve Smith**  
920.563.1644 • steve.smith@AviationPros.com

## SALES

**Randy Graper**  
920.563.1621 • randy.graper@AviationPros.com

**Kimberly Jorgensen - Classifieds**  
920.568.8307 • kimberly@AviationPros.com

**Benedict Hume - Sales Manager**  
+44 1442 288287 • +44 1442 219898  
benedict@itsluk.com

**Julian Maddocks-Born - Sales Director**  
+44 1442 288299 • fax +44 1442 219898  
julian@itsluk.com

**Elizabeth Jackson - List Rental**  
847.492.1350 ext. 18 • ejackson@meritdirect.com

## PRODUCTION & CIRCULATION

**Meredith Burger - Art Director**  
**Carmen Seeber - Media Production Rep**  
920.568.8373 • carmen.seeber@AviationPros.com

**Debbie Dumke - Circulation Manager**  
**Steve Swick - Production Director**

## CYGNUS AVIATION EXPO

**Emily Patten - Trade Show Director**  
847.454.2723 • emily.patten@cygnus.com

Published by  

## CYGNUS AVIATION

**Gloria Cosby - Executive Vice President**  
**Gerry Whitty - VP, Marketing**

## CYGNUS BUSINESS MEDIA

**John French - CEO**  
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# 'Yes, But Other Than That ...'

However difficult a problem, there is always something constructive that can be done about it.

By Steve Smith



STEVE SMITH

**I**f we're all in a gloomy mood as we close out one year and anxiously wait for another, there is certainly plenty to make us all pretty gloomy indeed at the moment. Read the latest IATA report? Maybe the biggest surprise over American Airlines' bankruptcy was that it took so long. The FAA chief resigns over a DUI. And the weekend before I wrote this, federal agents in New York actually broke up a drug-smuggling ring orchestrated by baggage handlers at JFK.

But I've never been one to put too much faith in automatic progress and, rather, taken a hard-headed approach to the slings and arrows of the world. The most fundamental problems in life have to be managed and contained and can never be entirely eliminated. It also doesn't mean that things will always get better. And some things are never so bad that they can't get worse.

But then again, things are never so bad that they cannot contain a liberating element to them. However difficult a problem, there is always something constructive we can do. However bad things seem, there is always some good we can rally around and try our best to see if we can't get it done.

So when I get together with friends, as I did last weekend over that traditional Yuletide feast of cheeseburgers, French fries and beer, it's only natural in these times for all of us to throw down our own pity parties and attempt to one-up everyone else.

I wish I could lay claim to being the guy who says this, but it's the sole

woman at our Round Table who will always eventually say, "Yes, but other than that ... " While not an automatic restorative, it does help you refocus, take stock and make some productive plans. It calls out to your leadership skills no matter if they're currently buried under pessimism.

Take a look at this month's cover story, for example, on JetStream Ground Services. Business certainly wasn't "bad," but the company definitely had reached a certain level of growth it couldn't budge past. The owners hired some expertise in these matters that they themselves didn't have.

A new COO, rather than keeping the numbers close to the vest, shares enough financial data with his general managers to keep them motivated to analyze and control what they can.

Technology provides essentially instantaneous knowledge rather than just a hunch about what's going on out there on the ramp. An added compensation plan puts some skin in the game for everyone. And a training program for new recruits lets them know what's expected of them from Day One.

So, but other than "that," (take your pick), how are you doing? What's going right? What are your plans for the year ahead? What do you think you want to take on? As always, your editor wants to know.



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**NBAA 23rd Annual Schedulers  
& Dispatchers Conference**  
San Diego, CA

<http://www.nbaa.org/events/sdc/2012>

**Jan. 19-20**

**National Aviation  
Maintenance Symposium**  
Ann Arbor, MI

<http://www.greatlakesaviationconference.com/pama>

**March 7-9**

**Cygnus Aviation Expo**  
Las Vegas, NV

<http://cygnusaviationexpo.com>

## Business Buzz

### ■ IATA Blames Oil For Profit Decline:

Global aviation earnings will likely decline to \$3.5 billion in 2012, but those could turn into steep losses exceeding \$8.3 billion if the euro zone crisis veers toward catastrophe, according to a report by the International Air Transport Association. For 2011, the industry says it anticipates that surging oil and fuel prices will clip profits at \$6.9 billion — less than half of its \$15.8 billion in 2010 profits.

### ■ Two Airlines Win Slots At LGA:

JetBlue and the Canadian airline WestJet beat out five other companies in an auction for the slots at LaGuardia Airport. JetBlue already has a small number of flights at LaGuardia, but the flights will be the first for WestJet.

■ **Lufthansa To Fly A380 To IAH:** The Houston Airport System will welcome its

first double-deck A380 at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in August, when Lufthansa upgrades the aircraft on its Houston to Frankfurt service.

■ **Delta Down, US Airways Up:** Delta Air Lines traffic for November dropped 1.9 percent from the same month in 2010 as the carrier trimmed capacity by 4.1 percent. International traffic on the U.S. carrier slid 7.3 percent, while domestic traffic rose 1.4 percent. US Airways reported a 3.1 percent rise in traffic for November as the carrier trimmed capacity by 0.8 percent for the month.

### ■ U.S. Airline Employment Rises:

United States airlines employed 388,641 workers in September, a jump of 10,965 workers, or a 2.9 percent increase compared with September 2010, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. The bureau reported that the September airline



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employment level was the highest since April 2009.

■ **New Name For Aviation Trade Group:**

The trade association for the leading U.S. airlines unveiled a new name as well as a new tagline and logo that better represents the industry's role connecting United States aviation to the global economy. The Air Transport Association of America will carry the name Airlines for America (A4A) with the tagline of "We Connect the World."

■ **Alaska Air Takes American's Spot**

**On Dow Jones:** Alaska Air Group Inc. replaced AMR Corp. in the Dow Jones Transportation Average after the parent of American Airlines filed for bankruptcy.

■ **Qatar Expands Cargo Routes:**

Qatar Airways has launched dedicated freight routes to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport and Toronto Pearson International Airport from its Doha hub via Luxembourg.

## Partnerships/ Acquisitions/ Contracts

■ **Flightcom To Supply Southwest:**

Southwest Airlines will become the first U.S. airline to require ramp workers to wear wireless headsets. Flightcom equipment will be used at all Southwest Airlines' gates at its 73 destinations across the United States.

■ **Sage Expands Delta Service:**

Sage Parts has entered into a new contract with Delta Air Lines in which Sage will dispense replacement parts for ground support equipment at major Delta airport hubs in Minneapolis, Memphis and Detroit.

■ **FAA Awards Sustainable Fuel**

**Contracts:** FAA is awarding \$7.7 million in contracts to eight companies to help advance alternative, environmentally-friendly, sustainable sources for commercial jet fuel.

■ **Lufthansa To Help Iraqi Airports:**

Lufthansa Consulting will evaluate the ground handling requirements at Baghdad International Airport, the capital's main airport and the country's main international gateway as well as at the international airports in Basra and Mosul.

■ **SAN Receives VALE Funds To Cut Emissions:** San Diego International

Airport has received a \$2 million VALE grant that will be used to purchase 400HZ power lines to 10 jet ports and external air-conditioning units.

■ **ASIG Starts Two New Contracts:**

ASIG® commenced ground handling services for TAM Airlines at John F. Kennedy International Airport, Terminal 4. ASIG is providing ground handling, cargo transportation, cabin cleaning



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and aircraft deicing services for TAM's 20 weekly wide-body flights. Also, ASIG renewed its agreement with Emirates to provide passenger handling services on behalf of the carrier at London Heathrow Airport.

## People In The News



Gustavo Corzo

Bosserman Aviation Equipment, Inc. has hired Gustavo Corzo as its new director of international sales and Kali Price as its customer service manager. Corzo has more than 14 years of aviation experience and will be responsible for all aspects of



Kali Price

## Iberia Uses Single-Engine Taxiing At ORD

Iberia Airlines launched a single-engine taxi program in December at O'Hare International Airport to reduce aircraft emissions and conserve fuel. Iberia uses the four-engine Airbus A340 aircraft at O'Hare. Based on an average of nine minutes its planes spend taxiing after landings, Iberia estimates that it will save 352 pounds (160 kilograms) of fuel on the A340-300 model and 524 pounds (238 kilograms) of fuel on the A340-600 model per flight.

The Chicago Department of Aviation also encourages towing aircraft between the gate and runways to reduce emissions and fuel consumption.

international sales. Price will be responsible for updating customers on order status and completion, following up with customers and fielding technical support calls. She also schedules warranty repairs and handles warranty parts returns.

Jerry Crump joins Somerset Capital Group, Ltd., as vice president of new business development for GSE. Previously, Crump had been director of purchasing for Swissport USA.



Scott Twining

FCX Systems hired Scott Twining as an executive sales associate. Twining has more than 30 years of quality experience and extensive expertise related to the sales, marketing, technical support, project management, and design of GSE equipment.

ATS hired John Drpich as its new director of business development. Drpich



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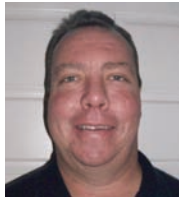
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has 29 years in international wide-body airport operations with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.



**Bryan McCreary**

Integrated Deicing Services hired Bryan F. McCreary as vice president of fluid and business development. McCreary spent the past eight years with Clariant Corp. as its North American business manager.



**Brett Wood**

Toyota Material Handling North America has expanded its executive team: Brett Wood has been promoted to executive vice president of TMHNA. In his new role, Wood will lead several strategic TMHNA assignments in sales, marketing and operations to accelerate synergies



**Jeff Rufener**

among company brands. Jeff Rufener will take the helm as president of Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., Inc. Rufener joins Toyota after most recently serving as vice president of marketing for Mitsubishi Caterpillar Forklift America Inc.

Global Aviation Services LLC promoted Scott Strong as director of maintenance. Strong will be responsible for leading and managing the company's maintenance operations. Strong also writes the "Maintenance Matters" column for *Ground Support Worldwide*.

**Correction:** We did not identify the following two men correctly in the October issue:



**Jeff Messmer**

West Star Aviation, Inc. appointed Jeff Messmer as operations manager at its newest facil-

ity at Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield, MO. In his new position at West Star Aviation, Messmer will be responsible for all maintenance, avionics and customer service and support operations.

Leighton "Lee" M. Yohannan was named co-CEO of Rampmaster. Yohannan is currently director emeritus and founder of LiquidHub,



**Leighton "Lee" M. Yohannan**


a systems integrator and technology strategy consultancy with revenues of more than \$60 million in annual sales. Previously he was owner and CEO of The Reohr Group, Inc., a \$55 million global technology consultancy.

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# JETSTREAM

## Prepares For Takeoff



A combination of old-fashioned discipline and new technology helps ground service handler win business.

By Steve Smith

**W**hen we first talked with Richard Cordell, chief operating officer of JetStream Ground Services, he was at a hotel in Indianapolis, gearing up to hire a ground crew for a new contract the Jupiter, FL-based ground handler had just received from US Airways.

We'd done our homework beforehand and read his resume and past accomplishments with Delta Air Lines

so we had to admit that we were more than a little surprised to hear that Cordell would be at the hotel and so entrenched in the hiring process.

He'd heard that before.

"What attracted a 30-year Delta senior leader to JetStream?" he asks. "JetStream had experienced quite a bit of growth in its past 15 years. Smaller companies, early on, can expand and make money. But to get past a certain threshold is where it becomes difficult."

Cordell did his homework, too, as he began talking with JetStream's owners. The company had already invested in technology to manage ground support service, particularly for a company its size.

"The company's owners knew they needed a certain level of operational expertise to get past the threshold they found themselves at," Cordell

told us, "and the more I talked, the more excited I got since I believed I could really make a difference."

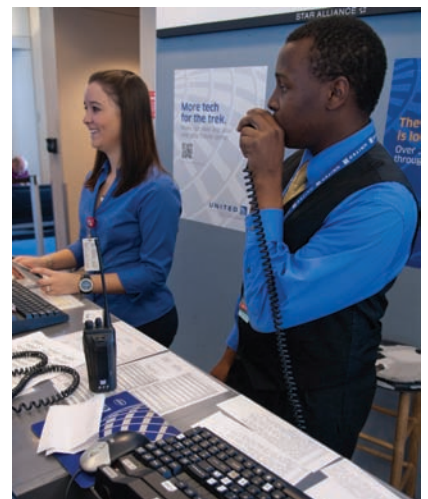
Cordell signed on as COO about a year and a half ago, and along with



*Blake Schultz Jr.,  
Vice President of  
Sales and Marketing*



*Richard Cordell, Chief  
Operating Officer*



*It's often hard to tell JetStream employees,  
like these gate agents, from airline employees.*

another relative newcomer to the company, Blake Schultz Jr., vice president of sales and marketing, they've both been busy not only getting new business, but more importantly, honing a corporate culture that expects the best in ground service.

"I can sum up in one word what we needed to take the company to its next level – predictability," Cordell says. When this COO talks about "operations," he takes a very all-encompassing view. One of his first priorities, for example, in taking the job was that the human resource managers would also report to him.

"It's very important in this business to have the HR policies and procedures of the company support the operational side of the business," he explains. "How you train new hires so they know on Day One what's expected goes a long way to get the best perfor-

mance. If you wait until the fourth day, a lot of confusion can already set in. What we expect from management and, more importantly, the information we provide them makes a huge difference, too."

Schultz concurs: "Our technological edge was something I knew I could sell. We're delivering a better product at a lower cost – not just a lower-cost service. Airlines are always going to be looking for ways to lower their costs. If JetStream can provide this service to the airlines better than they can do it themselves, then we have built the proper foundation to win business."

Thanks to old-fashioned discipline and new technology, airlines are taking notice of a ground handling service company that Cordell had to admit he really didn't know or hear much about during his nearly 30 years at Delta.

#### A HIGHER ALTITUDE

Both these aviation industry veterans know price is always going

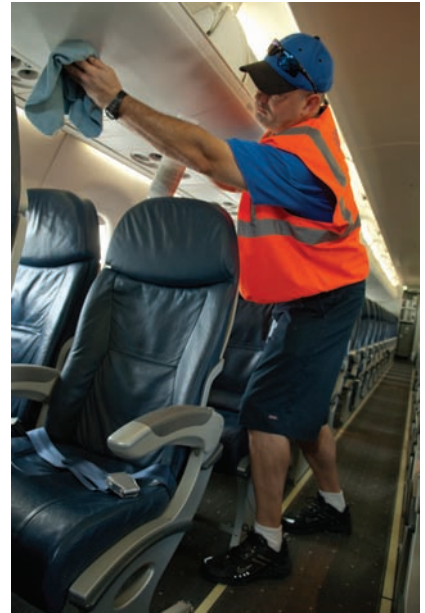
to be king when it comes to bidding on work for ground service.

Cordell, however, embraces the notion.

"Again, that's where predictability comes into play," he explains. "We want companies to know that we deliver; that we are predictable. Are we price competitive? Yes we are. But what we need to do is to instill in our employees that desire to grow and perform flawlessly – and do it conscious of price, but also conscious of adding value to our business methods."

Hence, we found Cordell at that hotel in Indianapolis participating in a job fair along with a couple of his HR staff and his safety and compliance staff as they all made hiring decisions to handle ramp service for the new contract with US Airways.

The job fair attracted management and ramp staff alike. After a screening process and hiring decisions are made, Cordell's staff will set up one week's worth



*Aircraft appearance is one of JetStream's fastest-growing ground support services.*

of classroom training for about 20 people. In the second week, the new hires will be taken to an existing operation in Columbus, OH, for a week of on-the-job training.



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Left: "We're delivering a better product at a lower cost – not just a lower-cost service," says Blake Schultz Jr., vice president of sales and marketing.



Above: "Predictability" is the watchword that COO Richard Cordell has instilled in all of JetStream's services.

"We have a very well-thought-out transition list, some five to six pages long with about 100 items," Cordell adds. "But at some point, the training wheels come off and the new general manager has to run the show."

Cordell firmly believes in developing his GMs from within and providing them with all the data they need to run operations efficiently and effectively.

Consider a recent contract that JetStream won to handle ground service for Delta Air Lines at Jackson-Evers International Airport,

Jackson, MS. The company will provide below-the-wing support for Delta's 12 daily departures. This represents JetStream's first contract with the airline.

"We need to shine in Jackson," Cordell says, adding that operations with 10 to 25 flights a day is "our strike zone. There are tremendous opportunities for growth in those markets and we can make a big difference."

Cordell promoted a shift manager from a Charlotte, NC, operation to be the GM at Jackson. The technological

firepower given to the GM is one very important aspect that Cordell says isn't necessarily visible to his customers, "but is vital if we are trying to run an organization that's predictable and that delivers flawlessly."

#### LOCAL CONTROL

Cordell now puts the budget in the hands of the GM at stations.

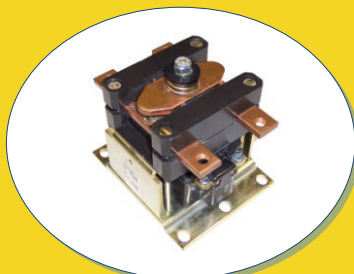


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“That may sound simple,” Cordell adds, “but we wanted them to know they should focus on controllable costs, such as wages and maintenance of GSE.”

From there, every Monday the company provides a financial dashboard – sort of a financial report card. Secondly, there’s a web-based operational dashboard. It’s mandatory for the GM to enter various performance metrics on a daily basis that might help pinpoint, say, causes for delays and other problems in performance. Last, but certainly not least to Cordell, the company has aligned its company goals with the goals of the GM.

Again, another simple change Cordell says makes a huge difference.

“Before, GMs were reviewed on their employment date,” he adds. “But now they are evaluated on a calendar-year basis and we’ve also put into place a performance-based compensation plan that provides higher earning opportunity for leaders

that deliver exceptional operational performance; financial performance and individual performance.”

What’s more, the GM’s operational goals are directly aligned with the goals of the carriers which they serve.

“So if an airline, for example, has specific goals for baggage handling performance,” Cordell adds, “our GMs not only know that, but can be rewarded accordingly.”

Cordell firmly believes in the old management adage that what gets measured gets accomplished.

“I think this year we’ve built a firm foundation to excellence,” Cordell says. “In 2012 we’re looking to build that second layer of bricks. The changes we’ve made so far, while I’m certainly not saying they were easy to make, were easy to identify. As we get better, the bar gets raised.”

To keep pushing ahead, the company credits success to WorkBridge, a mobile resource management software. Successful ground handling requires

quick decision-making combined with sophisticated capacity and resource management. The program improves communications in airport operations, provides real-time updates to a mobile workforce and enables more effective planning and allocation of resources.

“The program works in so many ways to help us in real-time to dispatch crews and enhance productivity,” Cordell adds. As an example, he used aircraft cleaning services.

“Often times, you’ll see the cleaning crew waiting on the jet bridge for passengers to deplane,” he adds. “That’s some of the biggest sources of nonproductive time.”

With the program, however, JetStream managers can analyze how long it takes to deplane a particular aircraft, how long it will take a crew in transit and a number of other variables that hinder productivity.

“It’s a great third set of eyes to help us identify ways to be as efficient as possible,” Cordell adds. ■

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# One Step To Modernize Russian Ground Support

The Sheremetyevo Airport and Aeroflot team up to improve the country's outdated ground support industry.

By Eugene Gerden

**T**he Russian ground support industry is on the verge of big changes, amid the ever-growing attention given to the country's problematic aviation industry.

Recently Aeroflot, Russia's flag carrier and largest airline, and the Sheremetyevo International Airport, Russia's second largest airport, announced plans to establish the country's largest ground support company.

The new as-yet unnamed joint venture will specialize in providing ground support services for Aeroflot at SVO, located 18 miles from Moscow, as well as the air carrier's partners in the SkyTeam alliance. Aeroflot's partners at the airport include a varied lot: Air Europa; Air France; Alitalia; China Airlines; China Eastern Airlines; China Southern Airlines; Czech Airlines; Delta Air Lines; Kenya Airlines; KLM; Korean Air; TAROM Romanian Air Transport and Vietnam Airlines.



*SVO and Aeroflot's ground support joint venture will provide service to Aeroflot and other airlines of SkyTeam alliance.*

It will no doubt be a busy operation. Aeroflot alone operates domestic and international passenger service to 109 destinations in 53 countries, mainly flown from its hub at SVO.

According to Michael Vasilenko, general director of SVO, the hope is a successful debut at SVO may start an expansion to other Russian airports, most of which currently experience a lack of quality ground support services.

Until the move with SVO, Aeroflot had been providing its own ground support for its aircraft and SkyTeam members.

However, a devastating ice storm that paralyzed SVO during last year's busiest winter travel period ahead of the New Year's holiday began to change that.

An estimated 20,000 travelers faced delays of two days and caused



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## Aeroflot Boosts Traffic 24 Percent

**Aeroflot boosted air traffic 24 percent year-on-year to 11.8 million passengers in January-October 2011. International traffic rose 22 percent year-on-year to 7.34 million passengers, while domestic traffic climbed 27 percent to 4.45 million.**

**In October, the airline's passenger traffic went up 27 percent year-on-year to 1.25 million passengers, international traffic amounted to 741,100 passengers and domestic traffic stood at 512,100 passengers.**

some to assault Aeroflot employees. While bad winter weather didn't help, one major factor for canceling some 70 flights from SVO and delaying hundreds of other flights was a shortage of a common winter ground support supply – deicing fluid.

### MUCH TO BE DESIRED

Russian analysts believe establishing the country's largest ground support company as well as recently announced state plans to increase funding for the country's aviation industry is just what is needed considering that the current state of Russian aviation leaves much to be desired.

The main reason for this is the poor state of infrastructure in the majority of Russian airports, which have not been modernized for the last 20 years.

Today, the majority of Russian airports are not able to provide quality ground support services due to their outdated land bases. In addition, the number of professional companies that specialize in providing ground support services in Russia remains very small.

"The majority of Russian airports, and especially regional facilities, are unable to provide quality ground support services for modern aircraft," says Anton Koren, CEO, Center for Strategic Research in Civil Aviation. "In addition, the industry is regulated by outdated legislation, which was developed in the 1990s and does not contribute to the development of competition in the market."


During the Soviet era, no full-fledged ground support industry existed due to the traditional centralized and planned economy.

Fully controlled by the state, there was no reason to expect any competition,


innovation or any particular high work level in the market. At the same time, the country had only one "official" airline anyway – Aeroflot.

After the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in the 1990s, however, hundreds of small airlines were established, which naturally created a demand for ground support services.

At that initial stage, most new carriers preferred to sign agreements with



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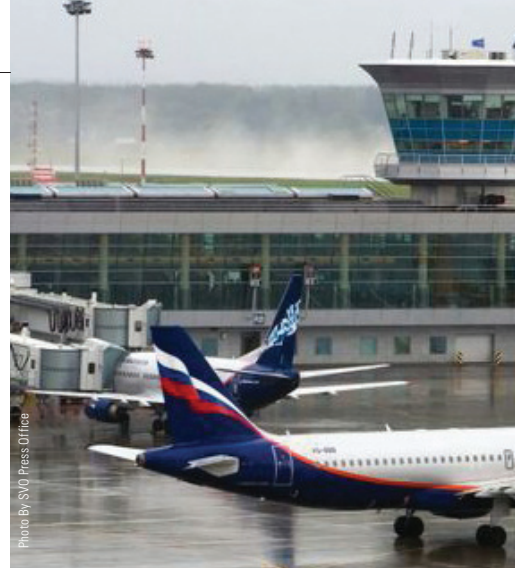


airports. Later, some airlines started working with a handful of specialized operators. Among the country's largest ground handling operators are such companies as Vnukovo Handling started only seven years ago and RusAero started in 1994.

Meanwhile, despite the shortage of professional ground support operators, the demand for high-quality ground support services has significantly

increased recently. One major reason is that the country's airliners are buying new aircraft - and not relying on the country's own brands for their orders.

"Currently, the majority of Russian airlines is buying foreign aircraft," says Alex Komarov, chairman of the organizing committee for an international ground support service conference held annually in Moscow. "Due to the fact that servicing Boeings and Airbuses



*Aeroflot operates domestic and international passenger service to 109 destinations in 53 countries, mainly flown from its hub at SVO.*

takes place with the use of different standards than Russian aircraft – most of which were designed during the Soviet era – there is a clear trend of the shift to new technologies of ground support throughout the country."

Last August, Boeing estimated that Russia and the "CIS" countries – former Soviet republics, such as Belarus and Ukraine – would take delivery of more than 1,080 new aircraft over the next two decades, with 32 percent of this figure already in backlog order for the next five years. The aircraft manufacturer estimated the market value at \$110 billion.

#### PROBLEMS AROUND

Not surprisingly, however, a number of problems are squarely in the way of further developing Russia's ground support industry. One of the most serious of these problems is the lack of modern ground support equipment at the majority of Russian airports. Most of the country's airports can only afford to use aged equipment and do not fully meet the ground support requirements of airlines operating foreign-made aircrafts.

On a related note, the sorry conditions of runways, taxiways, aircraft parking positions and lighting equipment further constrain ground support service.

Finally, the level of automatized ground support equipment at Russian airports also remains poor, with the

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most difficult situations found at regional airports. Baggage handling, for example, is done by hand at these smaller airports.

According to Koren, only a couple dozen of Russia's some 300 airports provide relatively satisfactory ground support services. Only one Russian airport is included in the international aviation review and ranking site Skytrax.

A lack of both ground support operators and funds at most airports puts the industry's biggest hopes for further development on the state. And in light of recent air disasters, the Russian government has significantly increased its attention to these problems.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has announced plans to

**The sorry conditions of runways, taxiways, aircraft parking positions and lighting equipment further constrain ground support service.**

modernize his country's airports and pay particular attention to determine how to improve ground support service. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has also stated government intentions to train qualified ground support specialists. In addition to a shortage of ground support workers, the majority

of the country's current ground support personnel are trained to support the old Soviet-era aircrafts.

By the end of 2011, the Russian Ministry of Transport will have completed a comprehensive survey of national airports and local airlines in order to estimate the current state of ground support services, and determine the necessary investment needed for improvement.

According to initial estimates, the annual investment needed to implement state initiatives is as much as 70 billion rubles (\$2.1 billion) for the next several years. However, according to Russian aviation industry analysts, this amount is understated and could be more than two times as much.

In addition to direct investments, the government may also consider the

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possibility of subsidizing private banking loans for the airports.

"Russia has very high credit rates," says Roman Gusarov, editor in chief of *Avia.ru*, one of the largest Russian analytical agencies in the field of aviation. "Even the most favorable credits are provided by the Russian banks at a rate of not less than 8 percent. The current state subsidies cover no more than a 25 percent of the credit rate, and the main

mission of the government is to create conditions so that the rate will not be higher than 2 to 3 percent per year."

Also, passing a long-awaited law governing airport operations may be another significant impetus for further developing Russian ground support.

The new law is expected to regulate the mechanism for funding airports, as well as abolish taxes on land and property, which is expected to help

## Sheremetyevo Expects 21 Million Passengers By 2011

**Sheremetyevo International Airport officials expect to close out 2011 by serving 21 million passengers. From January to October 2011, passenger traffic grew 16 percent compared to the same period of time in 2010 to 19.09 million travelers. Here are a few highlights for the first 10 months of 2011:**

- Passenger traffic on international air lines grew almost 18 percent.
- Passenger traffic on domestic air lines grew just over 13 percent.
- Sheremetyevo Airport handled 175,800 aircraft movements.


airports significantly increase investments in ground support services.


The new law may also reduce the customs duties on the imports of foreign ground support equipment to Russia, as well as to simplify formalities and reduce administrative barriers during their licensing.

Still, the government is expected to be the main driver to modernize airport infrastructure and ground support service since private investors remain reluctant to make investments in the industry. According to analysts at Vnesheconombank, one of the largest banks in Russia, private capital to the industry is difficult to attract because of its low profitability and long payback periods.


The continuing state monopoly in the industry, however, also prevents further development and the inflow of private investments. Unlike the European Union, the whole airfield infrastructure in Russia, in accordance with local legislation, is owned by the state and cannot be transferred to private owners.

About the author: Eugene Gerden is an international free-lance writer covering the global aviation and ground support industry. He writes for numerous industry publications and can be reached at [gerden.eug@googlemail.com](mailto:gerden.eug@googlemail.com). ✉






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# Professionalism: A ‘Must Have’ For All Aviation Workers

Everyone on the ramp can take a few daily actions to ensure safety on the job and for air transportation at large.

By Dr. William Johnson

**P**rofessionalism is not something reserved for airline pilots. Everyone who works around airliners must step up to be a safety professional. That includes gate agents who move a gate walkway up to the aircraft, fuelers, all service personnel, and especially ramp workers who are the last to touch the aircraft before it flies.

Industry personnel must strive to maintain professionalism, take responsibility for personal actions and remain aware of how each individual contributes to the overall safety of a company and air transportation at large. What are a few actions you can take each day?

First of all, you must be *fit for duty*. While fitness often refers to a physical condition, the real challenge is to ensure a mental fitness for duty. The quality and quantity of sleep is an important means to ensure necessary mental awareness and attitude. FAA website [www.mxfatigue.com](http://www.mxfatigue.com) is a great

place to review important practical tips about sleep. The basic rule: Get about eight hours of sleep every night.

While fitness for duty is a personal, professional responsibility, management must also recognize that schedules must be reasonable. A human cannot withstand repeating 12-hour shifts, or split shifts that do not allow for quality rest.

Safety-minded professionals *use voluntary reporting systems*. No one likes to make an error and then tell everyone about it. However, professionals know they can learn from the error and also help ensure that no one else makes the same mistake. Again, it takes cooperation between company and workforce to ensure a voluntary report of an honest mistake is treated in a just manner.

FAA is currently working with an Airlines For America (formerly known as the Air Transport Association) committee to extend the pilots' Line Operations Safety Audit into the mainte-

nance and ramp workplace. The system will help ground service workers conduct nonthreatening peer-to-peer audits of normal operations. This system will help identify both the good and the suboptimal practices. LOSA will permit companies to predict problems rather than waiting for an event to occur.

*Helping others* is another trait of professionals. They strive to guide new employees who may not be familiar with a new aircraft or procedure. The person being mentored demonstrates professionalism by learning and, ultimately, teaching a new co-worker. It is a two-way street.

*Professionals follow procedures*. They take personal responsibility to follow the principles and practices of the manufacturer or the company manuals. "Failure to follow procedures" is the most common cause of personal injury and aircraft ground damage.

"Safety Culture" is a popular term in aviation safety circles. In a safety culture, management and workers recognize safety is critical to meet the passengers' expectations and ensure the success of a company and the longevity of everyone's job. In a safety culture, each employee knows his/her specific actions ensure continued safety. Every individual working within a safety culture is a professional.

About the author: Dr. William Johnson is FAA chief scientific and technical advisor for human factors in aircraft maintenance systems. ■



*Everyone who works around airliners must step up to be a safety professional - especially ramp workers who are the last to touch an aircraft before it flies.*



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# Lifting Things

All vehicles and aircraft can be lifted with safety in mind. Just say no to planes with rockets and missiles in cargo.

By Tony Vasko

**A**ny vehicle must be lifted to allow us to get underneath or at least take the weight off the wheels. Our industry's more normal vehicles, such as vans and pickups and even catering or servicing trucks like the ever-loved "Biffy" or lavatory trucks, are no real problem.

It's only when you get up into the aircraft tugs designed to push and pull the wide-bodies that things become interesting.

It takes more than power to move the heavyweight aircraft and these tow units weigh upwards of 65,000 pounds. All that weight is needed to

gain traction. And so here comes the weight, four-wheel drive and some heavy-duty rubber.

Even then, I have been disconcerted to have a tug lose traction and start moving sideways rather than in the desired direction. It really doesn't take snow or ice to destroy traction. A little oil on the tarmac emulsified by some rain will do just fine.

## WEIGHTY OR NOT

Weighty or not, these units must all be lifted. Sometimes just a corner to replace a wheel, but often to allow a lucky soul to slide underneath on

a creeper to grease fittings or get to that pesky sump plug to drain engine oil. Only those working in the Northern climes can truly appreciate the delight of accumulated snow melting and falling on their faces.

Most all airline GSE shops have hydraulic lifts like those that can be found in any truck repair facility.

It goes without saying that anyone venturing under a jacked-up vehicle should install blocks or stands to prevent it coming down while they are underneath. I can also testify that these stands or props should be strong enough to hold the

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weight and also stable enough so they do not tip.

I came into the auto shop one dark and stormy night to get a cup of coffee and found a very white-faced Vinnie, the graveyard shift mechanic, contemplating a tractor that had rocked back off

### Bringing a load of missiles and rockets on an aircraft with questionable landing gear in an unsuspecting airport unprepared for handling munitions made me queasy.

some wooden blocks that were being used to prop it up. It had come down. He had been just about to go under the tug to start dropping a tranny when he leaned on the vehicle. The wooden blocks toppled. He only had the front end up so it was not level. Vinnie was not a big person, but I'm not sure he would have neatly fit under the tug if it had come down on him.

In older facilities, servicing pits might be common. These make it simple to just drive the vehicle over the pit. Access was certainly good, better than being on your back under something that could flatten you if it came down prematurely.

Still, there is one hazard. Gasoline or cleaning agents produce fumes that are heavier than air and seek low points to collect in. Servicing pits under often leaking vehicles provide just such a spot. If ignited servicing pits are very hard to escape from and so the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as well as fire protection codes, have some stiff requirements.

#### AIRCRAFT JACKS

Aircraft are a special matter. Our most common and abused aircraft jack is the axle jack used to change wheels and brakes. These jacks live

out on the ramp and are exposed to weather. That's bad enough, but they're also exposed to aircraft hydraulic fluid that drips down on them at exactly the same time their pistons are extended.

Jacks commonly use a mineral fluid and their seals are often not compatible with the synthetic aircraft hydraulic fluids. On several notable occasions I have had axle jacks blow

their seals out while extended with an aircraft on top of them. They were fitted with locking rings that screwed down on the hydraulic ram. When the aircraft axles were up, prior to changing the wheel, you screwed a locking ring down on the lifting ram. To release the lock you had to slightly extend the ram to take the weight off the locking ring. Inevitably, the ram seals would then blow their guts.

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It takes a wing jack to lift the airplane enough to get the axle jack out and these are usually miles away at the hangar. Towing them on their casters is out so we had to use a large forklift to transport them. Try that one on the long service road around JFK Airport.

Wing and fuselage jacks usually lead better lives inside a hangar with no hydraulic lines above them to leak. Even inside hangars, however, jacks

must be positioned carefully. If you want a terrifying time, try being under a DC-10 and get it off the ground only to have the jack “walk” about a foot on the ground. It made some impressive grinding noises as the tripod legs moved on the hangar floor. Fortunately, the top end stayed engaged where it belonged and no damage was done. Why it moved, I do not know. It had been carefully positioned under

the jack pad, the tripod feet were all square on the ground before the weight was taken – and still it moved.

**‘NO BOMBS’**

One last jacking story: Our maintenance outfit in Greensboro, NC, was servicing a cargo carrier based in Miami flying DC8-63 freighters. They had secured a big contract flying for the military in support of the first Gulf War. I received a call from the director of maintenance who wanted to know if we could do a gear repair on one of their freighters ASAP. In fact, the aircraft was in the air, gear wouldn’t come up and could they ferry over from the military base on the coast to us? As it happened, I did have an empty hangar bay.

“Great,” said the DOM. “And by the way, can you do it with the cargo onboard?”

“No,” I replied, “The aircraft will weigh too much for jacking.”

The DOM was anxious, too anxious I thought. “Can you get someone to off load the cargo if we get there?” he asked.

“I can ask around,” I said. “What’s the nature of the cargo?”

“Uh, military stuff, of course.”

“Anything that goes bang?”

“No bombs,” he cheerfully informed me. “Just aircraft rockets and missiles.”

Well, I am patriotic, but the thought of bringing a load of missiles and rockets on an aircraft with questionable landing gear into an unsuspecting airport unprepared for handling munitions made me queasy. And then there was the unloading and reloading of these touchy objects using untrained rampies. It put it out of the question. Where could it be stored while we worked on the aircraft? And who would guard it? Rockets and missiles also have the ability to fly on their own and a couple of rounds flying into downtown Greensboro would not make for good community relations.

There are times you have to annoy your customers and just say, “No way.” ■

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# Lightweight Nozzles Made For Heavy-Duty Work

New refueling nozzle series from Meggitt downsizes without limiting durability.

By Steve Smith

**C**onsider a day in the life of a commercial aircraft refueler. Working in all kinds of weather with a naturally hazardous commodity. Operating a refueling truck, pulling out as much as 50-feet of heavy 4-inch hose, then lifting as much as 60 pounds above their heads.



*The 145 series helps take some of the load off a refueler's arms and shoulders. An added slot option also makes turning the nozzle simpler.*

How many trips? One trade group gives the average as 25 trips in and out of that truck reaching a fill point typically 12 feet off the ground. Heck, wouldn't you just be more than a little tempted to just drop the thing to the ground and happily drag it along the ramp?

So if a nozzle comes out that takes a bit of the weight off a fueler's arms and shoulders, but that's still rough-and-tough, that would be a welcomed addition to a ground support crew's arsenal.

We saw one such new nozzle series, the F145 pressure refueling nozzles, introduced by Meggitt Control Systems at its booth at the *inter airport* in Munich last October.

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We talked with Mike LaPointe, director of marketing and Damon Thompson, manager of marketing and product support for Meggitt Fuelling Products who gave us a run-down of the nozzle's features and benefits. Here are a few highlights of our conversation:

**LIGHTER, BUT TOUGH**

"The F145 is smaller and lighter," LaPointe said. The net weight of the basic nozzle weighs in at just over 6 pounds. "Health and safety department at some fuelling companies believe this is a benefit for the workers."

However, the operating lever is fully protected by a sacrificial wear block that withstands the common dropping and dragging of this equipment. (The red components you see in the product photo are those sacrificial parts that are easily replaced by removing a single bolt.)

"We have had some of these nozzles in field trials for more than two

*Meggitt's new 145 series pressure refueling nozzles are lighter in weight, but will still stand up to common, demanding refueling conditions.*

years fuelling thousands of different aircraft types and hundreds of thousands of gallons of jet fuel being pumped through them and they have never been repaired or replaced during that time," LaPointe added. "The ones that have come back for evaluation only needed some of the sacrificial material replaced before we send them out again to other customers to field trial for us."

**INDEPENDENTLY TESTED**

The recently updated SAE AS5877 spec dictates the requirements for all the various types of nozzles used for refueling aircraft fitted with pressure fuel servicing systems.



All this is par for the course for all providers of such products, however, Meggitt went the extra mile to meet the spec – and that distance came at a high price.

"We are the only company that had the complete testing done by an outside aerospace-accredited test lab," he explained. "The testing took more than seven months to complete and cost more than \$300,000 to do."

**3- OR 6-SLOT**

The 145 series comes in both choices. The U.S. market grew up with 3-slot nozzle. Meanwhile, the

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European and Asian market always have had and preferred the 6-slot nozzle.

"The 6-slot nozzle is easier to connect as it takes less movement of the nozzle to locate the mating three lugs on the aircraft adapter to connect it to," Thompson said.

How easier? "We think the U.S. market will want the 6-slot once everyone realizes the ergonomics that differentiate the two types," Thompson explained. "With the 3-slot, a fueler needs to rotate the nozzle about 120 degrees; with the 6-slot, the needed turn goes down to a much simpler 60 degrees."

#### CROSS UTILIZATION

The new F145 series was purposefully designed to use all the same accessories that are currently available on the company's F116/117 series nozzles. As a result, the 145 series can be configured to meet most any application in the field.

"Any time you can offer such interchangeability," Thompson explained, "that cuts back on parts, inventory and that all that saves companies a lot of money."

"We are currently starting official six-month field trials with the international oil companies in a few weeks," LaPointe reported to us a few weeks after we met in Munich. "Once that is completed we will have the approvals from those oil companies as well as the rest of the world." 

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*Pictured: Steve Marshall with the GENx long probe.*

*Bottom left: The GE90-115B long probe in position on an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 777-200 aircraft.*

Check website for full probe & accessory list.

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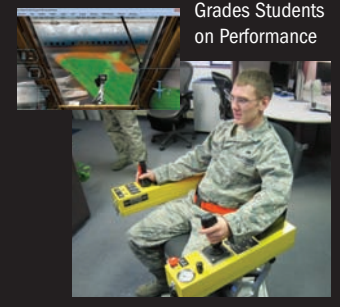
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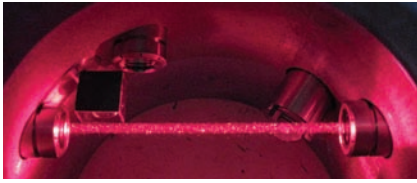
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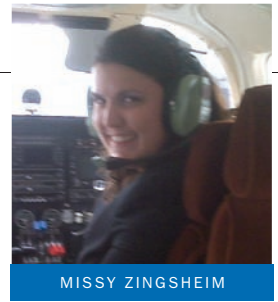
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MISSY ZINGSHEIM

# Another Year, Another Show, Another Reason To Come Together As An Industry

A new partnership, expanded outdoor demo area and the return of such favorites as the maintenance skills competition and networking party add up to a must-attend Cygnus Aviation Expo.

By Missy Zingsheim

**A**s we end one year and start another, I can't believe we are just a few short months away from our Cygnus Aviation Expo. This year (2012) we've really amped it up to be the most dynamic aviation event of the year. Here is what we have going on:

- New this year is our partnership with SAE International for its 2012 Aerospace and Defense for Ground Support Equipment Conference. SAE's overall conference theme is "environmental sustainability in airport operations."
- Expanded this year is our outdoor demo area. Not only have we expanded the demo area to have "garages" for the companies that wish to demo equipment, but we've also expanded the area so you can actually drive and test equipment. In addition to the expanded demo area, we've also included outdoor booths so you can really come and kick the tires and see the equipment in action.
- Also expanded this year are the sessions hosted by Cygnus Aviation. This year we are going to cover topics on marketing and social media, unmanned aircraft systems, FBO/MRO Round Table. Again this year we'll have our full-day, pre-show Management Day: Management Training for Supervisors Promoted from the Line. Plus our Green GSE Session.
- NATA returns with its Safety 1<sup>st</sup> Trainer – Train The Trainer Seminar. One hallmark of the best FBOs is the professionalism of the line service specialists on the ramp. A key component of ramp safety, security and efficiency is the guidance provided by line service trainers. NATA's Safety 1<sup>st</sup> Trainer Seminar delivers the in-depth instruction necessary to make these employees more effective line service supervisors and teachers.
- AMT Society will hold its popular Maintenance Skills Competition, which gives teams of licensed AMTs, AMEs, students enrolled in FAA, EASA, CASA or equivalently authorized schools as well as aircraft maintenance personnel of any country's Armed Forces the opportunity to test their combined abilities against those of their peers. This competition sets the standards that today's skilled aircraft maintenance professionals must meet.
- We'll also have another Attendee & Exhibitor Networking Reception. All qualified attendees and exhibitors have the chance to win a 2012 Ford F-150. Enjoy music, drinks and food, while networking with industry leaders! During this event we will also be giving away our Ground Support Leaders of the Year Awards.

All in all this adds up to the must-attend, most powerful aviation event of 2012. See you there!

**CYGNUS**  
**AVIATION**  
**MARCH 7-9, 2012 EXPO**  
LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER

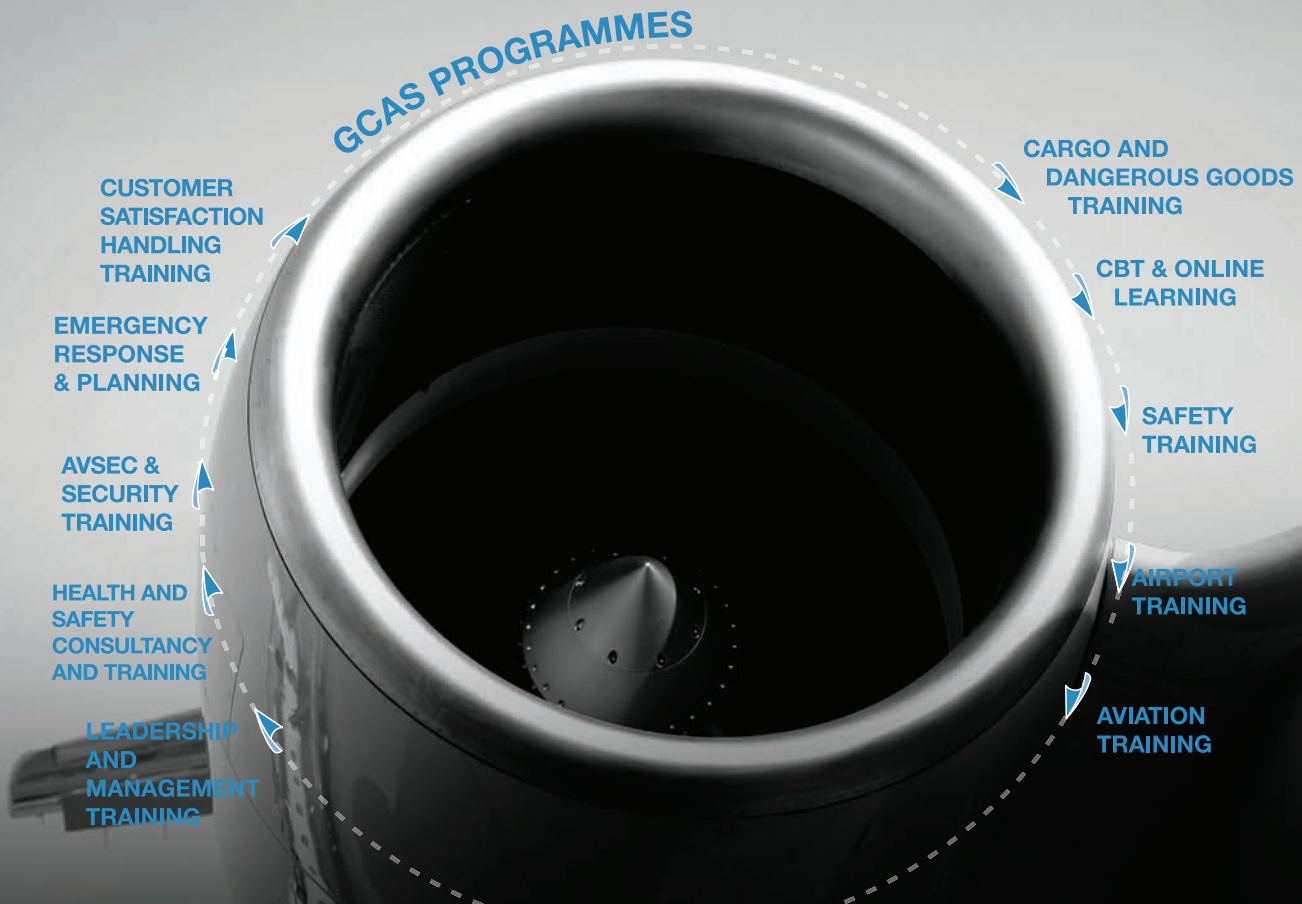


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Gulf Centre for Aviation Studies  
Division of Abu Dhabi Airports Company PJSC  
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