Perfect Turnaround

In just two and a half months from paper documents to state-of-the-art SAP from the T-Systems cloud: What Fraport AG has achieved with its two Brazilian airports is a precision landing.

COPY —— Sven Hansel

In the aviation industry, it is a showstopper even for professionals – the turnaround. Experts use this term to describe the period between "on-block" and "off-block", i.e. the period between the aircraft coming to a standstill at the passenger bridge and the next flight being uncoupled. Whether it's just dozens of passengers boarding and alighting or more than 500 – in other words, does the aircraft hold its parking position for just 30 minutes or two and a half hours – during this time the jets are refueled, cleaned, checked through, unloaded, loaded and so on. A meticulous interplay of perfection. Here every move that needs to be made, has to work like clockwork, and in a breathtakingly short time. Fraport AG, SAP and T-Systems have now achieved a similarly virtuoso interplay. They achieved an equally masterly turnaround and switched from old-fashioned paper processes to the most modern world of business solutions in record time.

The start: Airport operator Fraport AG is not only a national player, but also internationally active. For example, the Frankfurt company has stakes in Antalya Airport in Turkey, Lima Airport in Peru and the Bulgarian airports of Burgas and Varna. Two years ago, Fraport, which is listed in the MDAX,

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also took over Porto Alegre and Fortaleza, two Brazilian airports, and immediately started modernizing them. Especially in the IT landscape, the turbines needed new momentum.

Both airports, Porto Alegre and Fortaleza ranked 4th and 10th among Brazil's 30 largest airports, had no ERP system of their own to date. As part of business process outsourcing, an external service provider handled business processes such as purchasing, invoicing and payroll accounting and also taxed external service providers. For the employees, this meant a lot of manual work on paper and, as a result, a high susceptibility to errors in the process engineering. "That's why our goal was giving a modern system is in the hands of our employees," explained Rafael Augusto da Silva, Head of SAP Applications at Fraport in Brazil.

The cruising flight: From the start of the project to the take-off of the productive system, just two and a half months passed, a turnaround that rarely happens so quickly in implementation practice. And that even though Fraport relies on one of the most modern ERP systems with SAP's S/4HANA®, which is not

teeming with experience. Furthermore each of the airports represents a legal entity on its own and both of them are a good 3,000 kilometers apart.

However, the recipe for the success of this project lies in its implementation. SAP's "Activate" was used, a combination of SAP Best Practices, a methodology and guided configuration that saves a lot of time when introducing SAP S/4HANA. Fraport also used T-Systems' "Accelerator" program. In this way, for example, 65 percent of the financial processes at both airports could be mapped in SAP Best Practices. For its part, the T-Systems methodology ensured that the localization of the software or the integration of the Fraport banks took place extremely quickly. In addition, the project participants were able to integrate processes from existing software systems (payroll and accounting) from other manufacturers into S/4HANA in a very short time. And they created their own app for invoice approvals for airport employees.

The landing: From day one, 70 users worked on the system from the secure T-Systems cloud in a Brazilian data center of the Telekom subsidiary, today it counts already 115. "The introduction of the SAP system gives us more agility and mobility. And it reduces the susceptibility to errors, for example in tax settlements," says Rafael Augusto da Silva. Quarterly reports can now be generated within three days. And in addition to optimized cost and

profitability evaluations, structured business information is now also available in real time. S/4HANA not only covers pure financial processes, but also supply chain and purchasing applications.

Conclusion: Perfect turnaround in record time thanks to modern methods used virtuously by "pilots" and "ground crew", a precision landing.

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