



Europe Airpost

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In partnership with

Antéa

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Industry

Airline

Challenges

- Streamlining publishing of the aircraft operations manual
- Simplifying the integration of amendments
- Migrating from a hardcopy release to an electronic distribution of the manual
- Highlighting amendments for quick browsing by pilots

Solution

- Streamlined document generation
- Europe Airpost is using the integrated structured information management capabilities of Adobe FrameMaker to accelerate the production and distribution of its operating manual. The company also leverages PDF to electronically deliver important information quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively.

Results

- Improved productivity by reducing time needed to add amendments from three days to a half-day
- Made it easier for pilots to access the most relevant, updated content
- Supported environmental sustainability goals by using about one million fewer sheets of paper per year
- Streamlined operations and maximized existing assets
- Reduced printing and paper materials costs by 60% to 70% with electronic distribution in PDF

Systems at a glance

- Adobe FrameMaker

Europe Airpost

French airline streamlines the publishing of its flight-critical operations manual with Adobe® FrameMaker® software

Efficient, cost-effective document management

How do you make it easier to update a document when it is 6,000 pages long, is subject to strict revisions, and needs to be distributed to 200 pilots?

That was the problem facing French airline Europe Airpost. Aéropostale's worthy successor, Europe Airpost carries both mail and passengers to major tourist destinations in Europe and along the Mediterranean coast. The company has a fleet of Boeing 737-300 and 737-700 airplanes. Government regulations require that airlines keep up-to-date documentation on the operation of aircraft, including all safety procedures, at their employees' disposal. This documentation is regularly updated with amendments to established procedures. For each of these amendments, the company must make sure that changes are effectively integrated in the operations manual and brought to the attention of the pilots.

"For a long time, we used Microsoft Word to keep the manual up-to-date, with images integrated in various formats," says Mr. Sérafin Alvarez, head of the flight operations engineering department. "But updating the manual was complicated because the amendments require meticulous follow through. Each amendment required three days of editing to change dates, compile the modified pages, and complete the revisions."

Faced with the need to regularly update the operations manual for its aircraft, Europe Airpost, working with Antéa, established a streamlined publishing process using Adobe FrameMaker to help ensure the distribution of higher quality information, control costs, and free engineers from the time-consuming task of manual information management.

Better control of processing and distribution of information

Europe Airpost's goals were to increase flexibility in processing amendments and to accelerate the development and processing of the operations manual for its airplanes. Additionally, it needed to replace hardcopy distribution with electronic distribution to improve the process and reduce costs associated with distributing updated manuals to pilots. The company wanted to increase efficiency, reduce processing and distribution times, enhance responsiveness, and increase its control over the distribution process and costs.

"Until now, the manual was available only in hardcopy. Because the company is heavily involved in sustainable development, we decided to transition to electronic distribution, as our pilots already had laptop computers to help them perform their duties," adds Mr. Alvarez. "We needed a tool capable of editing a 6,000-page manual, to be distributed in PDF with capabilities added to make it easier to browse."

The company examined existing solutions and approached Antéa about a collaborative effort to deploy the Adobe solution. "We took a look at solutions already implemented by other airlines and learned that Antéa already had several clients in that field," explains Mr. Alvarez. Accordingly, following its own evaluations and on the advice of Antéa, Europe Airpost adopted Adobe FrameMaker software to overhaul its operations manual editing and distribution.

"Based on the expertise we gained through the development of a specific solution for producing operations documentation with Adobe FrameMaker for a major French airline, we decided to invest in standardizing the solution with enhanced functionalities to meet airlines' needs," says Mr. Alberto Franzetti, president of Antéa. "So, we offered this solution based on Adobe FrameMaker to Europe Airpost."

"Adobe FrameMaker allowed us to gain more precise access to the information through cross-referencing, like in a book. Of course, the table of contents is still there, but now there are hyperlinks pointing to different sections of a manual to give readers more complete access to information."

Mr. Sérafin Alvarez
Flight operations engineering
manager, Europe Airpost

Streamlining document publishing

The content of an operations manual has a distinct structure. Each amendment must be listed and numbered. The index has to be updated, the table of contents verified, and links between sections of the document created to unite information in different sections of the file.

The work done by Europe Airpost's engineers on the document revisions was slowed by long and tedious editing done using office productivity software. "Engineers spent far too much time editing and verifying text," says Mr. Franzetti. "Europe Airpost wanted to streamline the process. So we have redefined our standard solution to give Europe Airpost a solution that meets its specific needs."

There were two challenges associated with the project's implementation. The first concerned the company's approach to information. The airline's previous process included authoring unstructured content which relied on commercial, off-the-shelf tools and simplistic formatting. They would now move to a more structured approach, leveraging text which is enhanced using a professional document management solution. Accordingly, the company needed to integrate the entire operations manual production into FrameMaker and structurally tag the contents to make it easier to browse and update the document.

The second challenge was Europe Airpost's obligation to deploy the new solution while simultaneously maintaining the existing system to make sure that the necessary amendments were properly integrated throughout the implementation of the FrameMaker project.

Making PDF smarter

The operations manual is divided into four sections. The first is devoted to general information; the second to the aircraft's operation; the third indicates the specifics of certain routes and airports; and the fourth to crew training.

"We used to do an index, but Adobe FrameMaker allowed us to gain more precise access to the information through cross-referencing, like in a book," Mr. Alvarez says. "Of course, the table of contents is still there, but now there are hyperlinks pointing to different sections of the manual to give readers more complete access to information."

With Adobe FrameMaker and the ability to publish manuals in Adobe PDF, the company has revamped and restructured its entire manual. Europe Airpost was able to introduce smart browsing in the manual by enhancing the information and making the document more flexible for browsing. By automatically generating a list of all the pages on which amendments have been made, pilots can access the information quickly, directly and easily, greatly reducing browsing time.

Europe Airpost can also index files by introducing keyword searches, avoiding repetition between the various sections through hyperlinks. "With the Adobe solution, we were able to enhance the information available while maintaining the same volume of 6,000 pages," Mr. Alvarez says.

The new electronic distribution has helped Europe Airpost boost productivity, reduce costs, and make it easier for pilots and other personnel to stay updated on the latest amendments to the standard operating document. With Adobe FrameMaker, the company can update and publish the document with new amendments in only a half a day, rather than the three days previously needed. Employees can now focus on the changes to the content rather than on formatting. Additionally, the compact PDF files make it easier for pilots to access the latest version of the operations manual, while helping the company reduce its printing costs and environmental impact.

"We had concerns about network load," says Mr. Franzetti. "With the Adobe solution, we developed an interface that makes it possible to transmit only the modified pages to avoid having to send the entire document to the users' laptops every time an amendment is made, thus reducing network traffic and maximizing overall efficiency."

"Previously, for each amendment—no matter how simple—we needed a minimum of three days for editing and verifying the revision and formatting. This is now reduced to only a half-day."

Mr. Sérafin Alvarez
Flight operations engineering
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A project crowned with success

Today, all of the airline's operations manuals are published electronically. All pilots have an electronic version in PDF available on their laptop computers, with an accompanying hardcopy on each aircraft.

Although still in the transition phase, Europe Airpost has already seen positive results. The first benefit is increased productivity resulting from the streamlined publishing process. "Previously, for each amendment—no matter how simple—we needed a minimum of three days for editing and verifying the revision and formatting," says Mr. Alvarez. "This is now reduced to only a half-day. Our engineers can focus on their work modifying the content; the rest is handled by FrameMaker."

Moreover, the electronic distribution of the manual in PDF means the airline can now be more confident that pilots refer to the latest version of the manual, which includes all amendments. For pilots, consulting and accessing and browsing information is now easier.

Electronic distribution also reduced Europe Airpost's annual printing costs by 60% to 70% and resulted in a positive impact on the environment with the company using about one million fewer sheets of paper per year.

Overall, adopting Adobe FrameMaker has helped Europe Airpost streamline its operations and maximize its existing assets while improving productivity, reducing costs, and meeting its environmental sustainability goals.

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