



# Integrated approach results in fewer lost bags

**G**ROWING passenger expectations, tight turnaround times, relentless cost reductions, tough new security regulations – in today's high-pressure operating environment, keeping track of the billions of pieces of baggage transported around the world annually has become a major challenge.

There's no doubt that a passenger's loyalty to an airline – or even an airport – is at least partly dependent on how their baggage is handled. That's not just good customer service, it's an economic imperative: the cost of each mishandled bag ranges from US\$ 25-150. For airports and airlines, what looks like a deceptively simple task is getting ever-more complex as lengthy security procedures, worsening airport congestion, increased interlining and mounting passenger and baggage volumes introduce delays and complicate handling procedures. Routing more traffic through central hubs also means that small problems at one site can rapidly snowball out of control, impacting baggage transfers at other destinations down the line.

SITA, leading service provider globally of IT business solutions and communication services for the air transport industry in its Baggage Report 2009 stated that 2008 was a remarkable year for baggage, with the total number of bags mishandled dropping by over 20 per cent on the

previous year – from 42.4 million to 32.8 million – after five years of constant increases.

Baggage is a top priority for air travelers. Over 60 per cent of passengers surveyed globally associated a pleasant trip with having their “check-in baggage arrive promptly and safely”; a score second only to flights being on time – and well ahead of short queues, friendly ground staff or well-equipped modern terminals. Latest data from the Association of European Airlines (AEA) shows that the number of bags mishandled by its members fell from 16.9 per thousand in the first nine months of 2007 to 14.2 per thousand in the first ten months of 2008 – after increasing steadily from 2004 to 2006. Further improvements can be achieved through a combination of:

- Initiatives such as IATA's Baggage Improvement Programme (BIP) – which through its solutions toolkit helps drive changes in business processes and passenger practices
- Integrated Baggage Management Solutions – such as SITA's, developed with the whole air transport community in mind – which can direct, track and trace passenger baggage throughout the entire journey, from check-in to final delivery at the destination

In addition, better customer relations will result from the ability to use new technologies such as self-service baggage tracing – via kiosks, mobile phones or online – to help travelers keep track of their bags. Initiatives such as IATA's BIP and SITA's Integrated Baggage Management Solution can deliver real improvements to baggage processing and management, benefiting airlines, airports and passengers alike.

For further reductions in the rates of mishandled and lost baggage, bags need to be reconciled throughout the terminals and ramp areas of an airport and across all flights. This will depend on fully-integrated end-to-end systems which include improved tracking and reconciliation. These systems will likely be identified and implemented over time by airlines, as they continue to seek ways of reducing the costs of mishandled baggage.

Airports, encouragingly, are taking a proactive role in implementing the infrastructure required for automated baggage sortation and reconciliation systems, including the network, readers, scanners and antennae. So while airlines and their passengers may be the main beneficiaries of improved baggage processing, ultimately everyone stands to win.

## SPECIAL FEATURE



### The world's leading baggage solutions

SITA has been the recognized leader in baggage tracking and tracing solutions for the aviation industry for some 20 years. Its experience, in-depth industry knowledge and commitment to rapidly integrating the very latest technologies has already seen leading-edge SITA baggage systems installed in over 70 major airports around the world, including Amsterdam, Barcelona, Cairo, Chicago, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, London Gatwick, Madrid, Moscow, Singapore and Toronto.

SITA's Integrated Baggage Solution seamlessly integrates with a wide range of airline and airport host systems for handling, security, flight information, weight and balance, resource



management and operational databases, gathering data every step of the way so that a bag's location can always be pinpointed as quickly as possible.

Globally integrated, cost-effective and fully secure, the solution gives airlines and airports maximum visibility on baggage movements anywhere, anytime. Through a tightly-integrated suite of automated baggage tagging, tracking and tracing software, based on leading edge technologies and ultra-reliable global networks, it puts airlines and airports back in control of passenger baggage. Put simply, it guarantees the fastest and most efficient throughput of bags, from flight to flight, airline to airline, and airport to airport, right around the world – delivering a clear

win for airlines, airports and passengers alike. Since 2002, the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) has been using SITA BagManager in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, in the world's first multi-airport baggage reconciliation project. Since the beginning of 2005, London Gatwick – the busiest single-runway airport in the world – has been using BagManager to handle baggage, using around 250 wireless hand-held scanners. Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is one of the world's busiest, handling 40 million passengers and over 19 million departure bags a year. The airport recently teamed up with SITA to revamp their baggage handling system in a multi-million dollar overhaul, using Symbol Technologies' Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) tags and RFID read-points to track and manage baggage. The system went live at the end of 2004, and is now fully operational – and it's a project expected to deliver long-term savings to the airport of over HK\$ 85 million a year.

Bangalore International Airport Limited and SITA introduced the first ever passenger-baggage reconciliation system in India in 2007. This was a significant milestone for the air transport industry in India and set a benchmark for other airports.

In an era where improving efficiency in one area often means compromising service and satisfaction in another, SITA's Integrated Baggage Solution offers a rare win-win proposition, cutting costs, improving efficiencies and increasing the competitiveness of airlines and airports while streamlining the travel experience and delivering optimum passenger satisfaction.

