

Following hi-tech adoption, Swoop now runs a more efficient de-icing operation



One fell Swoop

Ensuring that your de-icing operation is as efficient as possible entails looking beyond the norm, notes the Editor.

Success stories in the ground handling business are always worth passing on but the reality is that an operational advantage is not necessarily something that everyone wants to share. This holds equally true in the de-icing arena. However, the story here shows that not only can advantages accrue from a change of mindset but that for some, at least, there is no lack of reticence when it comes to elaborating on the success in question.

As most readers will know, de-icing as a ground handling function has evolved over the last few years. Today, there is a greater awareness over the environment, which has led to the adoption of glycol recuperation and recycling facilities, for example. Added to that is an enhanced interest in forced air applications. Equally, the old modus operandi of charging per litre of fluid has been turned on its head, with operations like that of IDS reinventing the wheel and introducing a fixed cost per aircraft type. Above and beyond all this is the digital aid – which is exactly what attracted low cost carrier Swoop when it was looking to improve its operation. A digital transformation, this Canadian

carrier decided, would allow more control over the de-icing operation – and to make this a reality it enlisted the aid of solutions provider Wiseleap.

A strategic asset

Swoop began to think about implementing a solution that would enable its digital transformation with the objectives of efficiency, cost control, security, visibility over operations and sustainable development. Integrating this digital revolution in an effective manner with the daily lives of people would, it believed, prove to be an unquestionable strategic asset for the company.

The goal?

Streamlined processes and practices for ground operations.

And the motivation?

That can be summed up as primarily operational efficiencies, together with the above-mentioned benefits.

One of the WestJet group of companies, Swoop has been a notable recent example of digital transformation. Since its first flight in 1996, WestJet has sought to provide safe, friendly and affordable air travel. Right

from the start, the carrier's philosophy was one of putting its passengers and its people first; in doing so, it has gained an enviable reputation within Canada. Today, flying to more than 100 destinations, WestJet has remained true to its principles and continues to strive for the highest standards of service and success.

Streamlined solution

Striving for more control and visibility with the service providers with which it was working, subsidiary Swoop decided to approach this digital shift by streamlining its de-icing operations management with Deicing Manager, Wiseleap's de-icing management software, a digital platform aimed at centralising all winter operations data into a single platform to the benefit of the business' organisation on many levels. The objective of this transition was to gain better visibility across the de-icing stations around North America and improve the effectiveness between the winter operations management, the de-icing teams and service providers on the ground. This would be achieved whilst easily gathering all relevant information related to de-icing operations to make key operational decisions.

Following an in-depth study of the primary role of a de-icing management software and the benefits of using it on a daily basis, Swoop sought a solution that would meet its strict criteria for efficiency and integration between the different de-icing teams. The choice to implement Deicing Manager was made without hesitation because of the many benefits that the solution provided on several fronts. The main criteria that supported this decision were its ease of use, the simple integration of the platform and most importantly, the level of customisation and flexibility that the Wiseleap software offered. The Deicing Manager platform was implemented according to the de-icing processes and practices of Swoop and the transition was assisted by an ongoing training programme, as well as technical support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All of this was supported by a team based in Montreal.

"We were looking for something that allows us to improve our visibility over our de-icing operations across our stations, so

A NO-FRILLS BIRTH

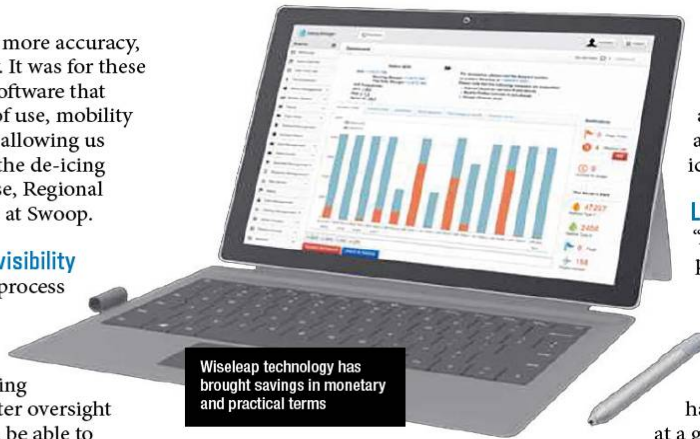
In April 2017 WestJet announced that it was planning to launch a new airline to enter the growing ultra low cost carrier market to compete against NewLeaf (now Flair Airlines). Swoop was born.

that we could benefit from more accuracy, productivity and efficiency. It was for these reasons that we needed a software that could combine simplicity of use, mobility and personalisation, while allowing us to have more control over the de-icing process,” explains Zac Hulse, Regional Manager, Domestic Affairs at Swoop.

Increased efficiency and visibility

Externalising the de-icing process implies that an airline is mostly dependent on the service to gather and provide accurate de-icing data. In order to gain a better oversight of the de-icing process and be able to effectively plan the costs related to de-icing operations, it was incumbent on Swoop to adopt some sort of de-icing management software. It was also deemed a good opportunity for the airline to make the transition from pen and paper to paperless practices and improve its tracking of spray logs over all of its stations.

“The way we used to collect data involved a lot of tedious manual work from our end as well as from our service providers.



Wiseleap technology has brought savings in monetary and practical terms

Having a clear view of all details coming from our de-icing operations was inefficient. This resulted in not having the relevant data to make key operational decisions. Having these challenges in mind, adopting a de-icing management software was a logical decision,” states Hulse.

The deployment and quick implementation of Deicing Manager within Swoop has helped to improve the effectiveness of the different teams in their

duty of aircraft de-icing. With the intuitive functionality of the platform, Deicing Manager has allowed the airline to benefit from an increased efficiency in the de-icing process.

Living up to expectation

“After an assessment of our practices and processes, one of the most important things for us, as a start-up airline, was to be able to have complete traceability of the cost of our de-icing operations season over season by having our de-icing data available at a glance. Last year, we managed more than 2,000 de-ice events with Deicing Manager, and ground operations managers have direct access to data and can efficiently plan their de-icing activities. Since integrating the Deicing Manager platform, we are also able to forecast our costs dedicated to de-icing, and reconcile invoices based on contract rates to be more cost- and time-efficient.

“I strongly recommend this software solution to all airlines,” adds Hulse. *ghi*



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