Consistency of service delivery to clients is core to operations’ push to operational excellence. For Jeremy Akel, senior vice president, global operations, world-class customer service begins with consistency.
“THE CUSTOMERS’ EXPERIENCE WITH BRISTOW SHOULD BE THE SAME WORLDWIDE,” HE SAYS. “THIS MEANS CONSISTENT PRACTICES AND STANDARDS AT EVERY BRISTOW LOCATION.” JEREMY AKEL HAS SPENT THE PAST 12 MONTHS UNDERSTANDING HOW CUSTOMER SERVICE IS DELIVERED GLOBALLY AND SETTING HIS OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES. HIS FOCUS ON CONSISTENCY IS TO GIVE GLOBAL CLIENTS THE SAME LEVEL OF SAFETY, SERVICE AND RELIABILITY REGARDLESS OF LOCATION.

WHY CONSISTENCY MATTERS
The experience of other companies shows the journey toward consistency begins with a thousand small steps, identifying even the smallest improvements in strategies, activities, tools and processes that lead to operational excellence.

“On a business level,” says Senior Vice President of Global Operations Jeremy Akel, “consistency is important when setting your goals and strategy with a long-term view. It’s also important in your commitment to and application of the highest standards in financial discipline, execution, risk management and safety performance. And consistent, reliable service is essential to retain your customers.

“On an individual level,” he continues, “consistency comes from understanding our purpose and how important our roles are. How important it is to do what’s necessary when no one is watching. How important discipline in execution is, especially when you don’t see immediate results. And completing a task above and beyond the baseline as a matter of course – because you believe deep down in operational excellence. No matter what your role is, you play a part in customer service. Consistent systems and behaviors are key to customer satisfaction.

“Each time we establish the right standards, make the right decisions, execute well, or continually refine and innovate, we improve the company’s performance in some way and see the benefits ripple through the organization. By making the delivery of our service more predictable, we improve customer satisfaction and allow our teams to focus their creativity on improving service delivery.”

How does he see the organization becoming more consistent? There are a number of simple, tangible improvements from which Bristow can reap significant benefits.

SAFETY IS FUNDAMENTAL. “Safety is ground zero for consistency,” Akel says. Bristow is working to ensure that the company’s safety management system is implemented the same way in every business unit. In addition to driving improvement in the company’s safety Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), safety is a major factor in winning new business. The key to safety leadership is consistent systems and behaviors, and a pride in oneself to do it right the first time. “A prospective client’s auditor will check our safety management system before they give their approval for us to work with them,” he says. (See related safety article on page 10.)

“BY MAKING THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICE MORE PREDICTABLE, WE IMPROVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND ALLOW OUR TEAMS TO FOCUS THEIR CREATIVITY ON IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY.” – JEREMY AKEL, SVP, GLOBAL OPERATIONS
Health Usage Monitoring Systems (HUMS) were pioneered by Bristow to detect potential equipment malfunctions before they occur. Now HUMS data will be downloaded after every flight on all new-generation aircraft, and Bristow has to be able to download and analyze HUMS data across the Group in a consistent way. “Our fleet support group in Aberdeen should be able to see all of the data,” Akel says. “We need the same people looking at the data to recognize performance trends.” The data can also detect traits for each individual aircraft to make better decisions about placement and operating parameters.

**STANDARDIZING FOR CONSISTENCY.** By fiscal year 2015, all of Bristow’s medium and heavy aircraft will meet the standards set by the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (OGP), an industry group that promotes safe, responsible and sustainable operations. In addition, all Bristow operations will have and conduct procedures consistent with OGP guidelines. “Our major clients are in the OGP, and having OGP-compliant aircraft will improve safety, make it easier to transfer aircraft between clients and support our strategic marketing position,” Akel says.

Currently, the same aircraft type may have different configurations in different regions. “While this is usually done on an ad-hoc basis to support clients, we experience a loss in value because added components require extra maintenance and more time on the ground,” he says. “These variations also make it more difficult to sell or relocate the aircraft.”

Bristow is leveraging technology to consolidate and align technical manuals and share information globally. Bristow uses more than 1,000 manuals in its daily operations, and each one must be updated regularly – a hidden cost that can be addressed by consolidating and centralizing the database. “We’ll be able to address a lot of this with our SAP implementation, but first we need to standardize the content,” Akel says.

**MANAGING THE FLEET GLOBALLY.** Among the main focus areas are control of fleet configuration and standardization of the aircraft acceptance process. “There are inconsistencies now that sometimes result in taking delivery when we should have asked for additional items to be addressed,” Akel says. “Now we will have a consistent process and accountability.” Going forward, Bristow will work with its suppliers to achieve a more comprehensive, but more standardized configuration, create visibility and improve delivery to revenue lead times.

**CREATING A NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE ROLE.** Akel recently announced the new role of service delivery manager to work with clients on a day-to-day basis and ensure the clients’ requirements are met efficiently and effectively. “This person will work with all functions to address aircraft or personnel issues and develop steps within their business unit to improve service,” he says.

**CLIENTS WANT A CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE**

Underscoring all is the drive toward operational excellence, supported by a culture of openness and innovation. Aligning across global operations is fundamental to encouraging coordination, collaboration, sharing ideas and best practices. Going forward, Akel says, you can expect to see initiatives in place that will look to identify inconsistencies, and simplify and standardize each of the above areas.

The most compelling argument for pursuing consistency is the advice of our clients, who rank consistency among the top attributes they want to see in a global service provider.

The rewards will be felt by employees and clients. “Consistency drives value, creates efficiency and eliminates hidden costs,” Akel concludes. “Most importantly, it gives our clients a better and more predictable experience.”
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