

How Fort Wayne International Modernizes Operations and Maintenance

Overview

The Need

An easy-to-learn digital platform for all forms, documentation and processes across the airport.

The Solution

A platform that could be tailored to the airport's needs, covering everything from communication, to team management, to tracking compliance, and more.

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Background

Pen and paper have officially exited the terminal.

Digitization, from forms to whole operations, has swept through most industries over the past years, with aviation being no exception. With a focus on safety, maintenance, and continuous improvement in operations, airports have really taken to technology to enhance the modern airport operations environment.

Ryan Bauer, CM. ACE, Airport Operations Supervisor at Fort Wayne International (FWA), experienced this technological transformation and has spearheaded FWA's transition to fully digitized and automated processes and data collection.

Faced with the human resistance to change, an expiring software contract, and challenged with creating a way to quickly and easily collect and store necessary information, Ryan turned to Veoci.

Digital Documentation

Having software that allowed for record keeping, specifically cradle-to-grave record keeping and trackability, was extremely important to FWA. Ryan discovered that Veoci enabled and encouraged full-scope record keeping, describing Veoci as a platform "...geared at people that need to store, utilize, and flow information throughout the organization... think of it as a conduit, it's a method in which these things are done."

Every form and process within Veoci collects information that is then stored and always available. The curated data can then be displayed in almost any capacity. Using filters, users can show critical information and hide less important data.

The airport's first Veoci solution was for work order management, which required Ryan to create records for airport assets on the platform. While this

took some time, Ryan acknowledged that taking the time in the beginning to create asset records for vehicles, buildings, flights, and more absolutely pays dividends and will continue to.

These asset records can be used across the platform and within other solutions, as well as individually managed and tracked. One of the airport's other initial Veoci solutions was a building permit tool. This utilized the buildings with established asset records, discerned who was permitted to enter specific buildings, and detailed the names of each building as changes have been made in recent years.

Storing and tracking flight information has always been imperative, but it proved to be especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to implementing Veoci, entering flight information was tedious and time consuming. Now, using a single form, Ryan and his team can gather all of the required information, saving the team 15 minutes a day, or about 65 hours a year.

Ryan explained that flight data helped flight pattern recognition, which informed better gate staffing decisions and other operations across the airport. Having an accessible communal digital space has changed the game for FWA.

Efficiency and Connectivity

Consolidating data and information within Veoci created an opportunity for FWA to also streamline communication across teams and departments. Gone were the days of never ending email chains and digging through hundreds of messages to find that one specific attachment someone referenced.

New Ways to Communicate

Ryan and his team often use threads, a central feature within Cockpits, a particular Veoci Room view, to report any updates, post the daily schedules, or instantly share other pertinent information. These habits exhibit the connectivity of information and operations Ryan continually stressed the importance of throughout the webinar.

Dashboards contribute to that connectivity too. Dashboards are completely customizable, and allow for tailored views of data. This set-up not only provided team members with relevant and useful data, but built a common operating picture for the airfield teams.

These Dashboards can also be public, giving Ryan a means of sharing data and information with external stakeholders without Veoci user profiles. For instance, the TSA agents at FWA collect specific data points regarding terminal foot traffic. By routing this data to public dashboards, airport vendors and business tenants can use the data to make stronger operational decisions when scheduling staff or purchasing merchandise and resources.

Team Management

Veoci also plays a key role in team management. Veoci's Task feature lets Ryan easily assign and supervise each employee's work. Tasks are also a simple way to communicate expectations. Different schedules pose no issues either; though shifts are not always lined up, expectations are clear.

Ryan also utilizes Tasks in an operations calendar. The calendar, composed of previously determined and planned operations, can be filtered to only display a specific date or event that he and his team needs to plan for. Ryan also assigns tasks to team members from this operations calendar, and even created his own Custom Action that sends a reminder to start planning for upcoming events.

Testing, training, and certifications are also big gears in the airport's personnel management and operations. For example, the airport gives personnel a recurring Non-Movement Driving Area Test. Before digitizing this test using Veoci, management had to manually review each submitted exam. With each proctor review taking at least 2 minutes, and 100 team members taking 7 individual tests a year, the airport now saves 60 hours a year on this operation alone.

Solutions In Action

Ryan detailed how Veoci has also streamlined the airport's crane notice process. Construction companies in the Allen county area notify Ryan and the airport weeks before delivering or raising a crane on the airport's property. Before implementing Veoci, Ryan had to collect the notices and then manually inform and remind relative stakeholders of crane operations notices.

Now, Ryan uses a form to collect all of the crane operation data that comes in — i.e. dates, contact information, locations — that's then shared with appropriate personnel. He then schedules notifications to specific individuals 12 hours before a crane is raised to insure that operations will not be impacted.

Users can also filter this Form's entries to see crane notices at a higher level; for instance, a user can filter the entries to see all raised cranes currently on the property. This information can then be visually represented and mapped.

Inspections and Compliance

Just like many other airports across the U.S., FWA performs regular Part 139 inspections to ensure regulatory compliance. Not only does Veoci streamline the team's regular airfield inspections, it puts all the data into a single location and allows information to move between all operations and inspections. This configuration also keeps a thumb on the airport's pulse, ensuring compliance across the operations.

PAPI and REIL inspections are also a priority for Ryan, which he simplified using a single form. Ryan followed suit for fuel farm and tender and construction safety inspections as well. For other Veoci administrators, he stressed the importance of making sure that everything made sense and was simple so all users and operations stakeholders get the most from these solutions.

Having centrally-located data also gives Ryan a leg up when inspectors come by. Using Dashboards, Ryan can compile a curated report for the inspectors and only pass on relevant information, saving all parties time and stress.

Tips and Recommendations

With over a year of experience using Veoci, Ryan provided viewers with some lessons he learned and what he thought would be helpful to others who are implementing and managing the platform for their organizations:

“Build it how you want it, in a way that works for you”

Ryan shared that when it comes to building out a solution, there’s no need to change a process just to meet the platform because the platform can take on any process.

He also reminded listeners that while the Veoci Solutions team can configure solutions for your organization, you, as an administrator, can too. Don’t discredit your ability to create viable processes, or think that it’s too late to get started or try something new using the platform.

Processes Matter

Moving processes onto Veoci should be a full-hearted effort. Throughout implementation, there was an expectation of full commitment in terms of time and effort during the adoption period, which ultimately resulted in the creation of quality processes that make sense and save time.

Creating a solution will take some time and thought; there is no sense in quickly throwing forms, workflows, dashboards and more together to immediately solve an issue. Simple processes are best, but they are not always the easiest to get to, so have patience.

Train and Train and Train Employees

Practice makes perfect, an old adage Ryan kept in mind when his team started using Veoci. With daily use and practice came a familiarity, and then a comfortability.

Ryan also recognized that identifying “local experts” within each department was helpful. This individual can be a sounding board and answer the day-to-day questions others ask.

Identifying a champion within an organization was another piece of advice Ryan passed along. A champion can speak to the power and usability of Veoci during both the adoption and integration periods. They’ll be your organization’s cheerleader and encourage others to really embrace the platform for operations.

Use Your Resources

See how other airports are using Veoci; speaking to other Veoci users might give you some good ideas for new solutions or improvements to existing ones. Ryan also noted that he had a few moments where he had a question or encountered a road block. Fortunately, the Veoci Helpdesk provides great content administrators can use in the solutions. Make sure to visit it when you have a question!

One of the last tips Ryan gave viewers was to consider attending a Veoci Boot Camp. “Veoci Boot Camps really get you comfortable,” Ryan said. “As someone in airports without a strong software background, it gave me a good understanding of how Veoci works.”

Looking Forward

Ryan wants to keep improving FWA’s solutions. He said that even more irons are in the fire, including creating a training records database, SWPPP inspections, and even a solution using Veoci’s Plans feature.

As Ryan and his team at Fort Wayne International move forward with building solutions using Veoci, they will continue to find new ways to save time, streamline processes, and keep people safe with Veoci.