

A MAGAZINE FOR AIRLINE EXECUTIVES

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Arab Air Carriers Organization Helps Members Move into the Future

■ By Nejb Ben-Khedher | *Ascend* Contributor

These are exciting times for the Arab Air Carriers Organization and its member airlines.

Since its founding in 1965, the AACO has been a catalyst for strengthening the airlines of the Middle East. And in the past two years, the organization has focused even more intently on helping Arab carriers gain better access to advanced technology while saving costs through joint purchasing.

In the past few years, the AACO, founded to promote pan-Arab cooperation, has transformed itself from a meeting forum for Arab carriers to a forward-thinking, proactive partner, assisting its members with increasing the efficiency of their operations and controlling costs. Through its efforts, the AACO estimates it has saved its 22 members about US\$140 million last year alone.

The organization also teams with the International Air Transport Association to provide additional training for its members' personnel, providing expertise in both operational and commercial areas.

The AACO's efforts come at a pivotal time for the region's carriers. Due to the changing economic climate, many Arab carriers are considering significant changes to their operations, including ideas once considered controversial, such as staff reduction, work rule

of challenges that are affecting their profitability.

Under the leadership of Secretary General Abdul Wahab Teffaha, the AACO is coordinating a number of revenue-enhancing initiatives in the areas of e-commerce, customer relationship management and MIDT analysis.

Through the agreement, the AACO members will be able to utilize the *Sabre® ProVisionSM* MIDT processing service, the *Sabre® WiseVisionTM* sales expansion system, and at a later stage, the *Sabre® TransVisionTM* traffic flow analysis system.

These tools will enable the contracting carriers to extract and analyze valuable decision-support information from the wealth of data available from computerized reservations systems and global distribution systems.

Through the use of these tools, Arab carriers will be able to use the GDS and CRS data to increase their market share, maximize market potential, identify travel patterns, analyze alliances and increase revenues.

The AACO-Sabre partnership also has potential to expand into other areas such as revenue management and pricing.

In June, AACO and Sabre hosted a one-day pricing and revenue management workshop in Beirut. The workshop, attended by 34 airline representatives, focused on techniques and industry best practices.



Oman Air officials Hamad Al-Harthy, manager marketing programs and systems (standing left), and Abdulrahman Albusaidi, chief executive officer (sitting), along with Nejb Ben-Khedher, senior vice president, Sabre Consulting (right), sign a contract for airline reservations services from Sabre.

changes, and even eliminating "prestige" destinations as part of network rationalization. Some of the Arab carriers are also considering alliances, regional consolidation and privatization.

While the Arab airlines face different degrees of complexity in their operations, the majority of them have a number

As part of its new focus, the AACO members named Sabre as an official industry partner in June.

As an AACO partner, Sabre will provide a full line of sales expansion products that deliver a comprehensive group of MIDT processing, data analysis and office automation software solutions.



ARAB AIR CARRIERS ORGANIZATION



The relationship with the AACO further builds upon Sabre's long-term commitment to the Middle East region.

With customer support personnel based in Beirut and Bahrain, Sabre has local subject matter experts with experience in the unique aspect of the Arab air transportation business.


A growing client base also relies on Sabre solutions to operate its businesses.

Oman Air recently selected Sabre's reservations and departure control systems. Gulf Air, Kuwait Airways, Middle East Airlines and Royal Air Maroc are among the Arab carriers currently utilizing the Sabre® AirMax™ automated revenue management system to maximize the revenue from each passenger by optimizing the allocation of seat inventory. And, in addition to the AirMax system, Gulf Air also uses

a range of Sabre products supporting the airline in virtually every functional area, from planning to operations.

The use of new technology provided through the partnership represents only one aspect of the dramatic changes affecting the airlines of the Middle East. Throughout the region, fleets are getting younger, management is focusing more intently on profitability and service levels, and competi-

tion continues to grow.

As these trends continue to affect the Arab airlines, Sabre will continue to partner with them to ensure they have the tools, systems and training necessary to succeed. 

Nejib Ben-Khedher is the managing partner for Sabre Consulting. Prior to heading the consulting group, Nejib was vice president of the Europe, Middle East and Africa region for Sabre Airline Solutions.

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News on New and Improved Products and Services from Sabre Airline Solutions

product

The Sabre® Qik™ business processing solutions Java edition

description

The Qik solutions provide industry-leading graphical user interfaces and developer tools.

benefits

The Java edition of the Qik solutions retains all the benefits of its previous editions, including ease-of-

use, increased productivity, reduced costs and increased revenues. Users of the Qik solutions will also be able to integrate them with the underlying technologies that are used across an ever-widening span of customer touch-points, including the Internet, wireless devices and reservations.

The Qik business processing solutions' powerful toolkit allows airlines to tailor their Qik solutions to their unique business environment. The newest version is a much more flexible and powerful

tool that allows developers to create graphically rich applications more quickly than ever before.

The latest release of the Qik solutions includes a completely re-written developer tool that enables travel and transportation companies to more cost-effectively integrate data and systems, while providing information to travelers, all via an open technical platform and an advanced tool set.

The Java edition of the Qik solutions addresses

customer requests for access to more diverse content and information that travelers can use to make informed travel decisions.

features

- Support for two scripting languages,
- A fully graphical screen painter,
- Support for more advanced graphical elements,
- Support for a variety of graphics formats,
- Creation of modal and non-modal windows. 