



CASE STUDY: British Airways Maintenance

Aircraft Maintenance Facility Accurately Tracks Inventory Management Data without Extra IT Burden

CUSTOMER NAME: British Airways Maintenance, a subsidiary of British Airways

LOCATION: Cardiff, UK

INDUSTRY: Aerospace

MATERIALS MANAGED: MRO consumables, durables, calibrated equipment, rework, kits

CRIBMASTER SOLUTIONS: Inventory Management Software & Hosting Services

Challenge

The British Airways Maintenance facility at Cardiff (BAMC) performs all major maintenance on the British Airways long-haul fleet, including 747, 767, 777, and 787 aircraft. Their highly trained engineers carry out inspections, structural repairs, cabin interior refurbishment, and aircraft modifications to comply with service bulletins and airworthiness directives.

To complete the assigned maintenance tasks, BAMC stocks more than 5,000 types of parts and 1,000 types of tooling, some of which is vendor managed inventory (VMI).

The facility relied on manual data entry to determine replenishment needs, but employees sometimes retrieved items from one of the two tool cribs without documenting what they took or which job it was for. With inaccurate data, BAMC often faced inventory management challenges that directly impacted completion deadlines:

- Inventory stock-outs
- Employee accountability issues
- Inefficient workflow processes

Seeking a cost-effective solution, the BAMC management team researched various commercial tool management software programs. All of the options, however, required them to incorporate another software program into their existing SAP system, increasing IT costs exponentially.

“Adding more software to the current system would have been considered an ancillary IT solution.”
– Phil Morgan, Senior Team Leader for Inventory and Tooling

Solution

BAMC turned to one of their value-added supply chain partners, Buck and Hickman, who proposed CribMaster Inventory Management Software. The secure, economical solution offered fast deployment and powerful functionality without burdening BAMC’s IT personnel. As host, CribMaster performs all database administration and software upgrades.

Now that the user-friendly system is in place, maintenance engineers use a hand-held scanner in the tool crib to scan barcodes on their employee ID badge, the material being taken, and the project or aircraft bay assignment. When finished with the repair, the engineer scans the returned items back into the tool crib. The database stores all of this information in real time.

BAMC also moved all of its commercial suppliers to the CribMaster database, enabling them to optimize their supplier product portfolios. The company then expanded the solution to other areas of the crib, such as reworkable items, calibrated equipment, and kitting.

With the implementation proving successful at reducing costs and improving inventory management, BAMC is next considering customizing work areas with CribMaster point-of-use vending solutions to eliminate walk time and increase productivity.

CribMaster provides database administration, on-going technical support, and upgrades with no expensive implementation fees.

Results

The CribMaster solution provides BAMC with an accurate, low-overhead way to monitor usage, track consumption and budget by cost center, and automatically or manually issue purchase orders. Automated reports provide historical data for managers to analyze product usage by person, team, maintenance bay, and aircraft.

In addition, the complete CribMaster implementation enabled BAMC to streamline their vendor and business processes by:

- Reducing the supplier database from 150 to 53
- Increasing storage space for parts with lower MRO inventory
- Decreasing consumption by approximately 40%
- Lowering inventory costs
- Allocating IT resources and budgets more efficiently

The CribMaster solution fits the BAMC philosophy of driving continuous operational improvements and reducing MRO costs. Better inventory management without additional IT involvement helps BAMC to meet maintenance completion times. By prioritizing safety, reliability, and on-time delivery, BAMC has become the benchmark for aircraft maintenance.



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