

Portal Power: E-Business at Boeing Gaining Velocity

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Imagine that a new book by your favorite author has just been published. You don't have time to drive to the nearest bookstore, so what do you do? You buy it online. With a few clicks of your mouse, the book is delivered to your door in a matter of days.

Now imagine that you own a Boeing 737 and you need a spare part. It can't possibly be as easy as ordering a book online, can it?

Indeed it is. Just by logging on to MyBoeingFleet.com, the most successful business-to-business Web site in the air transport industry, not only can you order spare parts but also have access to:

- Engineering drawings
- A full range of up-to-date maintenance and flight manuals
- Service bulletins
- Fleet reliability statistics
- Links to events and announcements, news and relevant Boeing Web sites
- Many other reference documents.

E-business ease

Boeing fleet operators can access millions of engineering drawings through the MyBoeingFleet.com Web portal. Launched in 2000, the password-protected site was built to provide airline customers direct, personalized access to information essential to maintaining and operating Boeing and Douglas airplanes.

"Our goal is to make it easier for our customers to do business with Boeing," said Barb Claitman, director of The Boeing Company's (NYSE: BA) Commercial Aviation Services Information Systems organization.

Andrew Hoad, FLS Aerospace's group vice president of Material Solutions, attested to the site's merits. "In the past it was a nightmare," he said, referring to the copious amounts of maintenance service bulletin updates his company must handle regularly. "Updates could get delayed in the post and potentially the company wouldn't receive important information until it was too late."

FLS Aerospace is one of Europe's leading independent aircraft maintenance providers. They now access Boeing maintenance manual updates via computer on MyBoeingFleet.com.

Ordering spare parts is another example of how MyBoeingFleet.com has improved productivity for both the customers and Boeing.

Previously, the majority of orders were received by telephone, telex or telefax. This involved action by someone at Boeing to receive, review, enter or otherwise manipulate the orders. Boeing also responded to those orders by acknowledging status, usually multiple times during the order process, by sending automatic telex or fax responses.

"Now, the PART Page on MyBoeingFleet.com allows order entry without Boeing intervention, and more importantly, it allows the customer to 'self service' their order status inquiries, and pull the information from the Web 24 hours a day," said Darrel Vorderstrasse, regional manager in Boeing Spares Sales. "The page also contains links that allow customers to track shipment status."

Subscribers work with information as it becomes available, rather than having to wait for supplements and revisions to be printed, shipped, collated with existing documentation and distributed.

Today, customers can order more than 6.5 million different types of spare parts on the Web site. The spares pages host more than 130,000 transactions each week.

Impressive statistics

The site is available to airplane owners and operators, and maintenance, repair and overhaul shops. Currently, there are more than 30,000 industry professionals from over 550 companies, plus more than 3,000 Boeing employees, who use MyBoeingFleet.com's personalized technology to do their jobs.

"The site is getting over 4,000 logins each day - more than four million hits each month - making Boeing the aviation industry leader in e-enabled customer solutions," Claitman said. "In just two years, MyBoeingFleet.com has become the most widely accessed Web site available to owners, operators and maintenance facilities."

One place for everything

More than simply a data repository, MyBoeingFleet.com also is interactive and collaborative. Users have access to a digest created for airlines and Boeing to identify, prioritize and resolve technical issues cooperatively.

As Nathanael Earp, 737 general manager for Delta Air Lines said, "Product support is everything in this industry. It's been really good to have one place [MyBoeingFleet.com] we can go to find out what's happening with the fleet."

Saves paper, time and money

A MyBoeingFleet.com user accessing documents equaling 156 gigabytes would receive a data transfer of approximately 80,000 pages of text. That corresponds to a stack of paper over 25 feet high, weighing about 800 pounds, and saves just over six trees.

One customer who stanchied the flood of paper copies they must handle is Continental Airlines.

As Information Week magazine reported, "Previously it took Continental 60 to 90 days to produce and distribute maintenance manual revisions. Now, the Web site [MyBoeingFleet.com] is updated every 14 days. The airline also saves \$500,000 to

\$1 million a year in distribution costs."

The Future

The company expects many more customers to sign up for MyBoeingFleet.com in the future.

"MyBoeingFleet penetration isn't anywhere close to complete, since all airlines have not yet subscribed," Claitman said. "But digital information is easier to use, available for concurrent use by many individuals and often features extensive indexing and text-based search capability. The advantages are too great to ignore."

Mike Bair, Boeing executive vice president of Commercial Aviation Services, said the company will continue to use technology to improve how Boeing does business.

"Developing and improving MyBoeingFleet.com is just one way Boeing has listened to customers and reacted to their requests," he said.

For a free, introductory guest tour of MyBoeingFleet.com, logon to the Web site.

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