Boeing to Supply Airplane Health Management System to Virgin Atlantic

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and Virgin Atlantic Airways said today that the airline will use Boeing's Airplane Health Management system to monitor the in-flight condition of its 747-400 fleet. The announcement adds momentum to a growing partnership focused on reducing the environmental impact of air travel.

In April, Boeing and Virgin Atlantic said they will work together to reduce fuel burn and cut aircraft emissions on the ground as well as developing sustainable biofuels suitable for commercial jet engines and the aviation industry.

Virgin Atlantic's 13 747-400s will use Airplane Health Management to gather and evaluate critical in-flight data on the real-time flying condition of the airplanes, information that can be used across the enterprise to identify and address efficiency issues. Airplane Health Management gives airlines significant insight as to the condition of airplanes in the sky, providing in-flight access to fuel-burn information so airlines can identify and correct problems that might be wasting fuel.

In some cases, Airplane Health Management allows airlines to begin working faults while an airplane is in the air. For example, a fault identified by AHM and relayed to ground controllers provides airlines the visibility to turn a potentially costly on-ground maintenance delay into an easily addressable repair that minimizes or eliminates scheduling problems for passengers.

AHM also supports long-term fleet-reliability programs by helping airlines identify and respond to faults proactively. The system provides fleet-wide information aggregated from other operators, which can be used to determine, for example, the effectiveness of particular maintenance actions in fixing problems. The goal is to help airlines operate at the highest levels of reliability and efficiency.

"Boeing is committed to helping carriers operate successfully, and Airplane Health Management is one of the key tools we offer in that effort," said Dan da Silva, vice president of Sales and Marketing for Boeing Commercial Aviation Services. "We couldn't ask for a higher validation of Airplane Health Management as a great tool for environmentally conscious airlines than this decision by Virgin Atlantic."

Airplane Health Management is a key component in Boeing's larger vision of the e-Enabled airline, where information technology, connectivity and strategic integration promise greater efficiency and improved airline operations.

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