

BLOG FROM THE POINTY END: OUR PART IN THE JIGSAW. Captain Simon JV Lewis for easyJet LinkedIn.

SO HOW DO WE MANAGE TO GET OUR BUSINESS PASSENGERS TO THEIR DESTINATIONS IN SUCH GOOD TIME?

MOST OF THE TIME IT PROBABLY APPEARS TO OUR FAST GROWING BUSINESS PASSENGERS THAT IT IS MERELY A CASE OF TURNING UP AT THE DEPARTURE GATE AND BOARDING THE AIRCRAFT THAT JUST HAPPENS TO BE THERE WAITING FOR THEM.

HOWEVER, THAT AIRCRAFT SITTING THERE IS MERELY A PIECE OF A HUGE JIGSAW THAT WAS BEGUN WEEKS EARLIER.....

AS AN easyJet PILOT, I WOULD HAVE BEEN ROSTERED FOR THIS FLIGHT THE PREVIOUS MONTH, SO I HAVE PLENTY OF NOTICE OF WHERE I AM SCHEDULED TO FLY EACH DAY.

FOR THIS PARTICULAR FLIGHT, THE FIRST WAVE DEPARTURE TO GLASGOW, EZY401, THE CREW ARRIVE IN THE CREW ROOM AT LEAST 60 MINUTES BEFORE DEPARTURE. BY THEN THEY WOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBJECT TO THE SAME, DAILY, SECURITY CHECKS AS THE PASSENGERS.

AS CAPTAIN, MY INITIAL ROLE IS TO MAKE SURE, WHEN I CHECK IN AT A COMPUTER TERMINAL, I HAVE A FULL COMPLIMENT OF CREW.

A CONTINGENCY TO PROTECT AGAINST POSSIBLE CREW SICKNESS AND DELAYS, MEANS MOST OF THE BASES HAVE A FULL CREW ON AIRPORT STANDBY AND A SPARE AIRCRAFT FOR THE DAYS FLYING PROGRAMME. THIS ALLOWS THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROGRAMME TO BE MAINTAINED AT VERY SHORT NOTICE.

I THEN NEED TO FIND MY CO-PILOT, NOT ALWAYS THE EASIEST TASK IN A CROWDED CREW ROOM. IF WE HAVE NEVER FLOWN BEFORE, THIS IS OUR 'GOLDEN 5 MINUTES' WHERE WE TRY AND FIND OUT A LITTLE ABOUT EACH OTHER. TOGETHER WE WILL THEN REVIEW THE FLIGHT PLANS FOR THE DAY AND DECIDE ON WHO WILL OPERATE WHICH SECTORS. AS WELL AS PERSONAL PREFERENCE, GENERALLY THE WEATHER IS THE BIGGEST DICTATOR ON WHO OPERATES WHICH SECTOR, AS THE MORE EXPERIENCED CAPTAIN WOULD ALWAYS OPERATE PARTICULARLY TRICKY APPROACHES THAT MIGHT BE OUT OF THE FIRST OFFICERS LIMITS. SIMILARLY, WHEN IT IS FOGGY, ALL AUTOMATIC LANDINGS WOULD BE FLOWN BY THE CAPTAIN. OUR FLIGHT PLANS ARE CONTINUALLY UPDATED AND PREPARED THROUGH OUT THE DAY AND NIGHT. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE MOST EFFICIENT, EXPEDITIOUS AND COMMERCIAL ROUTING AVAILABLE. THIS PROVIDES INITIALLY AN EXTREMELY ACCURATE FUEL REQUIREMENT. HOWEVER, IN THE SAME WAY YOU WOULDN'T FILL YOUR CAR TO THE EXACT AMOUNT OF FUEL REQUIRED FOR YOUR JOURNEY, WE CARRY ADDITIONAL FUEL FOR DELAYS, HOLDING, WEATHER AND ALWAYS AN ALTERNATIVE DESTINATION. WHAT WE DON'T WANT TO BE DOING IS CARRYING LOTS OF EXTRA FUEL ABOUT UNNECESSARILY, AS THIS HAS A HUGE COST IMPLICATION. HOWEVER, IF THERE IS A REASON TO TAKE MORE FUEL, THEN OF COURSE WE WILL. THE FUEL FIGURE IS THEN PHONED THROUGH TO OUR GROUND OP's COMPANY, SO THAT THE AIRCRAFT WILL ALREADY BE FUELLED WHEN WE ARRIVE TO BOARD. TO FURTHER SAVE TIME DURING THE FIRST WAVE OF DEPARTURES, THE AIRCRAFT OUR PRE-FUELED OVERNIGHT SO THEY ALREADY MOST OF THE FUEL ALREADY LOADED IN THE AIRCRAFT WINGS.

WE WHEN INTRODUCE OURSELVES TO OUR CABIN CREW FOR THE DAY AND MAKE OUR WAY TO THE AIRCRAFT.



easyJet HAS PUT INTO ACTION A NUMBER OF PLANS TO FURTHER IMPROVE OUR ON TIME PERFORMANCE- OTP. THESE INCLUDE THE PILOTS AND THE CABIN CREW NOW BRIEFING ONCE ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT AND NOT IN THE CREW ROOM. THIS MEANS THAT ONCE WE HAVE ALL BOARDED THE AIRCRAFT, I WILL CLOSE THE DOOR AND BRING EVERY ONE TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AIRCRAFT. HERE, WITHOUT ANY DISTRACTION, WE WILL DISCUSS FLYING CONDITIONS FOR THE DAY, WHETHER ANY TURBULENCE IS FORECAST ON ANY OF OUR ROUTES, FLIGHT TIMES, CREW WORKING POSITIONS, ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, OUR CHOICE OF BEVERAGE AND WHEN WOULD WE LIKE OUR CREW FOOD!

TO SAVE FURTHER TIME, SHOULD DE-ICING BE REQUIRED TO REMOVE OR PROTECT FROM ICE ACCUMULATION ON THE AIRCRAFT, OUR DE-ICING COMPANY WILL HAVE DECIDED DURING THE NIGHT WHETHER OR NOT OUR AIRCRAFT WOULD REQUIRE A COATING OF DE-ICING FLUIDS. ANY ICE OR SNOW ON AN AIRCRAFT SEVERELY DEGRADES IT'S FLYING ABILITIES AND CAN HAVE FATAL CONSEQUENCES. BEING ALREADY DE-ICED MEANS THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO WASTE VALUABLE TIME IN THE QUEUE FOR THE DE-ICING RIGS TO COME TO THE AIRCRAFT.

THEN BEFORE YOU, THE BUSINESS TRAVELLER CAN BOARD THE AIRCRAFT, THE CABIN CREW MUST CARRY OUT VERY IMPORTANT PRE-DEPARTURE SECURITY SEARCHES AND PREPARE TO GREET THE FIRST PASSENGER. THE CREW MUST ALSO MAKE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH CATERING ONBOARD FOR YOUR EARLY MORNING COFFEE AND BREAKFAST.

THIS MORNING I WILL BE THE PILOT FLYING THE AIRCRAFT TO GLASGOW , WHILST MY CO-PILOT WILL BE OPERATING AS THE PILOT MONITORING. AS THIS IS THE FIRST FLIGHT OF THE DAY, I WILL INITIALLY FIND THE TECHNICAL LOG AND VERIFY THAT THE CERTIFICATE OF MAINTENANCE AND DAILY INSPECTION ARE UP TO DATE AND SIGNED AND CHECK THE DEFERRED OR CARRIED FORWARD DEFECTS. ONCE THE REFUELING IS FINISHED I WILL CHECK UPLIFT IS CORRECT AND SIGN THE AIRCRAFT OFF. I WILL DO A FULL SECURITY AND COCKPIT PREPARATION OF THE FLIGHT DECK, WHILST MY COLLEAGUE DOES THE WALK AROUND AND CHECKS EVERYTHING IS AS IT SHOULD BE ON THE OUTSIDE. THIS CHECK WILL BE IN ADDITION TO THE PREVIOUS EVENING'S ENGINEERING CHECK AFTER THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY.

THE FLIGHT PLAN FOR TODAY'S FLIGHT IS DOWNLOADED TO THE 'BRAIN' OF THE AIRCRAFT, THE FMGC, TO IT'S INITIATION PAGE. THIS PAGE ALSO CONTAINS INFORMATION ON OUR ALTERNATE AIRPORT SHOULD THERE BE A PROBLEM WITH GLASGOW, OUR FLIGHT NUMBER FOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND CRUISING HEIGHT.



AS YOU START BOARDING, IT'S STARTING TO GET QUITE BUSY IN THE FLIGHT DECK. MY CO-PILOT WILL HAVE RETURNED AND HE WILL BE WRITING DOWN THE DEPARTURE WEATHER AND THEN PUTTING THAT INFORMATION INTO HIS PANASONIC TOUGH PAD IN ORDER TO WORK OUT OUR TAKE OFF PERFORMANCE AND LIMITATIONS FOR THE PARTICULAR RUNWAY IN USE. A LOAD-SHEET WILL THEN BE COMPUTED AND THE WEIGHT AND BALANCE DATA CALCULATED AND THEN ENTERED INTO THE FMGC. COPIES OF THE TECHNICAL LOG AND LOAD-SHEET ARE THEN PASSED BACK TO THE DISPATCHER, WHO YOU MIGHT HAVE SEEN AS YOU BOARDED, AS HE CO-ORDINATES THE TURN AROUND OF THE AIRCRAFT.

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE VERY AWARE THAT OUR DEPARTURE TIME IS FAST APPROACHING, THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE RUSH ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING IS CHECKED AND RECHECKED BEFORE WE ARE HAPPY TO GO.

ONCE I AM HAPPY THAT EVERYTHING IS SET UP CORRECTLY, IT IS TIME TO GO THROUGH THE TAKE OFF BRIEFING WITH MY CO-PILOT. THE PURPOSE OF THIS, IS TO INFORM MY COLLEAGUE OF THE PLANNED COURSE OF ACTION FOR BOTH NORMAL AND ABNORMAL SITUATIONS DURING THE TAKE OFF. IT IS ALSO A RECALL OF BOTH OF OUR STANDARD EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND TO DISCUSS SPECIFIC THREATS THAT MAY BE PARTICULAR TO THE AIRPORT. ONCE WE HAVE COMPLETED ALL THAT, I WILL ASK FOR THE BEFORE START CHECK LIST.

MY CABIN MANAGER WILL COME IN AND CONFIRM PASSENGERS NUMBERS WITH OUR LOAD-SHEET AND I WILL ASK HER TO CLOSE THE DOORS FOR DEPARTURE.

THIS IS GENERALLY MY CUE FOR THE WELCOME PA WHERE I WILL INTRODUCE MY CREW AND GIVE SOME FLIGHT DETAILS AS WELL AS ASK YOU TO OBSERVE THE SAFETY DEMONSTRATION BY THE CABIN CREW.

AND NOW WE ARE READY TO GO! HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL BE EITHER BEFORE OR ON THE DEPARTURE TIME ADVERTISED.