

# sounds good

How to cut costs and still enhance the customer experience

Conventional wisdom has it that enhancing the quality of the customer experience costs companies more. But this is not always the case. Nicky Spiers, business development director at Voice Perfect, says, "We believe that improving communication between airport operators and the passengers that fly is essential. If we then automate this communication it actually saves operators money. Our experiences in the past year with installations at East Midlands Airport in the UK and Lleida-Alguaire Airport in Spain support this idea."

SCAS-Air is a simple to use, touchscreen system that creates professional, real voice scheduled and customised passenger announcements and is linked direct to FIDS and public address systems. Messages are assembled from a repertoire of segments, but through a sophisticated set of algorithms they sound to the listener exactly like one seamless sentence. The system can provide any language requirement, always using native speakers for maximum passenger comprehension.

The beauty of SCAS-Air is its simplicity of use. This gives it incredible flexibility and offers an elegant and effective solution to the regularly changing requirements of passenger communication in airports. It also gives airport operators a vital tool in the effective management of operational difficulties and emergencies. You can even add background music if you want. And, of course, with the changes to EC legislation that require the visually impaired to have the same access to information as everyone else, airports can no longer rely solely on visual displays.

SCAS-Air can save an operator money in two ways. First of all, research has shown that natural speech by trained voices enables passengers to identify required



LEFT: SCAS-Air creates professional passenger announcements  
BELOW: The solution helps airports improve the traveller experience



information more accurately and with fewer repetitions than with synthetic messages. In other words, passengers are more likely to go to the right gate at the right time, not leave their bags unattended and, in the event of an emergency, evacuate the building without panicking. Fewer lost passengers mean fewer flight delays.

Second, SCAS-Air improves efficiency as it reduces or removes the need for costly staffed information desks, with personnel reading out instructions over live microphones. Automation is essential for these savings, with flight-related announcements being triggered by changes in the flight information display servers.

Since the launch of SCAS-Air in 2009, Voice Perfect has completed the trouble-free installation of the system in East Midlands in the UK, where announcements are made in French, German, Spanish and Polish, as well as English. The company has also installed the system in Lleida in Spain, with announcements in Spanish, Catalan and English. Native

speakers were employed to create the announcements.

David Howell, head of development at East Midlands, looked at several other systems before deciding on Voice Perfect's SCAS-Air. "There are a few companies that can supply this type of system but the quality of SCAS-Air was far superior. It was the single most cost-effective equipment we have installed. We were going to overhaul all the component parts of our PA system but, after putting in SCAS-Air, we realised that the problem was not with the PA itself but with the quality of the live announcements. The installation went without a hitch. In fact I've just signed up for a further year of support."

As part of a series of cost-reduction exercises, the installation of the SCAS-Air automated announcement system at East Midlands Airport also enabled the operator to make savings on staff costs and increase efficiency by allowing staff at information desks to carry out other tasks, as they are no longer tied to a microphone.

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