



Pandemic-Accelerated, Mission-Critical Service Desk for Miami International Airport

Seamlessly cutover to cloud-based service desk without interrupting airline/airport operations and support services.

INDUSTRY: Transportation (Airport)

SUMMARY:

The [Miami-Dade Aviation Department](#) (MDAD) operates the Miami International Airport and its' associated general aviation airports in Miami Dade County, Florida. Miami International Airport is the department's cornerstone and is one of the busiest international passenger and cargo airports globally.

“ This initiative enhances our business & service continuity capability. The ability to be more agile allowed the IT department to increase its service levels while cutting costs and maintaining our workforce's health and safety. ”

Maurice Jenkins, CIO, MDAD

For several years, [Black Box](#) has provided management and support for the airports' Network and Communications Services. A vital component of the services includes an on-site IT Service Desk that supports airport operations, tenants, and end-users. The nature of calls include incident, problem, and service request management for all IT-related services supporting the design, integration, and implementation of the airport's mission and business-critical systems. In 2020, the Service Desk handled, on average, more than 25,000 calls and responded to more than 50,000 network alarms.

“ We are the first point of contact for IT issues and work diligently to solve every problem. ”

Johnathan Lewis, Black Box Client Delivery Director

“The Service Desk is the single-point-of-contact for the airports IT related issues,” said Johnathan Lewis, Black Box Client Delivery Director. “We are the first point of contact for IT issues and work diligently to solve every problem,” Lewis added. He explained that the goal is to provide an excellent customer experience to each caller, whether gate agents, retail tenants, or MDAD employees.

CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS

- #1 Quickly transition Service Desk Agents to a remote and socially distanced work environment. Identified a cost-effective cloud solution to provide efficiency and expediency
- #2 Maintain operational standards in a remote environment
Ensured transparency, collaboration, and enhanced functionality improving call-waiting time by 39%
- #3 Accelerated training development and service implementation
Expedited two-level training provided thorough understanding

SUCCESSES

- System implementation and training in record time
- Improved remote work capabilities
- Enhanced service and business continuity
- Provides expandability and flexibility of Service Desk operations

VALUE

- Realizes 34% cost savings through a cloud-based system
- Improves Service Desk efficiency
- Optimizes business resiliency during emergencies, disasters, and pandemics

39% Improvement in call queue time

1/3 Total cloud solution costs one-third less than annual maintenance costs for on-premise legacy equipment

6% Reduction in abandoned call rate

2:49 seconds Average length of call from beginning to resolutions



CHALLENGE #1:

Quickly transition Service Desk Agents to a remote and socially distanced work environment

The initial impact of COVID-19 reached far beyond social distancing guidelines and local lockdown orders. Although restrictions impacted many businesses and venues, airports continued to operate. The local, national, and international communities were dependent on the airport ecosystem. The continuation of IT Service Desk functionality was mission-critical to airport, airlines, and tenant operations. The threat of the virus demanded action to protect the Black Box Service Desk team's health and well-being.

The typical Service Desk environment, such as the MDAD NOC, requires team members to operate in close quarters. If someone contracted the virus, the entire team would be exposed and forced into isolation. This was not a sustainable situation.

“When COVID hit, the team was tasked with transitioning the Service Desk to remote working conditions. It was imperative this move was completed in weeks instead of months as Service Continuity became our top priority.”

Floyd Lindo, *Black Box Voice Operations Manager*

Black Box's challenge was how to create a socially distant and safe environment for its team members while ensuring business and service continuity for MDAD. The existing emergency plan could only support two team members stationed in an alternate airport location that did not offer the flexibility or advanced capabilities needed to support an IT Service Desk team. There were two major obstacles to this plan: the legacy on-premise communications system and availability of work-space suitable for social distancing.



SOLUTION

Identify a cost-effective cloud solution for efficiency/expediency.

With the virus rapidly spreading, the ability to protect the IT Service Desk team members' health and safety through social distancing and working remotely exposed the legacy on-premise call system's limitations.

Through the ever-changing dynamics of technology, Black Box knew a cloud-based solution was the answer. The team reached out to Paula Morton, Managing Director of CTIntegrations (CTI), the software technology company that created [CT Suite](#), an application built to drive excellent customer care and optimize agent performance. CTI proposed a CT Suite solution that would be fully integrated with [Amazon Connect](#), a cloud-based contact center solution from [Amazon Web Services \(AWS\)](#). The goal was to provide a rich and informative agent experience that is easy to use, easy to deploy, and flexible to meet all of the Service Desk's needs.

“Black Box was able to securely and rapidly modernize its contact center operations to meet high call volumes and support a remote workforce in the midst of COVID-19. And cloud-based solutions like Amazon Connect are not just for emergencies. They offer government agencies, like MDAD, improved flexibility and cost savings over old-school systems for the long haul.”

Alex Haber, *State & Local Government Account Manager, AWS*

CHALLENGE #2:

Maintain operational standards from a remote environment.

Although the AWS service provided the technology needed to operate remotely, Black Box wanted to build upon the Amazon Connect technology and add some of the most critical Service Desk operations requirements. If successful, the platform could possibly be used in other areas, such as the Airport Operations Center.

“The challenge was maintaining operational standards while ensuring equivalent collaboration capabilities mirrored the on-site communication requirement. This functionality is especially critical in a Service Desk.”

Robert Bach, *Black Box Technical Support Engineer*

SOLUTION

Ensure transparency, collaboration, and enhanced functionality.

To get over the “visibility” barrier, the CTI team worked closely with Black Box to integrate Amazon Connect and the CT Suite platform to fulfill all remote work requirements such as call flows, calls in queue, number of available agents, call stats, abandons, holds, transfers, and more. The goal was to give agents the collaboration the Service Desk demanded while working remotely, including a key softphone capability to ensure efficient call handling and customer satisfaction.

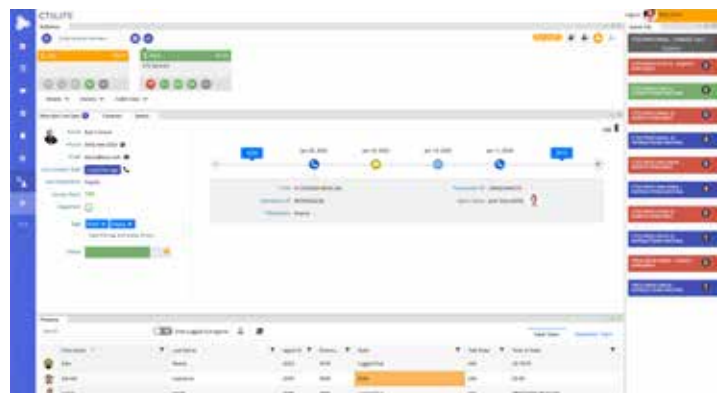
The success of the CT Suite application rested upon agent usability and seamless integration with Amazon Connect. With COVID-19 rapidly spreading and the need to work remotely becoming more urgent, the teams put the CT Suite/AWS project on the fast track.

“The set of tools we gave Black Box is quick to deploy and future ready. It all goes back to agile thinking. We gave the Service Desk the critical tools and functionality they needed during a pandemic.”

Paula Morton, *Managing Director, CTI*

CTI Engagement Manager Tiffany Jansen worked closely with the Black Box NOC team to define what virtual functionality they needed to get the same type of visibility they had in person. The Service Desk team required a dashboard that enabled them to “see” what team members were available and what they were doing. At a glance, users can get the big picture of the service desk's status, including staff members and customers on calls and in the queue.

“Users need to be able to see everything on one screen,” explained Jansen. “People want the ability to personalize their experience by rearranging functions to suit their preferences. The CT Suite Widgets give users that capability without losing sight of team members.”



Service Desk Dashboard



CHALLENGE #3:

Expedited training development and service implementation.

The last step in enabling the remote Service Desk team was expedited training. The team members needed to understand the system, its' functionality, and the features available for effectively managing calls. The challenge was coordinating the training efforts to a 24x7x365 team in a live environment, remotely.

“The user interface is easy to use. Training was to the point and has allowed us to maintain business and service continuity throughout the pandemic.”

Jenifer Cabrales, *Black Box Tier II Desktop Support Lead, MDAD Service Desk*

SOLUTION

Comprehensive training with a hands-on approach.

CTI scheduled training webinars and worked closely with key team members. Once the designated Service Desk team was comfortable with the system, Black Box implemented a “train the trainer” plan and completed training in three days.

The seamless transition of operations for the Service Desk was the true measure of success.

“Training was super easy. The CT Suite Web Client was a critical enabler during the pandemic. The team loved it.”

Ken Magny, *Black Box Administrative Coordinator, MDAD Service Desk*

OUTCOMES

The right system in record time.

Enabling the Cloud: Following continual improvement practices, Black Box began researching state-of-the-art Service Desk Systems for several months before the pandemic. The crisis only accelerated the need to implement a cloud-based solution that enabled remote access for Service Desk team members.

Efficiency: The service desk team now has tools that provide remote functionality, transparency, and collaboration .

Expediency: The cloud provides the ability to set up a contact center in minutes — a necessity during a pandemic and a convenience in normal times.

Emergency Operations: The cloud supports business continuity and resiliency in disaster-recovery/emergency operations and everyday business operations.

Economy: The Return On Investment (ROI) for cloud solutions is significant, eliminating the need for on-premise hardware, scheduled updates, implementations, or debugging performed by on-site staff. Black Box estimates a service desk cloud solution costs one-third less than the yearly costs for the maintenance of legacy on-premise systems, not including hardware and software upgrades.

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