Managing disruption with control, credibility and care at Air Canada

What challenges did Air Canada face with passenger reaccommodation?

In 2019, Air Canada embarked on a major transformation project to replace the airline's legacy passenger processing technology. This included implementing Amadeus' PSS - Altéa Customer Management, and Amadeus Passenger Recovery to automate disruption management.

Previously, managing disruptions was a complex, manual and time-consuming task for Air Canada. It required staff to have expert knowledge of the airline's network, capacity, tools and continual coordination across teams involved in operational planning. Air Canada's recovery procedures also had limitations: visibility of the end-to-end recovery outcome was limited to the impacted flight, and airline policies were not automatically enforced at the time of protection.

When an Air Canada flight was delayed or cancelled, operational and planning managers would gather to disseminate a strategy for recovery. This could involve off-loading all passengers and rebooking them onto available Air Canada flights, or reaccommodating one flight at a time, taking into account Air Canada's priority-based logic. The recovery process would take from 45 minutes to several hours per flight, often resulting in overstretched call centers, congested terminals and frustrated passengers.

Disruption management challenges

- Reliance on in-house expertise
- No visibility of end-to-end recovery
- Limited protection capabilities: own fleet only
- Time-consuming process
- High manual intervention
- Congestion at airports
- Passenger frustration

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The breadth and depth of Air Canada's operations

Provides a direct service to six continents

Manages a fleet of **+350** aircraft

Operates **1,000** flights daily to **57** countries

Serves **+180** destinations worldwide

46 million customers flown per year

Operates approx. **38,000** flights per year

3 global hubs in Canada: **Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver**

Group includes leisure carrier Air Canada Rouge & regional carriers Air Canada Express (operated by Jazz/PAL)

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Amadeus Passenger Recovery: who is it for?

Amadeus Passenger Recovery is an intuitive, web-based solution developed for airlines to automate disruption handling, streamlining the recovery process to reaccommodate passengers quickly and efficiently. The solution handles both simple, day-to-day operational events and massive disruptions. It can manage delays, cancellations, aircraft configuration changes and routing changes.

Simulate before executing
With this tool, airlines can simulate and compare multiple scenarios before activating reaccommodation plans (e.g. delay, reschedule, cancel). This allows airlines to consider the impact on policy compliance, operational costs and disturbance to passenger journeys in order to select the best overall outcome.

Protect revenues & build loyalty
Amadeus Passenger Recovery automates the reaccommodation process in one-step, re-booking thousands of passengers in minutes, instead of hours. This dramatically reduces the burden on staffing resources and optimizes operational planning. It also helps minimize compensation pay-outs and transfer to other airlines, by adopting the most efficient recommendations.

Manage exceptions
Airlines have procedures in place to prioritize high value passengers or those with special needs. However, there may be exceptions or complex scenarios which don't fit into standard procedures, and these can be managed with controlled overrides.

Post-event reporting
Upon completion of the recovery plan, Amadeus Passenger Recovery generates a detailed optimization report, which can be exported to Excel for further analysis.

Without Amadeus Passenger Recovery, it can take an airline **20 entries** and **10 minutes** to rebook each passenger.

With Amadeus Passenger Recovery, reaccommodating a whole flight of passengers can take just **2-5 minutes**.

Review time by airline agent is uncorrelated with the number of passengers to rebook and is less than **3 minutes** in **65%** of cases.

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What does the Amadeus Passenger Recovery solution allow Air Canada to achieve?

1. Provide Air Canada's passenger recovery team with **better visibility** to **make informed decisions** about which flight(s) to cancel.

2. **Centralize** and **automate passenger reaccommodation** for cancellations occurring within Air Canada's **72-hour** operating window.

3. Accelerate and streamline the rebooking process for passengers and **meet Air Canada's 30-minute protection target**.

4. Offer **personalized reaccommodation options** according to passenger profiles, later introducing a self-reaccommodation tool for travelers preferring to self-serve.

5. Evaluate the trade-off from **rebooking on other airlines** when Air Canada flights are not available or suitable.

6. **Reduce the workload** on Air Canada airport agents and call centers.

7. **Minimize congestion** in airports by pre-warning passengers of flight cancellations.

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# How does Air Canada use Amadeus Passenger Recovery?

At Air Canada, Amadeus Passenger Recovery is used by the Passenger Movement Team within System Operations Control (SOC), to centralize and automate disruption management for various scenarios occurring within the 72-hour operations window.

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When a flight has to be cancelled, a series of factors are considered:

1. How many passengers are impacted?

2. Are there any vulnerable customers, VIPs, travelers requiring special assistance?

3. What onward connections will be missed?

4. Can passengers be reaccommodated on Air Canada or alliance flights, before looking elsewhere?

5. Do passengers have to be moved from their original cabin class?

6. Will overnight stays be necessary and where?

7. How much is it going to cost?

Average **rebooking time** from cancellation notification - **10 mins** (ranges from 8 mins to 14 mins).
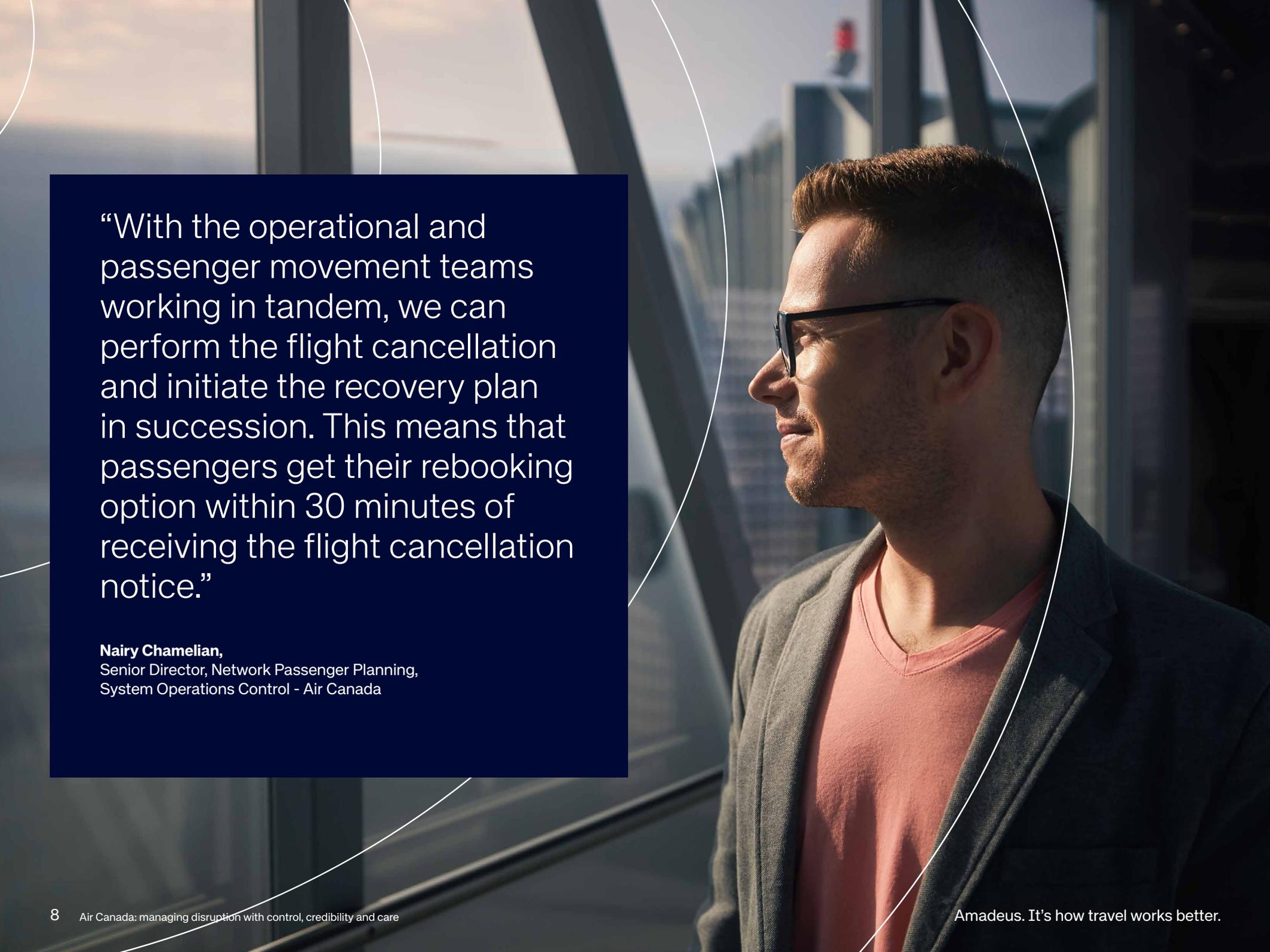
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"With the operational and passenger movement teams working in tandem, we can perform the flight cancellation and initiate the recovery plan in succession. This means that passengers get their rebooking option within 30 minutes of receiving the flight cancellation notice."

Nairy Chamelian,
Senior Director, Network Passenger Planning,
System Operations Control - Air Canada

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Optimization templates
– run, evaluate, apply

For Air Canada, the optimization templates in Amadeus Passenger Recovery are critical for decision-making. They allow the airline to perform simulation-based modeling to determine the impact of a particular flight cancellation, comparing pre and post recovery optimization and displaying the results in a clear dashboard view.

This process can be repeated for multiple flights in order to evaluate the best overall outcome, taking into account Air Canada's pre-defined KPIs, policies and business rules. Equipped with this insight, the planning unit can decide which flight to cancel and immediately activate Amadeus Passenger Recovery to automate the reaccommodation plan.

Today, **Air Canada reaccommodates +1 million passengers/ year** using Amadeus Passenger Recovery.
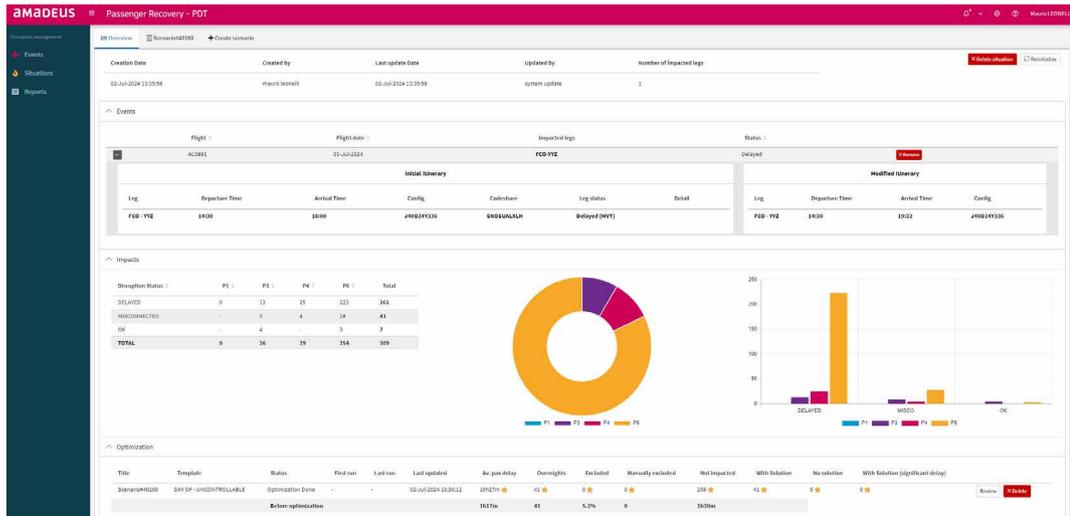
In the above impact analysis, a potential delay at arrival in Toronto of 1h22 identified 41 passengers from 309 as misconnected. For each of them, Amadeus Passenger Recovery found an alternative solution within the airline's acceptable policies. With this information, the Passenger Movement Manager can immediately proceed and protect those passengers in just one click.

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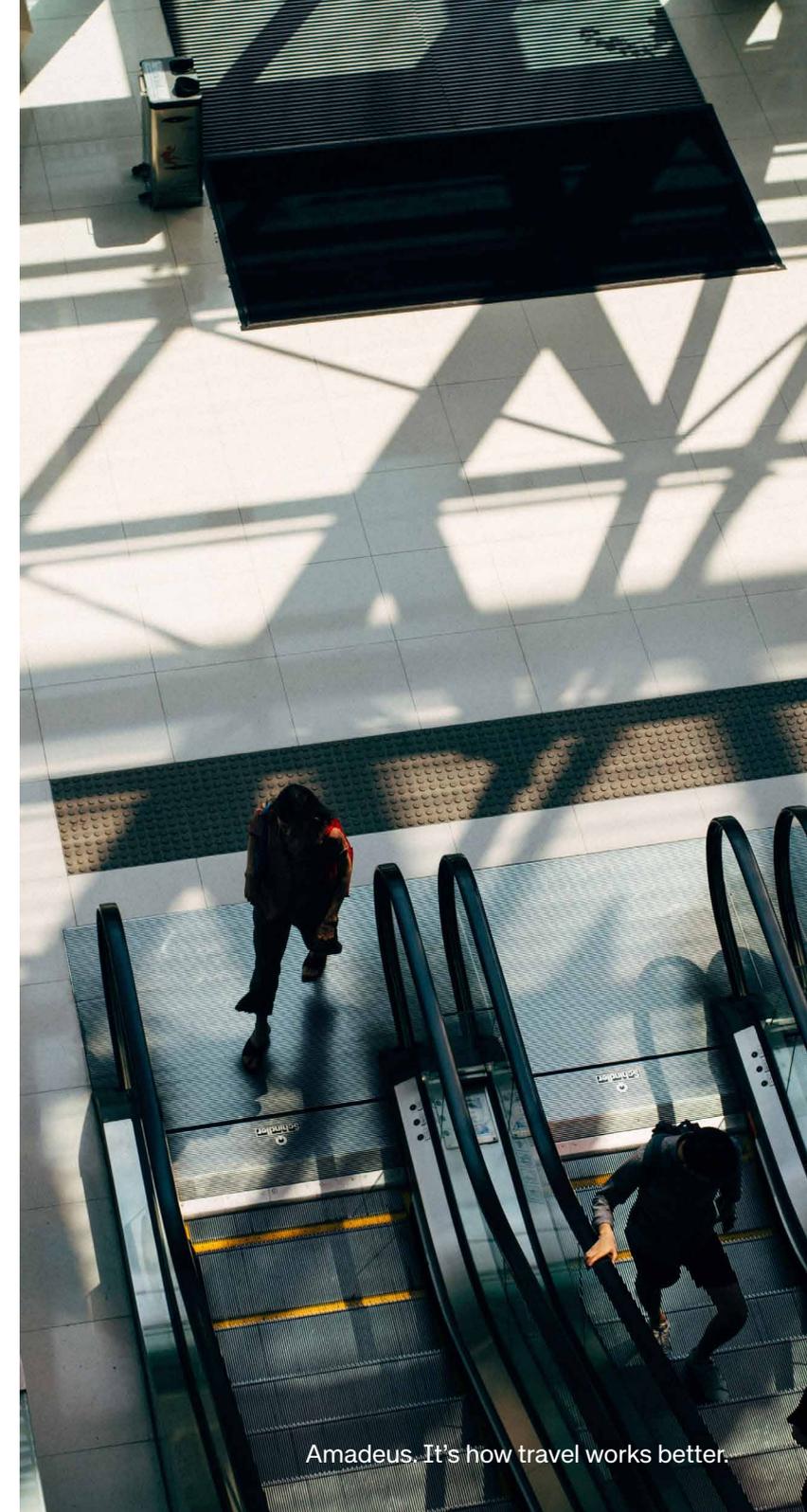
"Amadeus Passenger Recovery is an excellent tool that maximizes operational efficiency and time management. Its user interface is very easy to understand and navigate. Additionally, undesirable solutions can be filtered for better results. Amadeus Passenger Recovery has helped me in making better day-to-day operational decisions with a customer focus and attention to specific markets. In the event of a cancellation, customers can be rebooked within minutes".

Praveen John,
Passenger Movement Manager - Air Canada

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Real disruptions, real passengers, real results

Snowstorm in Maritime Province: 4-6 February 2024

A powerful snowstorm affected the Maritimes in Eastern Canada, paralyzing airports for several days. All flights in/out of the area had to be cancelled, impacting thousands of passengers.

Air Canada used Amadeus Passenger Recovery as part of their mass cancellation process, rebooking passengers onto new flights in anticipation of service resumption. The recovery strategy was handled sensitively and efficiently, prompting positive feedback from Air Canada's VP System Operations Control.

The facts:

> Most flights in/out the region were cancelled for 3 days.
> Over 11,500 travelers were rebooked using Amadeus Passenger Recovery, with less than 10% requiring manual intervention.

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"In Canada, we can face unique challenges with significant winter weather events. When these events occur at our hubs, disruption handling increases significantly and without the right tools, can become extremely challenging for both staff and customers. Amadeus Passenger Recovery has provided us with the ability to make decisions and protect disrupted passengers at a higher velocity, to keep pace with our ambitions to continually improve the passenger experience."

Cale Daniels,
VP System Operations Control - Air Canada

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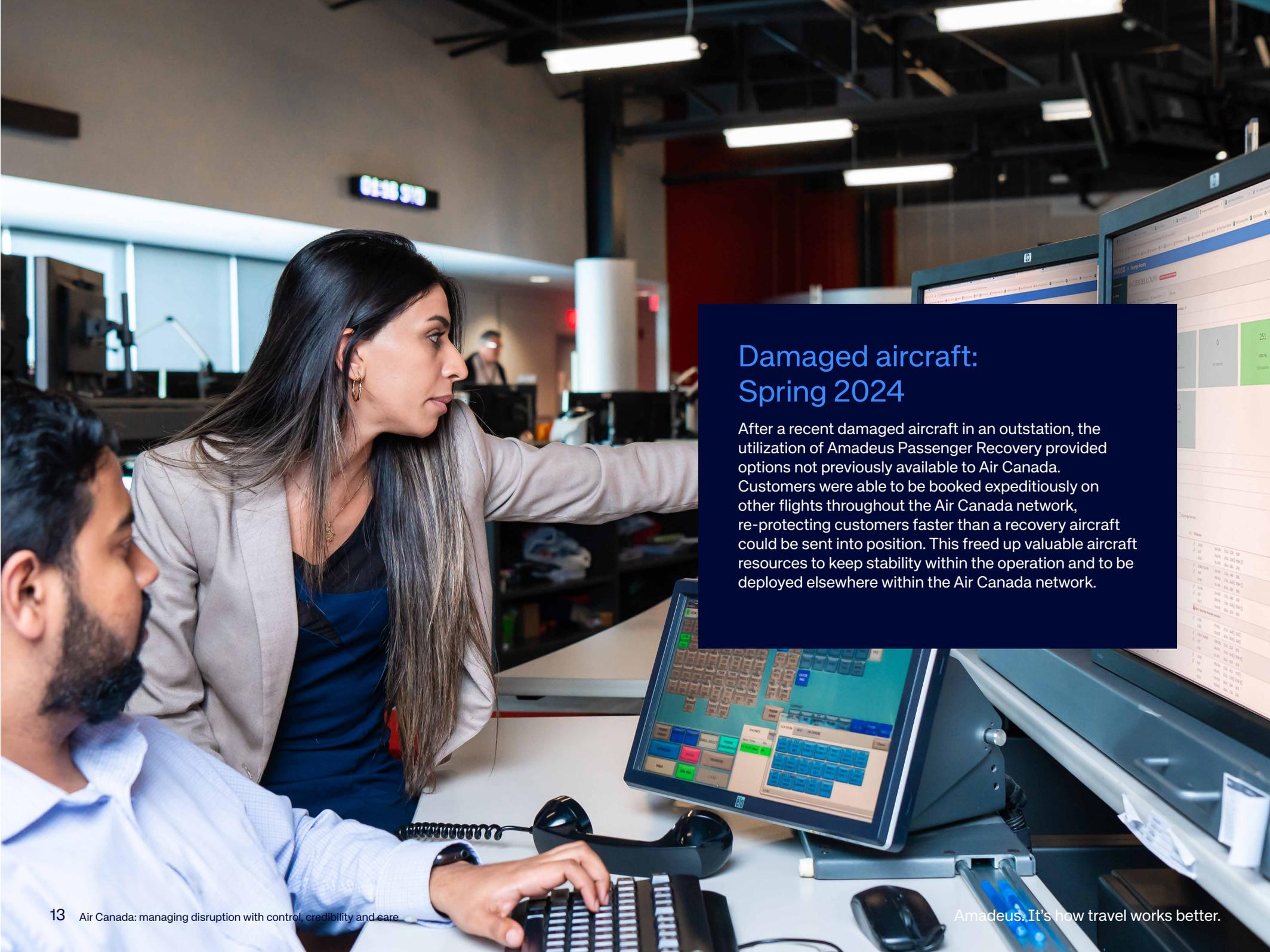
Damaged aircraft: Spring 2024

After a recent damaged aircraft in an outstation, the utilization of Amadeus Passenger Recovery provided options not previously available to Air Canada. Customers were able to be booked expeditiously on other flights throughout the Air Canada network, re-protecting customers faster than a recovery aircraft could be sent into position. This freed up valuable aircraft resources to keep stability within the operation and to be deployed elsewhere within the Air Canada network.

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What has Air Canada achieved with Amadeus Passenger Recovery?

Since implementing Amadeus Passenger Recovery in October 2020, Air Canada has experienced marked advancements in managing disruptions and improving the overall passenger experience.

- **Increased passenger satisfaction** with faster reaccommodation - from several hours to less than 30 minutes on average, and the opportunity to self-serve.

- Significant **increase in staff productivity** with a reduction in manual workload.

- More **efficient resource planning** with advance visibility on available capacity.

- Configuration of scenario templates to **automatically enforce Air Canada's rebooking policies**.

- **Financial savings** by **optimizing alliance and bilaterial agreements**. These can be input into Amadeus Passenger Recovery to secure the most cost-efficient fares.

- **Reduction in compensation costs** with more passengers automatically protected, sometimes arriving ahead of their original schedule.

- Ability to **apply controlled overrides** for exception handling (e.g. minors, groups).

- **Less congestion at airports** as passengers are given advance notice of cancellations, allowing airport agents to focus on customer care rather than 'crowd control'.

Since using Amadeus Passenger Recovery, Air Canada is able to **automatically reaccommodate 90% of passengers**, with 10% falling into the 'exceptions' category. *

data taken from Jan-Jun 2024

"Amadeus Passenger Recovery is a game-changer with respect to our team's productivity, efficiency, and most importantly, our customers' experience."

Rhea Torres,
Manager, Network Passenger Planning
– Air Canada

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Championing Passenger Recovery

In 2024, Air Canada became a **'champion'** for Amadeus Passenger Recovery, representing the airline community in user forums and actively participating in discussions regarding the solution roadmap. Investment decisions are collaborative ensuring that Amadeus delivers improvements and enhancements that represent the current and future needs of the airline user community.

In the longer term, Air Canada plans to expand its usage of Amadeus Passenger Recovery to include additional use cases such as automating passenger protection on delayed flights and aircraft configuration changes.

"Air Canada has specific characteristics which makes it an ideal contributor for the future development of Amadeus Passenger Recovery. The airline has a large, varied fleet - geographically spread, and a mix of domestic, international and transborder flights. This means they face complex and diverse disruption scenarios and can lend their experience to other carriers."

I-Sou Han,
Disruption and Passenger Recovery Product Manager - Amadeus

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Air Canada's advice to an airline looking to implement Amadeus Passenger Recovery?

"They should do it because it's efficient, it's fast and it provides great solutions for customers. It allows you to be more strategic with your disruption handling which is the most impactful moment in the life of the customer's journey. It's only when things go wrong that we can make them better. If I had to sum up Amadeus Passenger Recovery in 3 words, they would be: **Insightful, Strategic, Fast**."

Nairy Chamelian,
Senior Director, Network Passenger Planning,
System Operations Control – Air Canada

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Where should the industry focus to further improve disruption management?

Air Canada has seen significant improvements in disruption management since the adoption of Amadeus Passenger Recovery, leading to smoother, more streamlined experiences for their travelers. Nonetheless, to truly excel in passenger servicing, especially when things don't go to plan, a deeper understanding is required of the trip purpose. This will allow airlines to differentiate with more tailored services and interactions.

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"For Air Canada, the ultimate goal is to understand each traveler's story. We want to know their motivation for flying that particular route on that date, so should a disruption occur, we can identify the best alternative solution. For example, a passenger traveling to a funeral has to be prioritized at whatever cost. It can't wait. And the traveler's perception of our brand will forever be determined by how we respond in that moment. The key to this differentiation lies in data exchange – sharing insights with other partners in the end-to-end journey. This will ensure we can all deliver more targeted, personalized customer experiences. We are excited to see what Amadeus does in this space."

Nairy Chamelian,
Senior Director, Network Passenger Planning,
System Operations Control – Air Canada

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