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# Customer Service Flies High at Air France-KLM

Upscaling operations fast to deliver a responsive customer service.

Hamilton Rentals enables Air France-KLM to rapidly expand its contact centre operations, in a cost-controlled and speedy manner.

# Background

## Delivering a world-class service

One of Europe's largest passenger airline groups, last year Air France-KLM carried more than 100 million passengers to destinations around the globe.

Based in Wembley, London, the group's European Sales and Service Centre (ESSC) handles thousands of customer enquiries each day – everything from requests for information, reservations and changes to bookings, to dealing with complaints, compensation claims and lost-luggage declarations.

Available on the phone – as well as via email, live chat and social media - the multi-lingual teams at ESSC serve customers 365 days a year in 11 languages. Under a joint venture agreement with Delta Airlines, the centre also supports European customers of the US airline.

“Today's travellers have exceptionally high expectations and we always strive to deliver a fast, responsive and joined-up experience,” explains James Revell, General Manager, Air France-KLM ESSC.

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Being agile enough to respond when events disrupt passenger plans is a top priority for the ESSC – whether that's a volcanic eruption in Iceland, or a drone incident at London Gatwick airport.

“Maintaining an efficient and responsive service during periods of high demand is an art we've become exceptionally good at – the customer experience is central to everything we do,” continues James.

When the ESSC realised that planned industrial action, which included strikes by European air traffic controllers, was likely to disrupt airline flight operations for a number of months, it took the decision to extend its operational capacity to cope with an anticipated jump in customer interactions.

# The challenge

## Upscaling fast – and efficiently

With a situation that was evolving daily, James needed to increase ESSC operational capacity fast. The answer was to bring on-board temporary colleagues to support existing teams and ensure customer response times weren't compromised.

"The idea was to create a 'pop-up' office close to our primary site, where we could house these new back-office teams for a short-term period," explains James.

Onboarding 50 personnel with the right expertise and know-how was accomplished quickly. However, sourcing laptops for these new workers proved a more challenging task.

"With just weeks to go before the pop-up office go-live, we encountered a supply problem with our PC supplier – as a business, we've standardised on a specific make and model of laptop to streamline how we deploy and install desktop security and software for our service teams. But we couldn't source the right hardware in sufficient numbers in the required timeframe," continues James.

The airline's European IT team needed to help James find an alternative solution. The answer was to hire the required hardware from Hamilton Rentals.



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# The solution

## Temporary office set up – without the hassle

All it took was just one phone call to start the process rolling.

“Within minutes, Hamilton Rentals had assigned an account manager to handle every aspect of our requirement. After providing specifications for the laptops we needed – the make, model, memory and processor speed – in no time at all we had a commitment on rental price and delivery timeframes,” says James.

Just two weeks later the ESSC pop-up office was in receipt of 50 laptops, ready for remote set up and configuration by the airline’s IT team based in Amsterdam.

“Hiring proved the ideal fit for a short-term project such as this, where purchasing hardware can be hard to justify. There was no need for an expensive capital outlay on kit that would eventually be surplus to requirements,” continues James.

In no time at all, the pop-up temporary office project was back on track, with a workforce that was equipped with the tools it needed to get on with the task in hand.

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# The outcomes

## A flexible and practical service

Providing a cost-contained way to get the new temporary office up and running wasn't the only benefit of renting from Hamilton. The flexible nature of the service meant James could extend the initial hire period as often as needed – something that would prove vital when it became clear the impact of industrial actions in Europe would be longer-lasting than first anticipated.

"Initially, we rented 50 laptops for a period of three months. However, with the volume of passenger enquiries continuing to escalate in the face of travel disruptions, we took the decision to upscale our temporary operations yet further," confirms James.

All it took was another phone call to take receipt of a further 20 laptops and extend the rental agreement duration. In total, the ESSC utilised the rented laptops for over 10 months.

"No matter how often we moved the goal posts, Hamilton ensured our operations could continue without disruption. Their pragmatic approach allowed us to focus on operational priorities – without worrying about hardware availability or costs," states James.

On the resumption of 'business as usual' demand patterns, James was able to dismantle the pop-up office and return the laptops to Hamilton.

"The whole process was streamlined and convenient. Hamilton took care of the data wipe and system clean down on the returned laptops in line with GDPR and other privacy requirements," continues James.

# Why Hamilton Rentals?

Choosing a hire solution from Hamilton proved crucial for enabling the ESSC to temporarily scale up its operations to cope with increased passenger demand.

"This turned out to be a very efficient and adaptable solution that helped our business a great deal, ensuring we were always available to meet the needs of our customers in a cost-controlled way," says James.

"Creating a temporary pop-up office was a new challenge for me and Hamilton provided a no-nonsense service that gave us access to the equipment we needed, the moment we needed it. Friendly and helpful every step of the way, and with the minimum of fuss or paperwork, Hamilton's regular contact and communications helped me navigate a fast-evolving operational landscape with confidence."

## Contact

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