

# Air Canada

**CGI takes on Air Canada's challenges and delivers complex enterprise application support and maintenance**

**W**hen CGI was awarded a five-year contract in 1998 to maintain all of Air Canada's PeopleSoft and other enterprise applications—including HR, payroll and finance systems—we knew we were dealing with a fast-changing industry.

By August 2000, our new dedicated application support and maintenance center in Montreal was coasting at optimal altitude when, after acquiring rival Canadian Airlines, Air Canada publicly announced its intent to integrate the management of the two firms within one year.

Now, that was fast. The sign went on—fasten seatbelts.

## THE CHALLENGE

The initial repatriation of Air Canada's system management functions was a complex project, requiring a delicate balance of organizational finesse and in-depth knowledge of several technological environments. System information and technical control had to be repatriated from two locations and various sources, including some of Air Canada's previous suppliers. Some legacy functions had been in operation for more than 15 years, and documentation was sometimes hard to locate.

CGI's application support and maintenance center had to integrate all of these elements, and act as an efficient control tower, managing and directing IT functions and quickly responding to the client's requests.

The team had to deliver enhancements, maintenance, and modifications without affecting system output. Even though the managed applications were not officially considered mission critical, Air Canada couldn't afford prolonged.

This became even more important when the rapid integration of Canadian Airlines was announced.

## THE STRATEGY

Although outsourcing contracts generally involve taking over a client's IT operation along with its existing team, the current mandate required regrouping a mixture of legacy and brand new enterprise applications—with a brand new crew.

While the facility was being launched and tested, a group made up of representatives from Air Canada, the former outsourcer for some of the

## CASE STUDY

### RETAIL

Air Canada was already the country's largest air carrier and one of the top carriers on the international scene when CGI took over the support and maintenance of its enterprise applications.

applications, and CGI was created to manage all issues and ensure a smooth transition of knowledge and technology.

Throughout the process, applications were simultaneously operated from their former environment and CGI's Montreal facility until the new setup was thoroughly tested. The scarcity of system information at some levels was seen as an opportunity to thoroughly document all functions and implement processes that would ensure follow-up in the future.

CGI also implemented the Peritus methodology—part of its ISO 9001 certified project management framework. This comprehensive methodology is specifically designed to optimize the management of application support and maintenance teams.

Finally, during the integration of Canadian Airline's management, CGI brought in a task force of high-level consultants and technicians, increasing the center's staff from 35 to 60 to meet the client's deadline.

## THE TECHNOLOGY

Setting up the center and bringing it to full functionality required solid knowledge of the following:

- PeopleSoft enterprise applications (HR, payroll, finance) operated in a client/server environment
- Legacy systems (mainframe environment)
- Technical platforms/environments (Oracle, Focus, COBOL, UNIX).

## THE RESULTS

Since the complex repatriation process, the center has been providing excellent day-to-day service. Client requests are dealt with in an efficient manner, and CGI offers ongoing system evolution, thanks to its large pool of diversified experts. The quick and successful integration of Canadian Airlines' IT functions also demonstrates the benefits of dealing with specialists capable of quickly providing competent resources when demand increases.

*"Air Canada is very pleased with CGI's accomplishments in the context of this project. The project was delivered on schedule and the transition was totally seamless. To us, it was business as usual. We highly appreciate the professionalism and dedication of the specialists who work for our suppliers."*

**Jean-Paul Bourgeois**, director of enterprise systems, Air Canada.

For more information, please contact us at [info@cgi.com](mailto:info@cgi.com) or visit [www.cgi.com](http://www.cgi.com).

With 69,000 professionals operating in 400 offices in 40 countries, CGI fosters local accountability for client success while bringing global delivery capabilities to clients' front doors. Founded in 1976, CGI applies a disciplined delivery approach that has achieved an industry-leading track record of on-time, on-budget projects. Our high-quality business consulting, systems integration and outsourcing services help clients leverage current investments while adopting new technology and business strategies that achieve top and bottom line results. As a demonstration of our commitment, our average client satisfaction score for the past 10 years has measured consistently higher than 9 out of 10.