

Learning & Development



Cultural change for the better

David Arber reports on Redkite Systems' recent close interaction with the Fire and Rescue Service

IN 1999 THE CIVIL AVIATION

Authority (CAA) introduced CAP 699: The standards for the competence of Rescue and Fire Fighting Service personnel employed at United Kingdom licensed aerodromes.

CAP 699 requires that aerodrome management have a written corporate policy acknowledging that training for competence is an integral part of its strategy and that the key objective is the development and use of training and assessment systems that contribute to the efficient delivery of services while eliminating or reducing risk to the organisation, its staff and equipment, the community within the boundaries it serves and the environment.

Training for competence is not a replacement for current training practices. It is a method by which training is defined in terms of outcomes to be delivered within a flexible but rigidly controlled quality assured environment. It is an essential part of the 'safe person concept'. With this in mind, forward thinking airports identified Redkite Tracker as the system to meet the requirement.

As part of its regulatory oversight and audit programme the CAA regularly audit information held on Redkite Tracker to help ensure compliance with CAP 699.

The recent acceptance by BAA of Redkite Tracker has been the 'icing on the cake' for us as this means that the Redkite System has been adopted by most major commercial airports throughout the UK.

For Redkite Systems, the wide acceptance of Redkite Tracker has been very gratifying. We have enjoyed working with our colleagues in the ARFFS, and where needed we have worked hard to help airport fire personnel from airports large and small make the transition to – and come to terms with – the concept of a competence based approach to training. There is no doubt that the provision of an easy-to-use, robust recording system and common recording methodology has been of enormous benefit to all concerned.

Even Greater Understanding

A similar cultural change in the broader Fire Service is still under way. Being involved in this change is a privilege. Providing a recording system that is flexible enough to meet national requirements yet which is capable of accommodating local requirements of each

organisation has been a challenge. Over the past six years or so we have enjoyed working with, and gained a great deal of knowledge and insight from, our customers in Warwickshire FRS, Suffolk FRS, South Yorkshire FRS and Northumberland FRS.

The recent decision by Tyne and Wear FRS and Durham and Darlington FRS to select Redkite Systems as their preferred supplier will lead to an even greater understanding of system requirements and we look forward to working with them in the future.

Already Tyne and Wear FRS is working with Northumberland FRS towards a common approach to IPDS, with Durham and Darlington expected to join in soon. Working together in this way creates shared practices and reduces workloads.

In addition to ease of use, flexibility and scalability, our clients also require a system that incorporates quality control mechanisms to a very high standard.

Quality Control

In our view quality control is essential. It sits at the heart of Redkite Tracker providing tiered assessment and verification features. Redkite Tracker as used by both local authority FRS and ARFFS is designed to withstand rigorous inspections by external auditors. In the case of the ARFFS this is undertaken by the CAA. We have also been informed that Redkite Tracker has been interrogated by Health and Safety Inspectors during investigations following an incident involving injury. In this instance, 'evidence' held on the system helped demonstrate that the organisation in question had taken every possible action to mitigate

risk and avoid the incident. A simple 'tick box' system would not suffice under these conditions.

Of course, Redkite Tracker is not responsible for this quality – it provides a framework through which quality control can be enabled. It is our customers who agree that for a competent firefighter to equal a 'safer firefighter' a commitment is required to provide qualified assessors whose activities are 'sampled' by competent verifiers.

Quality control may also require the ability for a centralised training team to be able to co-ordinate and monitor take up and progress throughout the organisation. This is a requirement for all of our customers but it is essential to organisations with very widespread and remote locations.

From their headquarters in Inverness, Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL) use Redkite Tracker to monitor learning and development activities of firefighting staff located at its ten airports spread across mainland Scotland, the Inner and Outer Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland. The system helps ensure that fire personnel maintain their competence in line with CAP 699 and internal company requirements.

Converging Systems

As Redkite Tracker becomes more widespread so we are finding a steady convergence of recording systems across the ARFFS and local authority fire sectors. Many full time airport fire personnel also work on a retained or part time basis for a local authority FRS. Users now often comment that it is helpful to use the same system at their different places of work,



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by David Arber

The Redkite System has been adopted by most major commercial airports throughout the UK



even if they are updating against different standards. And why not: many of the functions required for ARFFS personnel are almost identical to those required by local authority firefighters. This is something that is now being recognised by the airport sector as CAP 699 comes under revue and CAP 699 and the Firefighter NOS begin to converge.

Redkite Systems also supply an equipment management system to a growing number of fire sector clients. The recent decision by Leicestershire FRS and Nottinghamshire FRS to adopt Redkite Systems as their preferred supplier extends our relationship within the local authority FRS sector. They will join Hereford and Worcester, Merseyside, Northamptonshire, South Wales, Warwickshire and West Yorkshire fire and rescue services together with over 35 ARFFS already benefiting from the Redkite Asset Tracker.

Initially developed in partnership with Warwickshire FRS in 2000 to meet the requirements of TB1/94 and subsequent expectations document, the system was awarded a 'best practice' citation by HMFSI in 2002.

Since then, Redkite Asset Tracker has been further developed to include the Redkite EMSCompanion, a portable inventory and inspection module based on the Psion Workabout Pro. The EMSCompanion has been designed to accommodate manual entry and read bar codes and read and write to RFID tags

without leaving the application.

New Hosted Services

Launched in January 2007, the take up of a new hosted service has been greater than expected. The reason for this is because the service we provide helps to reduce costs for the customer, and our clients report a dramatic increase in the speed and quality of service. Savings in cost are achieved because clients do not have to invest in SQL Server user licences, web servers or have in-house expertise on hand. Service improvements are brought about because we can communicate directly with end-users responding to their enquiries and resolving any issues more rapidly. This latter service is particularly useful when assisting new users configure their system for use.

Security and privacy are paramount on our hosted server. Each customer has their own unique system and work area on the server and therefore there can be no 'cross contamination' from other users. The addition of SSL means that all data held on each system is encrypted to the same high standard used by reputable Internet retailers and banks.

Northumberland FRS will be implementing a hosted Redkite Tracker allowing home working which will be of particular benefit to the retained duty system staff and out-based managers working away from HQ.

The benefits outlined above are obviously attractive to our customers – but what our clients really like is the fact that they get all these benefits at no extra cost – for, unlike our competitors, we do not charge a premium for the hosted service. Our fees are the same whether the system is located on your own servers or on ours.

New Question Master

The recent introduction of the Redkite Question Master is proving very popular as it empowers staff to assess their own knowledge of a topic by completing an on-line questionnaire.

The real power of the system comes from the fact that a specific questionnaire can be launched from a PowerPoint presentation turning any presentation into a dynamic learning aid.

In addition, a questionnaire can be mapped to units, elements or knowledge requirements held on the Redkite Tracker system. The successful completion of an on-line questionnaire that has been linked to a PowerPoint presentation can be seen as a knowledge credit towards competence in a unit.

Developed initially to meet the needs of BAA, Question Master integrates seamlessly with Redkite Tracker and is very easy to set up.

Since its release in October 2006, the MAG group of airports (Manchester, East Midlands, Bournemouth and Humberside) have already developed PowerPoint presentations linked to assessments where the outcomes are mapped to CAP 699 units as knowledge inputs. Tag Farnborough Airport has extended its use into both their ARFFS and other airport departments.

Northumberland FRS and Warwickshire FRS are also developing assessments linked to PowerPoint presentations using Question Master having quickly identified the cost benefits of developing this kind of material.

Appraisal Module

As part of a planned extension to Redkite Tracker, Northumberland FRS and Warwickshire FRS are working together to develop a new appraisal system module which will integrate seamlessly with Redkite Tracker allowing the electronic recording of and reporting on staff appraisals.

Redkite Systems Ltd is a UK Government-approved supplier and is a ISO 9001 registered company.

For further information on this or any other Redkite Systems product please either contact us at enquiries@redkitesystems.com or telephone 01926 814846 or visit our web sites <http://www.redkitesystems.com> or <http://www.redkitesystems.net>

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