

Importance of Roster Planning: A Case of Cathay Pacific



Source: Unsplash (2022)

Background

Established in 1946, Cathay Pacific Airways is Hong Kong's flagship carrier, committed to delivering world-class services and premium flying experience to its customers (Cathay Pacific, n.d.). However, the airline recently faced widespread criticism after the cancellation of nearly 800 flights over Christmas and Lunar New Year periods, causing public outrage and government scrutiny (SCMP, 2024). In response, the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) urged Cathay Pacific to fulfill its duty of providing reliable passenger services and requested a comprehensive incident report (HKSAR, 2024).

In its report submitted to the CAD, Cathay Pacific attributed the large-scale cancellations to several factors, including internal planning issues and underestimation of pilot reserve requirements (The Standard, 2024). The airline acknowledged that while it was aware of the illegal restriction limiting pilots to 900 flying hours per year, it had not anticipated this becoming a significant operational challenge. As a result, pilot flying hours were not tracked with the level of detail now deemed necessary, leading to an unexpected shortage of available crew (RTHK, 2024).

Having reviewed the airline's incident report, the CAD further pointed out the airline's poor coordination among departments responsible for service planning and crew scheduling. The department also criticized Cathay's lack of experience and digital capabilities in forecasting crew resources. In its statement, the CAD emphasized that the airline must establish stronger corporate governance to ensure effective communication among departments and the regularity of services (The Standard, 2024).

Since then, Cathay has proposed various remedial measures. It formed a task force to review its organizational structure and operational planning process and committed to enhancing headcount planning to ensure sufficient crew for maintaining flight schedules (The Standard, 2024). In May 2024, the airline also introduced a prototype digital system to monitor reserve pilot availability (Hong Kong Free Press, 2024). To improve attendance during peak travel

periods, Cathay proposed offering a 15% or higher bonus to pilots flying during these times (The Standard, 2024).

Challenges

Some believed that labour shortage is the main reason behind the incident and have questioned that the follow-up measures proposed by Cathay Pacific will be able to effectively tackle the root cause of the problem. The adoption of the new digital manpower monitoring system will also enable the airline to further exploit its pilots by pushing their hours as close to the 900-hour limit as possible. Overworking the pilots will only result in fatigue and more people calling in sick in the future. It may even hinder aviation safety or trigger union strikes if the problem persists.

While the peak season bonus may incentivize better attendance, it may also pressure crew members to work when they would otherwise take needed rest, potentially impacting well-being. Furthermore, with Cathay Pacific's recent announcement of plans to add 30 new aircraft to its fleet (Cathay Pacific, 2024), the strain on current staffing could intensify if pilot recruitment efforts are not scaled up accordingly.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the potential risks and benefits of Cathay Pacific's new digital manpower monitoring system?
2. How can Cathay Pacific balance the need to increase pilot flying hours with concerns about pilot fatigue, safety, and employee well-being?
3. What innovative recruitment strategies could Cathay Pacific explore to attract more pilots in a competitive market?
4. Beyond staffing and bonuses, what other steps can Cathay Pacific take to improve roster planning and ensure schedule stability?

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Keywords

- Airline
- Roster Planning
- Crew Scheduling
- Pilot
- Labour Shortage
- Flight Cancellation

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This case study is based on and adapted from the work of undergraduate students Cheung Yi Man; Ho Ching Yuen; Kwan Wing Yiu; Kwok Kwan Ling; Kwok Chung Ki; Kong Yuen Wai; Tsang Wai Yee, Valerie from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

班表规划的重要性：国泰航空案例研究



Source: Unsplash (2022)

背景

国泰航空成立于 1946 年，是香港的旗舰航空公司，致力于为客户提供世界级的服务和优质的飞行体验(Cathay Pacific, n.d.)。然而，该航空公司近期因在圣诞节及农历新年期间取消近 800 个航班而受到广泛批评，引发了公众不满和政府审查(SCMP, 2024)。作为回应，民航处敦促国泰航空履行其提供可靠客运服务的责任，并要求其提交全面的意外事件报告(HKSAR, 2024)。

在提交给民航处的报告中，国泰航空将大规模航班取消归因于若干因素，包括内部规划问题以及对飞行员储备需求的低估(The Standard, 2024)。该航空公司承认，尽管其知晓限制飞行员每年飞行时数不得超过 900 小时的法规，但并未预见到这会成为一个重大的运营挑战。因此，飞行员飞行时数未被以现在认为必要的精细程度进行跟踪，导致了可用机组成员意外短缺(RTHK, 2024)。

在审阅了该航空公司的意外事件报告后，民航处进一步指出，该航空公司在负责服务规划和机组人员排班的部门间协调不力。该部门还批评国泰航空在预测机组资源方面缺乏经验和数字能力。在其声明中，民航处强调，该航空公司必须建立更强大的企业管治，以确保部门间的有效沟通和服务的规律性(The Standard, 2024)。

此后，国泰提出了多项补救措施。它成立了一个专责小组，审查其组织架构和运营规划流程，并承诺加强人力规划，以确保有充足的机组人员维持航班时刻表(The Standard, 2024)。2024 年 5 月，该航空公司还引入了监测备用飞行员可用性的原型数字系统(Hong Kong Free Press, 2024)。为改善旅游高峰期的出勤情况，国泰提议为在此期间执飞的飞行员提供 15%或更高的奖金(The Standard, 2024)。

挑战

一些人认为劳动力短缺是此次事件背后的主因，并质疑国泰航空提出的后续措施是否能有效解决问题的根源。采用新的人力监控数字系统也可能使航空公司能够进一步通过将飞行员工作时数推近 900 小时上限来压榨他们。让飞行员过度工作只会导致疲劳，并使未来有更多人请病假。如果问题持续存在，甚至可能妨碍航空安全或引发工会罢工。

尽管旺季奖金可能激励更好的出勤率，但也可能迫使机组成员在他们本应休息的时候工作，可能影响其福祉。此外，随着国泰航空近期宣布计划增加 30 架新飞机至其机队(Cathay Pacific, 2024)，如果飞行员招聘工作未能相应扩大，当前的人力紧张状况可能会加剧。

讨论问题

1. 国泰航空新的人力监控数字系统可能带来哪些潜在风险和益处？
2. 国泰航空应如何平衡增加飞行员飞行时数的需求与对飞行员疲劳、安全及员工福祉的关切？
3. 国泰航空可以探索哪些创新的招聘策略，以在竞争激烈的市场中吸引更多飞行员？
4. 除了人员配置和奖金，国泰航空还能采取哪些其他措施来改善班表规划并确保航班时刻的稳定性？

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关键词

- 航空公司
- 班表规划
- 机组人员排班
- 飞行员
- 劳动力短缺
- 航班取消

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班表規劃的重要性：國泰航空案例研究



Source: Unsplash (2022)

背景

國泰航空成立於 1946 年，是香港的旗艦航空公司，致力於為客戶提供世界級的服務和優質的飛行體驗(Cathay Pacific, n.d.)。然而，該航空公司近期因在聖誕節及農曆新年期間取消近 800 個航班而受到廣泛批評，引發了公眾不滿和政府審查(SCMP, 2024)。作為回應，民航處敦促國泰航空履行其提供可靠客運服務的責任，並要求其提交全面的意外事件報告(HKSAR, 2024)。

在提交給民航處的報告中，國泰航空將大規模航班取消歸因於若干因素，包括內部規劃問題以及對飛行員儲備需求的低估(The Standard, 2024)。該航空公司承認，儘管其知曉限制飛行員每年飛行時數不得超過 900 小時的法規，但並未預見到這會成為一個重大的運營挑戰。因此，飛行員飛行時數未被以現在認為必要的精細程度進行跟蹤，導致了可用機組成員意外短缺(RTHK, 2024)。

在審閱了該航空公司的意外事件報告後，民航處進一步指出，該航空公司在負責服務規劃和機組人員排班的部門間協調不力。該部門還批評國泰航空在預測機組資源方面缺乏經驗和數位能力。在其聲明中，民航處強調，該航空公司必須建立更強有力的企業管治，以確保部門間的有效溝通和服務的規律性(The Standard, 2024)。

此後，國泰提出了多項補救措施。它成立了一個專責小組，審查其組織架構和運營規劃流程，並承諾加強人力規劃，以確保有充足的機組人員維持航班時刻表(The Standard, 2024)。2024 年 5 月，該航空公司還引入了監測備用飛行員可用性的原型數

位系統(Hong Kong Free Press, 2024)。為改善旅遊高峰期的出勤情況，國泰提議為在此期間執飛的飛行員提供 15%或更高的獎金(The Standard, 2024)。

挑戰

一些人認為勞動力短缺是此次事件背後的主因，並質疑國泰航空提出的後續措施是否能有效解決問題的根源。採用新的人力監控數位系統也可能使航空公司能夠進一步通過將飛行員工作時數推近 900 小時上限來壓榨他們。讓飛行員過度工作只會導致疲勞，並使未來有更多人請病假。如果問題持續存在，甚至可能妨礙航空安全或引發工會罷工。

儘管旺季獎金可能激勵更好的出勤率，但也可能迫使機組成員在他們本應休息的時候工作，可能影響其福祉。此外，隨著國泰航空近期宣布計劃增加 30 架新飛機至其機隊(Cathay Pacific, 2024)，如果飛行員招聘工作未能相應擴大，當前的人力緊張狀況可能會加劇。

討論問題

1. 國泰航空新的人力監控數位系統可能帶來哪些潛在風險和益處？
2. 國泰航空應如何平衡增加飛行員飛行時數的需求與對飛行員疲勞、安全及員工福祉的關切？
3. 國泰航空可以探索哪些創新的招聘策略，以在競爭激烈的市場中吸引更多飛行員？
4. 除了人員配置和獎金，國泰航空還能採取哪些其他措施來改善班表規劃並確保航班時刻的穩定性？

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關鍵詞

- 航空公司
- 班表規劃
- 機組人員排班
- 飛行員
- 勞動力短缺
- 航班取消

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