

客艙安全：隱形的服務項目

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「國際航空運輸協會」(International Air Transport Association, 後文簡稱 IATA) 的資深客艙安全經理 Jonathan Jasper 表示，當前有三項有關客艙安全的挑戰極為重要，分別是：專業技能、佩戴口罩、基本權益等，可能會與親身所處理的事務極為相關——乘客和「以人為本」(people-oriented) 的服務業，這是他從首次投入客艙安全作業迄今，三年來所累積的深刻體會。

專業技能不足

「專業技能不足，是當前的一個大問題，」他說：「航空業的復甦極為快速，然而讓客艙組員重新投入服務，仍需要一大段時間。」

在 COVID-19 疫情流行期間，有許多員工被停職或解僱。為此，擁有豐富經驗的客艙組員不得不離開航空業，但他們的專業技

能，仍然受到其他行業的高度重視。如今航空業已逐漸復甦，即使能有效地召回客艙組員重返職場，也必須重新開始進行複訓的工作。

「航空公司必須面試成千上萬的求職者，決定誰能成功獲選，然後進行相關的安全查核，」Jasper 說：「這可能需要很長的時間。即使是重返職場的前客艙組員，也需要更新其相關的安全許可；隨後，你必須處理好的工作是，如何能一次完成這麼大量的客艙組員訓練。航空公司從來沒有這種經驗，而且也沒有這種大量的施訓能力。」

客艙服務作業有一些基本上的改變，在 COVID-19 疫情流行期間，諸如：如何提供飲食、考量健康需求等方面，增加了許多作業上的複雜性。甚至有媒體報導稱，有些航空公司正在考慮把座位區隔化，甚至完全取消某些座位，以減少他們對客艙組員的需

求，同時又能符合安全法規的要求。

佩戴口罩

在客艙組員增加的許多作業中，最困難的是要讓乘客瞭解與配合，何時、何地仍必須佩戴口罩。至於乘客會產生困惑，那是可以被理解的；因為，世界各國都有許多不同的規定。Jasper 的形容是，這是一場「混亂」(chaos) 的情境。

IATA 的立場相當明確。只要日常生活的其他地方，諸如：劇院、辦公室，或是公共交通工具等，若不再強制要求佩戴口罩時，飛機上佩戴口罩的規定就應該結束了。以歐洲地區為例，「歐盟航空安全局」(European Union Aviation Safety Agency, EASA) 對口罩有放寬限制的建議，此舉不但大受歡迎，而且認為這是恢復航空業正常營運的里程碑。此外，美國有一位聯邦法官的裁定是，佩戴口罩的限制是違憲的；但這種明確的判決，算是相當罕見。

儘管如此，航空公司必須遵守相關法規，而客艙組員的工作，就是確實遵守規定。這種現象所延伸出的問題是，乘客不守規矩的滋擾事件大幅增加。

客艙組員的基本權益

一點也不奇怪，乘客不守規矩的滋擾事件，以及不斷增加的服務工作量，都會成為挑戰客艙組員的心理健康和基本權益的誘因之一。但真正把這問題擺在眼前的是，COVID-19 疫情的大流行。也許某位客艙組員已經失業了一段時間，而且也遭遇到一些財務上的問題；或者是，他們可能正在努力

的按規定實施，一大堆令人困惑的健康處理問題。在這種情況下，服務乘客的壓力是相當大的。

這可能導致有關安全的作業會發生失誤。如果客艙組員因個人問題而分心，他們就有可能無法像往常一樣地保持警覺；或者是，他們雖注意到異常情況發生也可能會忘記提出報告。

疲勞是其中的一個問題，儘管現有的安全法規已經涵蓋了這一點。然而，有關疲勞對心理健康的影響，卻不是可以量化的。「這就是為什麼，在這個領域很難得到監管，」Jasper 說：「心理健康是一個很廣泛的領域，這是很難下定義和解決的多元化問題。這雖然超出關心正常組員的法規義務，但這卻也會影響到飛航安全。」

大多數航空公司正在考慮把「夥伴支援計畫」(peer support program)，列為最佳的改進方案。這將使客艙組員有機會公開和誠實地談論，任何會影響到他們或其表現的相關問題。

IATA 還通過社交媒體，全力支援 2015 年 5 月 31 日開始舉行的「國際空服員日」(International Flight Attendant's Day)。「這是展現我們關心客艙組員的機會，並且加強組員角色的正面形象，」Jasper 說：「這種大眾化的社交活動，將會提高申請客艙服務工作者的興趣，並解決航空公司招聘員工的短缺問題，而且也會對乘客的搭機感受，產生一些積極正面的影響。」✈️

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Cabin safety: the invisible part of service

Jonathan Jasper, Senior Manager, Cabin Safety, IATA, says three challenges stand out and will likely generate lively sessions at the in-person event—the first time this customer and people-oriented sector has been able to gather for three years.

IATA Safety

Skills shortage

“Skills shortage is a huge issue,” he says. “The industry recovery has been strong, and it takes time to get crew back into service.”

Many staff were furloughed or laid off during the pandemic. Swathes of experienced crew have left aviation, their skills highly prized by other industries. And even those that return effectively have to start again.

“Airlines must interview thousands of people, decide on the successful applicants, and then run the relevant security checks,” says Jasper. “That can take a long time. Even ex-crew returning to the fold will need to renew security clearances. And then you have to work out how to train such large numbers at once. Airlines aren’t used to doing that and don’t have the capacity.”

Some fundamental changes to service, such as how food is served, health requirements, and so forth, add to the complexity of the issue. It has even been



reported that some airlines are considering blocking seats or even removing them altogether to reduce their cabin crew requirements and still comply with safety regulations.

Masks

Of the many new tasks facing cabin crew, easily the most difficult is getting passengers to understand mask requirements where they still exist. Passenger confusion is understandable. Jasper describes the plethora of rules that vary from country to country as “chaos.”

IATA position is clear. Mask requirements on board aircraft should end when masks are no longer mandated in other parts of daily life, for example in theatres and offices or on public transport. In Europe, for example, the European Aviation Safety Agency's recommendation to relax the mask mandate has been welcomed as a step on the road back to normality. And in the United States, a federal judge ruled that the mask mandate was illegal. But such clarity is rare.

Nevertheless, airlines must comply with regulations, and it is the crew's job to ensure compliance. The issue led to an enormous rise in unruly passenger incidents.


Crew wellbeing

Not surprisingly, unruly passengers and an increasing workload are among the factors that have made cabin crew mental health and wellbeing an emerging challenge. But it is the pandemic that really brought the issue to the fore. Perhaps a crew member has been out of work for some time and is having financial issues, or maybe they are struggling to implement the confusing array of health measures. The pressure in providing customer service under these circumstances is enormous.

It can lead to safety-critical failings. It is possible that the crew member may not be as vigilant as usual if they are distracted by personal issues. Or they could forget to report something they have noticed.

Fatigue is a part of this although that is already covered by existing safety regulations. Rather, it is about the unquantifiable effects of mental health concerns. "And that is why it is so difficult to get regulation in this area," says Jasper. "Mental health is a broad area, and it is difficult to define and combat the variety of problems. But this goes beyond normal employee duty of care legislation. It can affect safety."

Most airlines are considering a peer support program as the best way forward. It would give cabin crew the opportunity to talk openly and honestly about any issues affecting them or their performance.

IATA is also supporting International Flight Attendant's Day through social media. "This is our chance to demonstrate that we care about cabin crew, and to reinforce the positive aspects of the role," says Jasper. "In turn, this will help support interest in applying for cabin crew jobs, which will help our members with their recruitment shortages, and positively affect the passenger experience." 

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