

Plan ahead to prepare for passenger return

■ The reduction in airport traffic in 2020 caused many ■ airports to reduce staff, shut down portions of their terminal buildings and change operations to suit. Some airports shut down the main baggage handling system and combined all passengers through a common pre-board screening point. Airports were left with bare minimum staffing levels and equipment that hasn't been in use for quite some time.

Air travel will regain popularity as a primary mode of transportation and airports will be challenged to provide an excellent customer experience once the restart begins. Has your airport reduced its staffing levels or powered down equipment because of the reduced traffic? As we wait for normality to return, operators should prepare and test unused equipment well in advance and continue to operate and exercise systems as they wait for passenger numbers to build.

The restart could require all the various stakeholders to hire new staff quickly, and some of these people will be new to the airport environment and unfamiliar with airport operations. The approach to a successful restart will be similar to ORAT but could be much riskier. A restart team consisting of experienced and well-equipped individuals would certainly be a very efficient way to train new recruits quickly, provide recurrent training and assist in daily operations until the team is up and running and self-sufficient.



Once the restart is fully energized and working, operators can consider setting new goals for improved efficiencies through system audits, third-party reviews of processes and practices, and system hardware or software improvements.

Not knowing when traffic will resume and how it will accelerate makes it difficult to plan. When the pandemic quarantine requirements begin to ease and borders open, the traffic surge could reach unexpected levels. Will you be ready?

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Airports should be testing equipment and training staff ahead of passengers' return to air travel