

People Power

Roberta Neri, chief executive of Italy's ENAV, offers her views on the important role that developing human talent has in the business' efforts to modernise

Airspace can be considered as an infrastructure on a par with roads and railways, and as such, we need to invest in it in order to exploit its full potential and provide its users with the utmost level of safety and a consistently high quality of service.

Modern air transport is one of the fastest growing and most intensively-developing markets. It is not easy to forecast its growth with accuracy nor to understand the development of traffic flows which can change abruptly due to both internal and external factors.

It is obvious that ATM cannot and must not be seen as a bottleneck but rather a driving force and a strong link in the chain that demonstrates its ability to adapt to changes in a swift and flexible manner. The main mission of each service provider, of course, focuses on safety, and all operating and technological innovations need to be accompanied by ongoing research geared to improving safety levels.

Service providers need to modernise their technologies and operating models quickly, so as to enhance development in the industry, by combining their primary mission, i.e. safety, with the need to develop infrastructure through harmonising the network and procedures. Europe's air traffic management is a complex system due to the high traffic volumes and operational fragmentation.

ENAV started to revise the Italian airspace structure back in 2014, and this year we have successfully completed this first phase of modernisation. If we had not started so promptly, we probably would have been unprepared to deal with the significant growth seen recently.

The results are clear: in the first nine months of 2018, even though traffic over Italy increased by 9 per cent, we succeeded in ensuring excellent performance in terms of delay per assisted flight with respect to the assigned target (0.052 minutes versus a target of 0.11 minutes) while at the same time achieving significant results from a sustainability point of view.

Thanks to the implementation of the initial stage of Free Route in December

2016 (above 11,000 metres) and to the deployment of the second and final stage in May 2018 (above 9,000 metres), we have enabled airlines so far to save over 60 million kg of fuel with all the related benefits for the environment and cost savings.

These projects in particular, and these years of evolution in ENAV's operational management in general, have provided increasingly clear evidence that every development in technology, management models or operating procedures must be accompanied by human resource development. In our industry, people are at the centre of every change.

Flexibility

Investment in human resources is the necessary basis for successfully and effectively modernising the system, through the development of flexible and resilient organisations.

As everyone knows, ENAV is the only service provider in the world to be listed on the stock market. I can assure you that sustainability, ethics and long term value creation for stakeholders are key topics for our shareholders. In the eyes of many institutional investors, a company's reliability is measured in line with these characteristics and not only according to economic and financial metrics.

The reason is simple: the ability of a company to adopt sustainable modernisation and to create value is also the best way to ensure growth and development in the long term.

We have a variety of apparently different external demands: on the one side, highly stringent objectives imposed by European regulations such as cost efficiency, service quality, the environment and, of course, safety, and, on the other side, our stakeholders who have their own interests and expectations.

The needs are apparently different, but they actually tend and will increasingly tend to converge.

ENAV has achieved a lot so far and we can proudly say that we are a service provider that guarantees excellent performance levels, especially thanks to our



operational personnel and careful, targeted investments in technology. But this is not enough, of course. The challenges awaiting us are all but simple.

We must, first and foremost, ensure that our airspace is safe and accessible to all and not only to airlines. The drone market, for example, is growing rapidly and air navigation services providers are called upon to find solutions for managing this 'new' traffic in a safe environment.

Digitisation in the ATM world is creating new opportunities. Remote towers are now a reality and they can help significantly with managing air traffic in a more flexible manner and with increased capacity, especially at airports with low traffic flows, and this helps to reduce costs and, as a consequence, prices.

All these elements are at the heart of ENAV's business plan and represent what we believe to be an essential condition to ensure a bright future for the company and for air transport, to the benefit of passengers, workers and the community.

I believe that all the developments in our sector will provide strategic leverage in allowing air transport to grow in a harmonious and sustainable manner, creating value for its stakeholders and taking into account the needs of the passenger as well as those of the community on which it has an impact.

Service providers are, of course, just one link in the chain, and to achieve these results all players involved in our industry must work in the same direction, whether they are airports, airlines or the aerospace manufacturing industry. 