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HUMONIQ / WHITE PAPER 03

Lean team management

Why support needs so much management and endless training, why offshoring did not fix it, and how agentic AI absorbs the volume so a small, senior local team can lead the service instead of supervising it.

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01 / THE MANAGEMENT LOAD

Why so much

management.

Traditional air travel support is management-heavy by construction. A large team of junior agents needs rosters, shifts, quality reviews, coaching and escalation paths, and attrition keeps every one of those jobs busy. None of that work resolves a passenger's request.

Management grows with the team, not with the work.

Every shift

Rosters, queues and shifts

Somebody forecasts demand, builds the roster, covers absence and watches the queue. When demand moves, the same people reshuffle the day, and none of that reshuffling resolves a request.

Every week

Quality reviews and coaching

Sampled conversations, scorecards, one-to-ones and escalations. The reviews keep finding the same gaps in different people, because the work is repetitive but the people keep changing.

Every departure

Recruiting and replacing

A junior role with a hard job turns over quickly. Each vacancy restarts hiring, onboarding and supervised work, with experienced colleagues absorbing the load in between.

> A manager hour is overhead that resolves nothing, and the ratio of managers to agents never improves.

The ratio does not improve with experience, because the people keep changing while the work stays the same. A support leader's week goes on running the team rather than improving the service, and every growth in passengers brings growth in all of it.

Why air travel is so hard to staff

02 / THE TRAINING TREADMILL

Why training

never ends.

Training ends. Learning doesn't. An agent can finish onboarding before meeting a split booking, a disruption waiver or a partner airline's exception, because real competence develops through cases, not courses. Meanwhile fares, policies, systems and partner rules keep changing, and many agents leave before their training has paid back.

Make one person's learning useful to everyone.

Knowledge held by individuals	Knowledge built into the operation
A policy changes. Brief every team and hope the update reaches the next conversation. Fares, waivers, partner rules and systems change often enough that the briefing never stops.	Update the shared guidance, test the affected cases and review how the change performs.
A difficult case is solved. The next agent may face the same problem without knowing what worked. Good judgement is unevenly shared, so the outcome depends on who answers.	Capture the reasoning, turn it into a test case and improve how similar requests are handled.
A specialist moves on. Their judgement leaves with them. The next hire starts building it again, often before the last investment has paid back.	Retain reviewed guidance, examples and decision boundaries so their contribution continues.

Expertise should grow with every case, not restart with every hire.

The answer is rarely just in the policy. It is in the exception, the ticket history, the partner airline's process and the judgement to know which detail matters. A script cannot replace that experience. Neither should every new agent have to rediscover it.

Why deep industry knowledge matters

03 / THE MOVE OFFSHORE

Why support

went offshore.

Airlines did not move support offshore carelessly. Business process outsourcers and offshore hubs offered lower labor costs, ready-made scale and a way to absorb unpredictable demand. In a model where every request needs a person, it was the obvious decision.

Three pressures that sent support offshore.

01

Labor was the cost

With a person resolving every request, wages, workplaces and management dominated the budget. Lower labor costs elsewhere offered the largest saving available.

02

Scale was for sale

Outsourcers already ran large support operations with hiring pipelines, trainers, facilities and systems in place. An airline could add hundreds of seats without building any of it.

03

Demand was unpredictable

Seasons, schedules and disruptions make support demand volatile. A provider serving many clients could absorb peaks that one airline would otherwise have to staff for alone.

A rational answer to a cost problem that the operating model itself created.

The decision was not a failure of judgement. It was the best available response to an operating model that turns every passenger request into a labor cost, and the people who run these teams, at home or abroad, work hard within it.

More on elastic capacity and disruptions

04 / THE RELOCATED LOAD

Why offshoring

barely helps.

Offshoring changes who employs the team, not the need to recruit, train, roster, coach and review it. The management load is relocated and then partly duplicated, because the airline still has to govern the service from a distance.

Offshoring moves the team. It does not shrink the job.

The work to manage stays the same

Somebody still recruits, trains, rosters, coaches and reviews a large team of agents. The contract changes who employs them, not how many there are or how often they change.

The airline keeps a management layer

Vendor managers, policy specialists, quality oversight and escalation handling remain in house, because a provider cannot set the airline's rules or own its passengers.

Distance adds handoffs

Every escalation crosses a company boundary, a time zone and a context gap. Feedback loops slow down, so a wrong answer is repeated for longer before anyone corrects it.

The provider's attrition restarts the cycle

Outsourced teams turn over too. Each departure resets the training investment, and the airline's knowledge has to be retaught to people it has never met.

The cost side

Two bills where there used to be one.

The invoice funds the provider’s delivery operation and its business. The airline funds everything it retained. The Low labor costs paper counts both.

More on the full cost of outsourcing

05 / THE SMALL SENIOR TEAM

Why small local teams

thrive.

When AI resolves the volume, what remains is a small, senior team close to the airline’s own operation and passengers. It sets the rules, reviews outcomes, handles the sensitive exceptions and improves the service. Local knowledge, language and accountability stay where they belong, in a team you lead rather than supervise.

Three habits that compound.

Make judgement explicit.

Document why an option is right, when a question is useful and where approval is required. Preserve room for context instead of turning every decision into a rigid script.

Review outcomes, not box ticking.

Study real conversations for missed options, unnecessary questions and repeat work. Feed what you learn into guidance and evaluations, not just another coaching score.

Give specialists greater reach.

Keep people focused on sensitive cases, approvals and service improvement. Their experience should raise the standard across the operation, not only in the requests they personally handle.

Does every resolved case make the next one easier to get right?

The goal is not to turn people into supervisors of a black box. It is to give experienced airline specialists a clear role in shaping, testing and improving the service, with visibility into the decisions it makes and the authority to change them.

Why judgement beats workflows

More on world-leading CX

06 / THE HUMONIQ WAY

How Humoniq

solves this.

Two principles, end-to-end automation and world-leading CX. AI resolves most requests the moment they arrive, specialists handle the rest, and the airline pays one dollar per resolution.

The Humoniq standard.

PRINCIPLE 01

End-to-end automation.

AI carries each request from first message to confirmed resolution, inside the airline's rules and systems. Specialists step in only where judgement is needed.

PRINCIPLE 02

World-leading CX.

Not undetectable. Measurably better than human on everything a passenger notices: speed, accuracy, depth and a shorter path to the outcome.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

01	Instant response	An answer in seconds, at 3 a.m. or mid-disruption.
02	No queues	Every passenger is served at once. Only escalations ever wait.
03	Parallel work	Searches, checks and bookings run side by side, not one after another.
04	Deep integrations	Real actions in the airline's own systems, within its rules.
05	Faster resolutions	The most direct path to the best outcome, with fewer repeat contacts.

How this means lean team management.

A team you barely have to manage.

WHERE A SUPPORT LEADER'S WEEK GOES

Traditional air travel support

Six jobs to run

Recruiting · Rostering · Training · Coaching · Quality reviews · Escalations

Every one of these grows with headcount and starts again with each departure.

Humoniq

Three to lead

Set the rules · Review outcomes · Handle exceptions

A small expert team shaping the service, instead of a large one being supervised.

HOW WE GET THERE

Fewer people to manage

Most requests never need an agent, so the team is small, senior and stable.

Knowledge in the system

Rules and procedures are built in once, not retaught every quarter to new hires.

Oversight by outcome

Review resolutions and refine the rules, instead of monitoring shifts and queues.

A SMALLER, SENIOR TEAM

Keep the experience. *Multiply its impact.*

Explore support built around air travel expertise, with your specialists defining the rules, reviewing the difficult cases and raising the standard over time.

Explore AeroChat

https://humoniq.ai/products/aerochat