



## ZETES CASE STUDY | Virgin



### Virgin's RFID Pilot Takes Off with Zetes

With the help of Zetes Ltd (formerly PEAK Technologies), Virgin Atlantic Airways has implemented and put RFID to the test, evaluating once and for all, whether it is an economical approach to tracking the life cycle of aircraft parts at its logistics centres in Heathrow and Gatwick airports. Zetes, a systems integrator of automatic identification and data collection (AIDC) equipment and systems, has supplied Virgin Atlantic Airways with technology and configuration services, as part of this key trial.

The trial will look at the impact of RFID by using it to track critical aviation assets throughout its logistics supply chain. Virgin is the first airline in the UK to look at the potential benefits of RFID. It intends to fully evaluate its potential deployment as a means to track and trace high value aircraft parts from receipt right through to dispatch. To do this, Zetes selected and supplied Symbol MC9000-G handheld readers and a Symbol wireless LAN infrastructure. As part of this wireless implementation, Virgin will also use RFID printers and a specialised set of applications. The extraction of data from the core engineering system is an additional dimension to its trial.



“Our overall objective for the RFID trial, is to understand through practical hands-on experience, whether or not RFID is suitable for the business processes that we are obligated to perform, to support and maintain the airworthiness of our Virgin fleet,” said Graham Holford, Virgin Atlantic Airways. “PEAK Technologies (now Zetes Ltd) was recommended to us by Symbol and not only did they prove to be highly competitive, they were also able to provide additional value added services to ensure security and compatibility of the network,” concluded Graham Holford.

The project, called TRIM (Tracked by Radio Identification Method), utilises RFID tagging and has replaced manual data input and standard bar code labelling. It was designed with the specific goal of tracking aeroplane parts, spare parts and components in the warehouse. Aeroplane parts are tagged on entry to the warehouse, logged into the inventory system computer and given a full inspection before being issued with an RFID tag.

The main installation is based at Virgin's logistics facilities at Heathrow Airport with additional facilities at Gatwick Airport. Heathrow contains all the most valuable assets. Over the two sites there are four wireless access ports, with external antennas that support onsite data exchange.