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## Talent takes off

by [Daniel Stanton](#)

With sky-high growth in the region's air travel industry, airlines are having to recruit more staff than ever, but often the hiring process is less streamlined than the aircraft.

Qatar Airways recruits around 2,000 people each year and found that the inefficiencies in its paper-based processes were slowing it down. In addition, all CVs and job applications, even the rejected ones, needed to be stored, taking up physical storage space. It decided it had to reduce the amount of paper involved in applications and make the whole procedure more efficient.



**Qatar Airways: Software enables a new culture of recruitment.**

"Today we have 9,000 employees and by 2010 we should have perhaps 14,000 so you can imagine how HR is important, especially in terms of recruitment and training," says Youssef Bouni, senior manager human resources, Qatar Airways.

In October last year, the airline implemented Taleo, a talent management software solution, to automate and streamline parts of the recruitment process. "We felt it was important to have a talent management solution in place to assist us in recruiting the 'crème de la crème' of professionals in the airline industry that will help continue to make Qatar Airways a successful business," says Akbar Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways.

"After a detailed selection process, we selected Taleo for its global HR and talent management best practices and proven ability to help other global organisations successfully grow their businesses with the right talent. Additionally, Taleo's track record in successful global implementations and ongoing customer service and support will allow our IT department to focus on other mission critical aviation systems during our growth phase."

The Taleo system now manages Qatar Airways' interview and screening process from the moment a CV is emailed to the company. "The tool is from A to Z – receiving the CV, doing the screenings and, after doing the interview, doing the approvals or the rejections," says Bouni.

"You already have the requirement profile pre-input in the system, so when the candidate enters the information about his background and his profile, we have a first screening done by the system.

"So after the first screening you have a first shortlist and with this shortlist you work with the managers to find the people you will offer interviews."

This helped speed up the process dramatically. "The time saving is a lot," says Bouni. "It's between three and four months, if I compare it with the previous system. It's also saving cost because you don't need to do a lot of advertising everywhere and it is a better tool to optimise the identification of the candidates for the operations managers."

Taleo is currently being used in the airline's Qatar head office, as well as in its offices in the UAE and Egypt. "We have about 50 people using it," says Bouni. "For the second step, we have already started to train the people overseas."

Around 70 of Qatar Airways' overseas staff will start using Taleo by the end of the year.

The airline is currently looking at ways to integrate Taleo with its HR solution from Oracle, but this is only at the planning stage. Bouni says: "We have a new project coming, but there is no specific link between Taleo and other systems for the moment because the tool is not implemented worldwide."

Implementation has posed no major problems so far, and the staff seem to have taken to the system, thanks to its ease of use. "Training is very fast," says Bouni. "It takes a maximum of two days."

The solution has saved physical resources. Qatar Airways no longer has to worry about archiving paper records for every application - Taleo also stores archives of recruitment documents. In addition, it provides tools which allow the recruitment process to be analysed.

“With Taleo you can do statistics every month – how many applications we have rejected, how many applications we received – so you can have some key indicators,” Bouni explains. “It’s really a new culture of recruitment.”

Importantly, Taleo has proved its worth by creating cost savings and Bouni expects it to pay for itself within two years. “If you want to develop the e-strategy, you don’t need so many people perhaps in your HR department,” he says.

“The cost is something important for us because we have a culture of cost control, but it is also to see how this tool can help Qatar Airways recruit the quantity of people and the quality of people (it needs),” explains Bouni.



**An artist's impression of Doha International Airport's new control tower.**

Now that Qatar Airways has a tool in place to streamline the application process, Bouni wants to implement workflow management. “We have received a lot of applications through the system. Now the big job is to manage this workload and to have a very strong follow up every day on the system.”

Taleo is also used earlier in the recruitment process when job positions are first being created. A manager can create a position on the system then send it to other departments for the job to be approved and then advertised.

The next step will be to conduct the process by which staff book their travel through an electronic system. “It will be implemented in September this year,” says Bouni.

“The staff will go directly to the system and do everything when they ask for leave or duty travel. Another project is e-learning for training, and we have an e-visa project with the government for immigration.”

These new systems and processes are no luxury; they are driven by genuine

business needs, and without them the airline might struggle to achieve its objectives. Bouni says: "Qatar Airways is growing so fast that if we want to follow that speed we need to have very good support and very strong tools, so today we cannot continue to deal with paperwork. The strategy is more and more about having these things done electronically," he says.

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