

Ground equipment sector pins hopes on enlightened procurement strategy

Ground support equipment (GSE) manufacturers, ground-handling companies and airport managers heard calls for innovative asset acquisition and cost control strategies during the GSE Buyers Conference 2011 at London Heathrow on 11-12 April.

GSE manufacturers complain about the frequent lack of forward planning and last-minute rush orders. This is almost endemic in the system as handling companies are unable to place equipment orders until their airline or airport contracts are confirmed and all too often this is left until the last moment. Cyclical GSE such as aircraft and runway de-icers are particularly vulnerable in this regard.

Another complaint is the short-term view of costs. As one delegate to the EVA International-organised conference remarked:

"Customers always say that it is the whole life project cost and the long-term supplier relationship that matters, but in the event it always comes down to the lowest capital cost."

Pete Speck, vice-president of corporate supply and GSE maintenance management at Swissport Services and Swissport International, argued that in future initial cost will not be the sole criteria. He told delegates that he does not want to see "blood on the floor", preferring instead to build long-term relationships that will allow for joint product and service development and forward planning.

To achieve this the company needs transparency, competitiveness and innovation from the supplier, which should be easy to work with and should recognise the corporate structure and



EVA International: 1437936

■ Pete Speck of Swissport told delegates at the GSE Buyers Conference 2011 that success with customers will come from developing mutually beneficial long-term relationships.

procurement strategy of Swissport. One of the classic solutions to the problem of lack of predictability is offered by TCR, pioneers of the operating lease for GSE. Equipment operators take out an operating lease that means that all their equipment costs (capital and maintenance) are predicted and everything except the actual operation of the equipment is taken care of by TCR for a fixed regular payment.

Tom Bellekens, general manager for continental Europe at TCR, said that this makes TCR expert in calculating the total cost of ownership, of which less than 50 per cent is linked to the initial capital cost. Pooling of equipment and flexibility in and between sites improves plant utilisation and reduces costs, and the residual value of the unit is taken into account in calculating depreciation charges.



SEDET

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SEDET initial product is an Air Cargo Explosive Screener (ACES), designed to screen explosive contents in completely loaded trucks, thereby allowing very high inspection throughput and screening costs below 0.01€/kg. ACES is an Explosive Vapour Detector (EVD) based on Mass Spectrometry.

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