Genetec™

Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport

Operational gains take flight with unification

Name
Louisville Muhammad Ali
International Airport

Industries
Airports

Location
Louisville, Kentucky, United States

Products
Security Center, Omnicast, Synergis,
Sipelia, Airport Operations module,
Security Center Badging solution

Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport catalyzes operational improvements using data insights from Genetec Security Center

Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport (SDF) is a civil and military airport in Kentucky. Each year, more than 4.6 million passengers choose SDF as a launchpad for their travels. The airport offers nonstop service to more than 35 destinations on a dozen airlines, averaging 140 daily passenger flights. With just one stop, travelers can reach another 460 destinations worldwide. SDF is also home to the United Parcel Service (UPS) International air-sorting hub, Worldport. Over 6 billion pounds of cargo go through SDF, ranking it sixth in the world – and third in North America – for total amount of cargo handled.

Making airport improvements with a data-driven mindset

As one of the fastest-growing airports in the United States, SDF prioritizes exceptional customer experiences. This commitment led SDF to embark on its SDF Next Program, a major terminal capital improvement effort with investment upwards of $500 million spanning multiple years. Part of the project included building a new state-of-the-art command center, where a dedicated team could oversee everything from airport operations and employee badging to physical security.

Prior to the command center, the airport's teams faced challenges with siloed operations. Various managers and team members didn't have a comprehensive picture of what was happening from terminal to tarmac. Disparate solutions made it difficult to identify how issues were connected and where processes could be improved.

"We wanted to design an airport operations center (AOC) and choose advanced technology that would bring information to us. Ultimately, we needed solutions that gave our specialists a more cohesive, data-driven experience while overseeing badging, security, and airside and landside operations," said Megan Thoben, Vice President of Operations and Customer Engagement at Louisville Regional Airport Authority.

After looking at many options, SDF chose Genetec™ Security Center. The unified platform brings multiple security and airport-specific technologies into one intuitive experience with the option to add new integrations over time. Operators can work from one centralized view to respond to incidents, handle badging tasks, and collect valuable business insights.

Streamlining airport operations and security with one platform

Today, SDF operations specialists oversee over 700 cameras, 498 doors, and over 3,000 cardholders, all from Security Center. Various camera analytics also feed information to the AOC staff, alerting them to bags left behind, crowds gathering in certain areas, or security checkpoint lines getting longer than usual. With everything in one view, the team now manages different priorities and tasks with greater ease and confidence.

"Before Security Center, there were many steps involved in responding to alarms and trying to figure out what happened. Now, it's nearly impossible to miss an event because all video and data come into one easy-to-use platform. We see the alert pop up, double-click it, and everything we need is right there at our fingertips. The unified view helps us respond faster and quickly share critical information with our officers," explained Thoben.

From restricted security areas and perimeter fences to administration and IT buildings, the team can monitor all areas of operation. Even when they're on the go, they can access the information from their mobile phone.

"With the Security Center mobile app, our team doesn't need to be at their desk to know what's happening. They may be on our airfield or in a terminal, and they'll get notified if the checkpoints are overcrowded. They can then deploy resources to alleviate any bottlenecks or issues," said Thoben.

Speeding up baggage collection using the Airport Operations module

When the team chose Security Center, they were excited to use the Airport Operations module to start integrating broader airport systems for more insights. One of the first challenges they tackled was recurring bag claim delays.

"We had an issue with bag claim delays. We wanted to give the airlines data on how often these delays occurred so we could work together to solve the issue. This would inform specifics like 'Do we have a big problem or is it just one particular flight?', 'Does it occur at a particular time of day or night?' It then became a question of how can we use our existing technologies to collect this data?" said Thoben.

The SDF team began trialing different options, using everything from airplane transponder data and video verification at the gate. However, various discrepancies led to inaccurate results. They went back to the drawing board and consulted the Genetec team. Together they realized the most constant and accurate source of data came from their flight information display system (FIDS).

"Using the airport operations module (AOM), we connected our FIDS data into Genetec Security Center. FIDS tells the Genetec platform when the airplane arrives at the gate. At the baggage carousel, the handler swipes their access control card and inputs the flight number to get the carousel moving. Security Center receives all that data. If more than 30 minutes go by from the time the plane reaches the gate to the badge scan at the carousel, our team receives an alert. We make an announcement over the PA system to let passengers know we're working on it. Meanwhile, our AOC team gets to the source of the problem and dispatches our own baggage crew to help if needed," explained Thoben.

With data in hand, SDF isn't only alleviating baggage claim delays, but they're also sharing this data with airlines. This gives airline tenants deeper insights into their operations so they can adjust staffing if needed.

"Our goal is to reach 95% of flights unloaded within 30 minutes. Then I can tell those airlines that didn't meet 95% which specific flights routinely experience baggage delays," explained Thoben

Modernizing airport badging and clearances with Security Center

Focused on improving operations, SDF has more big plans on the horizon. Currently, the team is working on deploying the Security Center Airport Badging Solution. This helps airports comply with TSA and FAA regulations by facilitating background checks for all employees. It follows standards from clearinghouses like the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and works seamlessly with the Synergis™ access control system in Security Center.

"Our previous identity management system was clunky. So having all these same badging capabilities within the Genetec platform was a dream come true. The Security Center Airport Badging Solution gives us everything we need to automate TSA background checks and quickly assign, issue, or revoke access control credentials, all in one intuitive solution," said Thoben.

Key to this decision was getting access to the Authorized Signatory Portal. This web-based tool allows SDF to give authorized users permission to collect and submit personal information from badge applicants to facilitate the application process.

"The Security Center Airport Badging solution allows us to create easy-to-follow rules and workflows. The system automates many steps and empowers our team to quickly handle all their badging tasks. And there's extra peace of mind because the Genetec solution helps us ensure that only those with proper clearances will get a badge," explained Thoben.

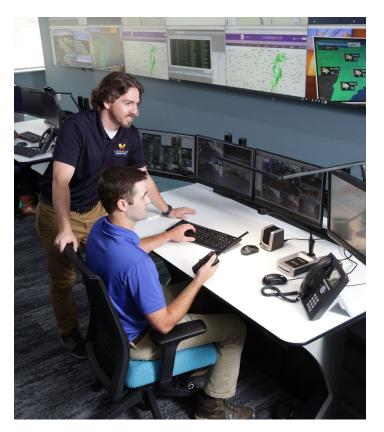## Expanding coverage using Genetec cloud services

Next up, the team is looking to extend security coverage to a historic administration building at their general aviation airport, Bowman

Field (LOU), which are about six to seven miles apart. To minimize the infrastructure footprint and costs, they're considering Security Center SaaS.

With the cloud-based, security-as-a-service platform, they can get the system up and running in minutes and easily connect it back to their on-premises system at SDF. This will enable a centralized view of all sites in one intuitive, hybrid-cloud environment.

In a final statement, Thoben shares some important advice for other airport leaders: "I challenge other airports to think more broadly about what they can do with the systems they already have in place. There's so much data that we're collecting, so how can we use that to get a fuller picture of what's happening across our airports? That's exactly what Genetec Security Center allows us to do at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport. We're just scratching the surface of what's possible, so it's great having such a supportive technology partner on our side," concluded Thoben.

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