

# CASE STUDY

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AVIATION - ATLANTIC AIRWAYS



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# ATLANTIC AIRWAYS

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## Interview – Jens Eystein i Løðu

“Having all our crisis plans always accessible and being able to handle an incident digitally through InCaseIT is a big step forward for us,” says Jens Eystein i Løðu who is Director of Crisis Management for Atlantic Airways in Faroe Islands. The company runs a complex operation which includes jets and helicopters, with destinations domestically as well as internationally.

Pre COVID-19, Atlantic Airways operated flights from the Faroe Islands to Denmark, Norway, Scotland, Iceland, Paris, Barcelona, Gran Canarias and Mallorca. No aircraft has been parked during the pandemic, but the airline has reduced international destinations from 12 to 2 as a result of the worldwide decline in travelling. “We now only fly to Billund and Copenhagen outside of the Faroe Islands using our Airbus A320,” i Løðu explains. Domestically, Atlantic carries its passengers on board one of two helicopters that are used for island hopping, and the helicopters are also accessible for the government in case they are needed for search and rescue operations.

## A Crisis Management Platform

Over the years, Atlantic Airways has moved from paper based emergency response plans to fully digital versions. i Løðu became safety manager for Atlantic Airways in 2009. “In 2016 we decided we needed a more robust and all-inclusive platform, and we therefore started evaluating other solutions,” i Løðu explains. InCaseIT soon emerged as a viable option, and experts from the company in Norway came to the Faroe Island to demonstrate and discuss features and specific needs.

Since 2018, Atlantic Airways has used InCaseIT on a daily basis. It contains a variety of checklists and log functions, and i Løðu and his team also use the platform for developing media communication. “We have draft versions of press releases for various crisis scenarios that can be submitted and finalized through InCaseIT,” i Løðu says. When asked what he finds to be its best feature, i Løðu points to the various options for notifying personnel about an emergency.



“Through InCaseIT we can reach key people by voice, email, push notifications and text messages simultaneously, and we can also confirm – in real time – who has seen the message and who is able to report to work. That is a function that saves us time and that makes it possible for us to concentrate on handling the situation quickly,” i Løðu explains.

Every member of the Crisis Management Team can be directly involved, follow the crisis progress and handle crisis related tasks in the checklist directly on their phone or iPad. “During exercises we have also used the app for uploading pictures from an accident site, making them promptly available at the crisis management center,” i Løðu says. He also appreciates the conference call function which have proved ideal for short briefings during a crisis. “The fact that the platform has had few technical issues and that support is professional and speedy is also important for us,” i Løðu adds.

In addition to having access to a physical meeting room at the company’s headquarters at the airport, Atlantic Airways will handle potential crisis digitally through InCaseIT.

i Løðu and his staff have therefore set up various teams in InCaseIT that include the following functions:

- Media handling
- Business continuity
- Special assistance
- Operational issues

“We have found that keeping track of what we do and which actions we take is vital, and we have therefore nominated a log keeper who is responsible for tracking activities in InCaseIT,” i Løðu describes. He points out that it is imperative to have enough staff, and his advice to other crisis managers is to make sure there are ample deputies to handle key tasks – also when those normally in charge are unavailable.



## Scenarios

Another important aspect of crisis management in the airline industry is to take care of victims, and Atlantic Airways has therefore trained a group of employees called “Special Assist Team” that in case of emergency are prepared for several tasks, including Call-Center, Family Care Center and Go-Teams to assist both crew, passengers and relatives.

To be better prepared for the human side of a disaster, i Løðu studied psychotherapy for several years, and in 2012 he completed his education in psychology. “In addition to understanding my own and team members’ behavior and possible stress during the crisis operation, the psychological knowledge does for sure make me feel better prepared for talking to those directly involved in an accident,” i Løðu says.

In addition to the obvious challenges related to an airline crash resulting in casualties or people hurt or missing, i Løðu mentions the loss of an aircraft as a difficult scenario Atlantic Airways has planned for. He believes a worst case incident would be a crash near or at an airport, because such a crisis would involve a large number of stakeholders. “We cooperate well with the Vagar airport in the Faroe Islands,” i Løðu explains. The airline and the airport participate in exercises together, and representatives from each sometimes travel to other airports to take part in their exercises. Audits abroad also focuses on finding the right handling agents that will play a role in a possible crisis.

“For each scenario I find it especially valuable to know people who will be involved in the management and recovery phase, including airport personnel in other countries. In a crisis situation we need to work quickly, and knowing whom to call and having access to a few ‘back doors’ to reach them is vital,” i Løðu says.



He points out that InCaseIT provides updated documentation and contact lists to everyone handling the crisis, and that an essential job for a crisis manager is to make sure all lists are 100 per cent relevant and up-to-date. "In my opinion, successful crisis management is based on preparedness," i Løðu concludes.

He offers the following concrete advice to others expected to handle a crisis:

- Keep checklists, records of contacts and organization charts always updated
- Find two deputies for each major position in your crisis organization
- Attend as many exercises as you can, and use findings to improve your own procedures
- Combine InCaseIT with other digital tools such as Google Map and Google Earth that can provide vital information and satellite images of an area of interest

Facts about Atlantic Airlines:

- National airline ("flag carrier") of the Faroe Island
- 100% owned by the government
- Established 1987
- Operates one of the newest fleets in Europe with four Airbus aircraft and two Leonardo AW139 helicopters
- CEO: Johanna Bergi



## Contact me!

Hi! My name is Harald Axelsen. Please reach out if you have any questions and interested in knowing more about how InCaseIT works, how we can help you or how we can work together!

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