

CASE STUDY: HI-LITE AIRFIELD SERVICES

MANY HAPPY RETURNS & SMOOTH LANDINGS

How Hi-Lite Airfield Services & crews help to deliver safe landings for their customers

When you think of cleaning, airport runways aren't the first thing that come to mind. But every time the four main landing gear tires on a 45-ton Boeing 737 contact the runway, they leave a poof of burning rubber as the tires speed up from zero to 1000 RPM in a split second. That poof of rubber settles onto the runway and hardens into a slick coating – and if too much builds up, incoming aircraft can't get enough traction to slow down.

Fortunately, in the dark hours of the early morning when passengers are asleep and planes are parked, highly-trained crews from Hi-Lite Airfield Services arrive with big, specialized equipment. Using a combination of chemicals and high-pressure water blasting, Hi-Lite crews clean the rubber from the runways. From the busiest airport in the world at Atlanta Hartsfield to small regional and private airports, Hi-Lite's experienced crews keep airports in compliance with the Federal Aviation Administration standards that keep planes and passengers safe across the U.S.

Hi-Lite started in upstate New York in 1990 as a roadway markings painting company: double yellow lines, solid single white lines, dashed yellow and dashed white lines, and so on. The company noticed an opportunity in painting airport runways – at the time, no contractor specialized in airfield markings. So in 1995 Hi-Lite took on its first airfield project at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield in northern New York, adapting its road painting equipment from 3-inch road markings to 3-foot airport runway lines and lettering. Business quickly expanded outside New York, and in 1998 Hi-Lite added waterblasting to the fleet so it could offer rubber removal services to airfields. Now Hi-Lite is the industry leader for runway and taxiway markings, runway rubber removal, surface prep and pavement maintenance.

In the early days, Hi-Lite crews drove equipment in caravans thousands of miles from New York to Texas,



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Julie Hall, Operations Administrator
Hi-Lite Airfield Services

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Florida, and across the United States. Crews can be deployed to projects for weeks at a time, so as the company grew in geographic reach, management realized that flying was a safer and faster way to move valued crew members.

Today, Hi-Lite's Julie Hall makes sure crews get to work safely and on time. Julie's a people person and an organizer: she loved spending time with her children as a stay at home mom, then worked as a teacher's assistant in a school before joining Hi-Lite. In her five years with the company Julie has helped out all over the place: doing office filing, as a receptionist and personal assistant and contracting, she now is in charge of purchasing and logistics –she laughs: "I've even gone on the road with the crew to experience the boots on the ground part of the job."

Maybe it was joining crews on the road that made Julie so committed to making sure travel is smooth for Hi-Lite's hard-working crews. "We're a small enough company that we care about our employees, if we didn't have those crews out there traveling, we wouldn't have a job because they do the dirty work –literally." The work is tough: "A lot

of the guys work late nights, because the airports are quieter at night, but it varies from project to project... we may work 16 hours, or we may work four hours." She says: "I like working with my crews, I fight for them sometimes, we all do, because we know what they're going through. Traveling is hard, especially when you're out for four weeks at a time."

It takes a lot to get crews where they need to be, handle changes during emergencies, and plan travel to welcome and train new crew members. "It definitely can be time consuming." Travel is an investment and flexibility is valuable: "We don't fly our crew in basic economy, it's not worth the hassle" Julie says. "Our crew members fly in from many different areas, they usually don't live near our job sites, so air travel is more efficient to get them to work."

For Julie, AmTrav makes this easy: "With AmTrav, I know where my travelers are right now with the click of a button, it's very easy to use –we used Concur before, it was just harder to do pretty much everything." Julie also appreciates the flexibility to quickly change an itinerary after she's started shopping and booking, rather than having to start

What Hi-lite Needed

Quickly move crews around the country and the world so they can do their work to keep airline passengers safe

Allow coordinators to easily book travel for crews with access to all flight, hotel and car rental options

Prompt, expert help changing crew itineraries

Real-time itinerary and traveler location data

Results with AmTrav

When Hi-Lite switched to AmTrav, they found that:

Coordinators could easily shop and book for different crew members, changing a search or even switching traveler mid-booking without starting over

Changing crews' itineraries is easy, AmTrav's all-U.S. based Travel Advisor team is ready to help whenever Hi-Lite calls.

Coordinators see where Hi-Lite travelers are right now in the AmTrav Traveler Tracker, with straight-from-the-source data in AmTrav's one connected platform.

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the search over from the start: “The ease of change with AmTrav is really nice, and the booking tool is very easy to use on my smartphone if I need to do something outside the office.”

While Julie is looking after her crews, AmTrav Relationship Manager Laura and the AmTrav Travel Advisor team look after Julie: “Working with Laura is great, I have had no issues when I call and seek help because everyone’s very helpful.” The Travel Advisor team is ready to help: “I’ve never been rushed on the phone, and I’m really not on hold ever. Now I come to think of it, I don’t think I’ve ever been on hold with you guys. I don’t feel frustrated when I hang up the phone with you. I can’t say the same about the other company before—it was frustrating.”

One thing AmTrav could do better? “I’d like to see a flat fee per booking instead of being charged when I need to call, but that does not stop me from calling your

guys—a flat fee would just be more appealing.” AmTrav is exploring different pricing models, feedback like this from Julie helps us figure out how to best deliver value to our customers.

Business is personal for Julie: “I’m definitely a people person, I loved being a stay at home mom then and I have a lot of connection with my crews now.” Today, taking care of her crews and saving time on managing travel means she has more time for herself and her family, whether boating on the lake, spending time with her children, working on her house or traveling herself.

At Hi-Lite, looking after crews means crews can do a great job for customers: “We put our customers first. I guess everyone says that, but we really do.” So much so that while “most of our projects come from bids, many also come from word of mouth –our team represents our company so well on the road and on the job.”

For more information, contact: Ted Perlstein, SVP.

tedp@amtrav.com

(800) 795-8371



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