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A career written in machines, models and the skies

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THE CIO TABLE

FROM THE EDITORS

EDITOR'S NOTE

Leaders Taking Aviation Further

Every edition of The CIO Table begins with one conversation. This time it is with Tarek Muhiddin, AMAC Aerospace.

He started on the shop floor at AMAC Aerospace. Tarek Muhiddin on rising to its executive team, and on teaching complex engineering one simple step at a time.

Our cover story follows Tarek through the choices that shaped the work, from the early years to the decisions being made now, and asks what other leaders can take from them.

Also in this edition: When new aircraft are late, maintenance data becomes capacity. Record delivery backlogs and crowded engine shops are keeping older aircraft flying for longer. Operators that run maintenance as a data discipline will keep more of their fleet in the air.

Then: Why Europe's CISOs are rewriting their vendor contracts. DORA and NIS2 have moved supplier risk out of the procurement appendix and into the board pack. What has changed in the contracts, and the three clauses worth asking about this quarter.

And: Mary Barra and the long road to an electric GM. A safety crisis in her first weeks, then a decade-long attempt to move a century-old carmaker to electric and software-defined vehicles. Why separating direction from pace keeps a transformation alive.

As always, we would like to hear what you would have done differently. The conversation continues at theciotable.com. ■

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COVER STORY

TAREK MUHIDDIN

A career written in machines, models and the skies

Aviation has always represented more than just the act of flight. It is a field where science and imagination converge, where precision engineering meets bold innovation, and where every detail contributes to the extraordinary achievement of conquering the skies. The industry thrives on curiosity, discipline, and the relentless pursuit of excellence, demanding minds that can both honor tradition and embrace transformation.

Amid this challenging and inspiring discipline, Tarek Muhiddin has carved a remarkable path. Inspired from childhood and shaped by years of technical expertise, he has evolved into a leader whose vision bridges engineering brilliance with operational mastery.

THE MAKING OF AN AEROSPACE LEADER

Tarek Muhiddin's journey into aeronautical engineering was inspired by his early childhood, largely influenced by his father, who worked in the aviation industry. Surrounded by aircraft and captivated by engineering challenges, Tarek developed a deep curiosity for aviation and machinery. His father's passion sparked his own, and from a young age, he enjoyed dismantling gadgets, building aircraft models out of straws and paper, and exploring how machines worked.

He was fascinated by the balance of science, mathematics, and creativity that aeronautical engineering demanded, as well as the constant evolution of aviation technology. This dynamic field motivated him to pursue the discipline both academically and professionally.

As his career advanced, Tarek's technical interests grew into a broader vision. He began to appreciate the impact of leadership and management in driving innovation and operational excellence within aerospace. This led him toward executive roles, where he could merge his technical expertise, operational experience, and leadership skills to contribute meaningfully to AMAC Aerospace.

For Tarek, his journey is a natural extension of his childhood passion, strengthened by years of experience and the drive to lead and inspire teams in advancing aerospace technology and service.

THROUGH TURBULENCE AND TRIUMPH

Tarek began his career at AMAC on the shop floor, an experience that gave him invaluable insight into the company's operations without the immediate pressures of management. This foundation allowed him to focus on AMAC's mission while building strong relationships with colleagues, many of whom continue to work alongside him today.

A turning point in his career came when he supported the construction of AMAC's hangar in Bodrum. The project required him to apply his technical expertise while adapting to a new culture and creating systems for a fully independent facility. This shaped his leadership style into one that is practical, informed, and deeply connected to operational realities.

The challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic further defined his approach, teaching him resilience and adaptability in the face of industry-wide disruption. Leading through uncertainty reinforced his commitment to clear communication and steady decision-making. Shortly after, the Russia-Ukraine conflict added another layer of complexity as AMAC was forced to halt work with sanctioned customers and vendors. These experiences solidified Tarek's ability to lead with principle during times of crisis.

RESTRUCTURING FOR RESILIENCE IN ISTANBUL

When tasked with restructuring AMAC's Istanbul operations, Tarek applied straightforward yet effective management strategies, including lean management principles. His approach centered on educating the team, breaking down complex concepts into simple, actionable steps, and encouraging everyone to contribute to process improvements within their roles.

By streamlining workflows, eliminating redundancies, and improving cross-team communication, operational efficiency increased significantly. These measures reduced costs, optimized resources, and enhanced service delivery. The restructuring ultimately led to smoother operations, faster turnaround times, and a stronger market position for AMAC Aerospace.

Through this transformation, Tarek demonstrated that clear communication, practical solutions, and a focus on fundamentals can yield powerful outcomes in even the most challenging environments.

CRAFTING A HANGAR AGAINST ALL ODDS

When reflecting on the key challenges of overseeing the construction of the hangar in Bodrum, Turkey, Tarek highlighted the dual responsibility of maintaining tight budget control and high-quality standards while simultaneously establishing operations. Creating a fully functioning hangar from scratch meant managing many moving parts at once, from staffing and training to implementing workflows and compliance systems, all while construction was still ongoing.

Adding to this complexity was the experience of working across different cultures. Differences in work ethics, communication styles, and expectations required deliberate efforts to build a cohesive team. Establishing effective processes demanded patience, cultural sensitivity, and clear communication. Aligning diverse teams around shared operational goals was not without its difficulties, but it ultimately tested and strengthened leadership, fostering a more resilient and adaptive approach.

BALANCING RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS BORDERS

When asked how he manages his responsibilities across both Basel and Turkey, Tarek emphasized the importance of having a proactive and trustworthy team. He relies on daily, consistent communication through calls, messages, and video conferences to remain aligned on priorities and address issues in real time.

Tarek makes it a point to stay directly involved in all high-priority matters, providing timely guidance and decisions. At the same time, he encourages an open-door approach, ensuring that his team feels comfortable reaching out for support whenever needed. This culture of accessibility and trust creates a strong connection and responsiveness across locations, bridging the physical distance between Basel and Turkey.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS WITH CRAFTSMANSHIP AND COMMITMENT

On what makes AMAC Aerospace's VIP Completions and Maintenance services stand out in today's aviation market, Tarek pointed to the company's commitment to delivering the highest

level of quality without compromise. The team is defined by dedication, loyalty, and hard work, consistently going the extra mile to exceed client expectations.

Always being available and responsive has been another hallmark of AMAC's approach, ensuring that even the most demanding schedules and unique requirements can be met. This unwavering commitment, combined with exceptional craftsmanship, is what differentiates AMAC and builds long-term trust with clients.

SHAPING TOMORROW'S SKIES THROUGH CUSTOMER VISION

Discussing how AMAC Aerospace adapts to the evolving needs of corporate and private aviation clients, Tarek explained that the company focuses on strategic investments in complementary departments that directly support customer requirements. This ensures a seamless and integrated service experience.

By continuously innovating and tailoring solutions, AMAC remains agile in responding to market changes. Whether it is delivering faster turnaround times, offering personalized completions, or enhancing maintenance programs, the company maintains a sharp focus on listening to clients and anticipating their needs. This customer-centric approach, reinforced by deep industry expertise, keeps AMAC ahead of the curve while staying true to its commitment to excellence.

INNOVATION AS A CORNERSTONE OF TRUST

On the role of innovation in maintaining AMAC's reputation among clients, OEMs, and aviation authorities, Tarek highlighted its central importance. Innovation drives the company to continuously refine processes, adopt the latest technologies, and elevate both quality and safety.

Listening carefully to customer requests plays a decisive role in shaping the direction of innovation at AMAC. Whether it means integrating cutting-edge technology or creating seamless, minimalist design concepts, the focus remains on aligning with the client's vision. This ability to tailor innovation to customer needs ensures that AMAC not only meets but often exceeds regulatory standards and expectations. By doing so, the company builds trust and strengthens long-term partnerships, securing its position as a forward-thinking leader in the aviation sector.

THE BLUEPRINT OF OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Tarek believes that ensuring operational excellence across AMAC's facilities in Switzerland and Turkey is rooted in a clear and consistent strategy. His approach centers on transparent communication, standardized processes, and strong leadership that keeps both locations aligned. To achieve this, AMAC implements unified quality management systems that ensure both sites uphold the same high standards and best practices. Regular collaboration and knowledge-sharing initiatives across locations are vital to maintaining cohesion and continuous improvement. Education, in his view, is equally important, starting from the top and extending to every individual involved in each project. He emphasizes that having the right education and experience for every role is critical to overall success. Alongside these systems, Tarek places trust in proactive teams at each site, empowering them to make decisions and remain accountable. It is this deliberate combination of consistency, collaboration, education, and empowerment that enables AMAC to deliver operational excellence, no matter the geography.

BUILDING UNITY ACROSS BORDERS

With more than 1,000 employees working across different regions, Tarek has shaped a culture of collaboration and unity by emphasizing structure and responsibility. He explains that each department has a clear focus on its specific tasks, ensuring operational efficiency and seamless

At a glance

NAME	ROLE	ORGANISATION
Tarek Muhiddin	Leader	AMAC Aerospace



Photo: David Syphers / Unsplash

alignment toward the company's larger objectives. In his leadership philosophy, a strict hierarchy is not about rigidity but about creating accountability, maintaining clarity in communication, and ensuring that decision-making flows effectively. This structured approach, he notes, helps reduce confusion and ensures that everyone understands their role in contributing to the organization's goals. By combining the precise efforts of individual departments with strong leadership oversight, AMAC maintains a harmonious operational rhythm and a unified culture that connects employees across all regions.

WISDOM FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

When asked what advice he would give to young professionals aspiring to leadership roles in the aviation industry, Tarek emphasizes the importance of beginning with a solid understanding of the core operations. He highlights the value of building knowledge from the ground up, ensuring that aspiring leaders appreciate every detail of how the business functions. In his view, relevant education is equally vital, as it equips professionals with the technical expertise required to solve problems with clarity and confidence. Tarek notes that this foundation in education and knowledge also enhances the ability to communicate transparently and honestly with both teams and stakeholders. He advises young professionals to be patient, remain eager to learn every aspect of the industry, and develop strong communication skills that foster genuine relationships across all levels of the organization. He encourages them to embrace challenges as opportunities, take responsibility without hesitation, and remain curious and adaptable in a field that is constantly evolving. For Tarek, it is this combination of technical knowledge, openness, and resilience that distinguishes the leaders of tomorrow.

A VISION ROOTED IN EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY

Looking ahead, Tarek envisions AMAC Aerospace continuing to strengthen its position as a global leader in VIP completions and maintenance through carefully planned expansion and innovation. His strategy involves leveraging operational excellence alongside new capabilities to deliver unmatched quality and service, always underpinned by honesty and transparency. He believes AMAC's deep expertise across every aspect of the business will allow the company to sustain a polished and professional reputation, meeting the high expectations of its global clientele. For him, sustainable growth will come through a strong focus on people and culture, ensuring that the company's competitive

edge is not only preserved but enhanced. Ultimately, he sees AMAC as "the" company of choice in the aviation industry, a trusted partner for both newcomers and established players, recognized not only for its technical brilliance but also for its integrity and relentless commitment to surpassing expectations.

AMAC AEROSPACE AT A GLANCE

AMAC Aerospace was founded in 2007 to serve corporate and VIP demand for the maintenance, completion and refurbishment of private and business aircraft. The group is led by Kadri Muhiddin, its group executive chairman and chief executive.

According to the company, it now operates eight hangars able to take mid-size, narrow-body and wide-body jets, with more than 100,000 m^2 of space for maintenance, modification and completion work. It employs more than 1,350 people.

Basel is the centre for maintenance, completions, engineering and continuing airworthiness management. Around it sit AMAC Corporate Jet in Zurich, maintenance sites in Istanbul and Bodrum, the completion specialist JCB Aero in Auch, near Toulouse, acquired in May 2016, the UK materials and digital records business GAMIT, and offices in Beirut and Riyadh, where AMAC Aerospace Ltd was registered in 2023.

Each site has its own focus. AMAC Aerospace Istanbul, at Atatürk International Airport, maintains Pilatus and Dassault aircraft. AMAC Corporate Jet manages around 15 aircraft, and JCB Aero holds design and production organisation approvals.

BODRUM, FROM FIRST HANGAR TO EXPANSION

The Bodrum hangar mentioned in this story was inaugurated on 2 July 2018 at Milas-Bodrum Airport in front of more than 100 guests, including Turkish government and airport officials. AMAC put its floor area at 4,626 m^2. Daily Sabah reported a cost of $15 million and capacity for one wide-body aircraft, such as a Boeing 777-200 or an Airbus A330 or A340, or two narrow-bodies.

The site runs a mixed model. In winter it carries out line and base maintenance for commercial airlines, and in summer it switches to VIP and business aircraft, including jets belonging to owners on holiday on the Turkish coast. AMAC says it is the only maintenance, repair and overhaul provider at the airport.

In September 2024 AMAC won up to 32,000 m^2 of additional land at the airport through a tender with Turkey's General Directorate of State Airports. The plan covers wide-body hangars, workshops, aprons and support buildings, and at the time the company expected construction to take about two years, with full operations from 2026.

A NEW ROLE IN BASEL AND A GROWING MARKET

In June 2024 AMAC announced that Tarek had been appointed chief operating officer of AMAC Aerospace in Basel at the start of that year. The company said he had around 20 years of experience and had held a range of positions within the business, and that he holds an undergraduate degree in Chartered Aeronautical Engineering from Kingston University, London.

AMAC has also strengthened its ties with the Gulf. In November 2023 it agreed to work with Mukamalah Aviation on maintenance for owners and operators of VIP wide-body, narrow-body and other fixed-wing aircraft in Saudi Arabia and the wider Gulf region.

Demand for new business aircraft is rising. The General Aviation Manufacturers Association reported 854 business jet deliveries in 2025, up 11.8% from 764 in 2024, with total aeroplane billings of $31.0 billion. Each delivery adds to the fleet that will later need maintenance and refurbishment. ■

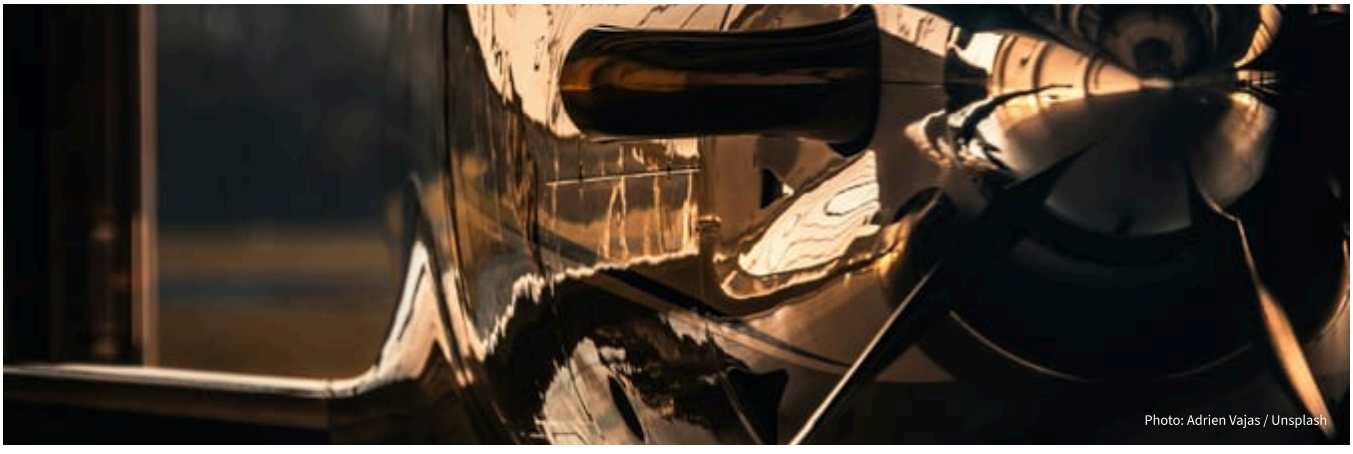
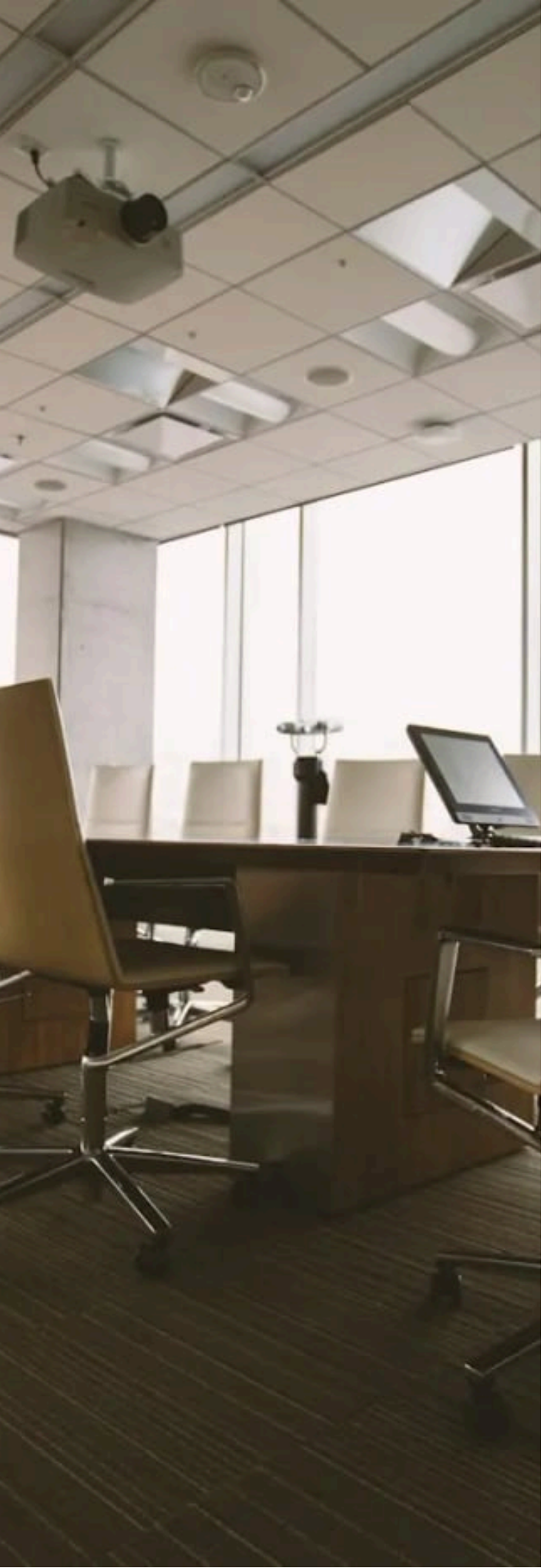


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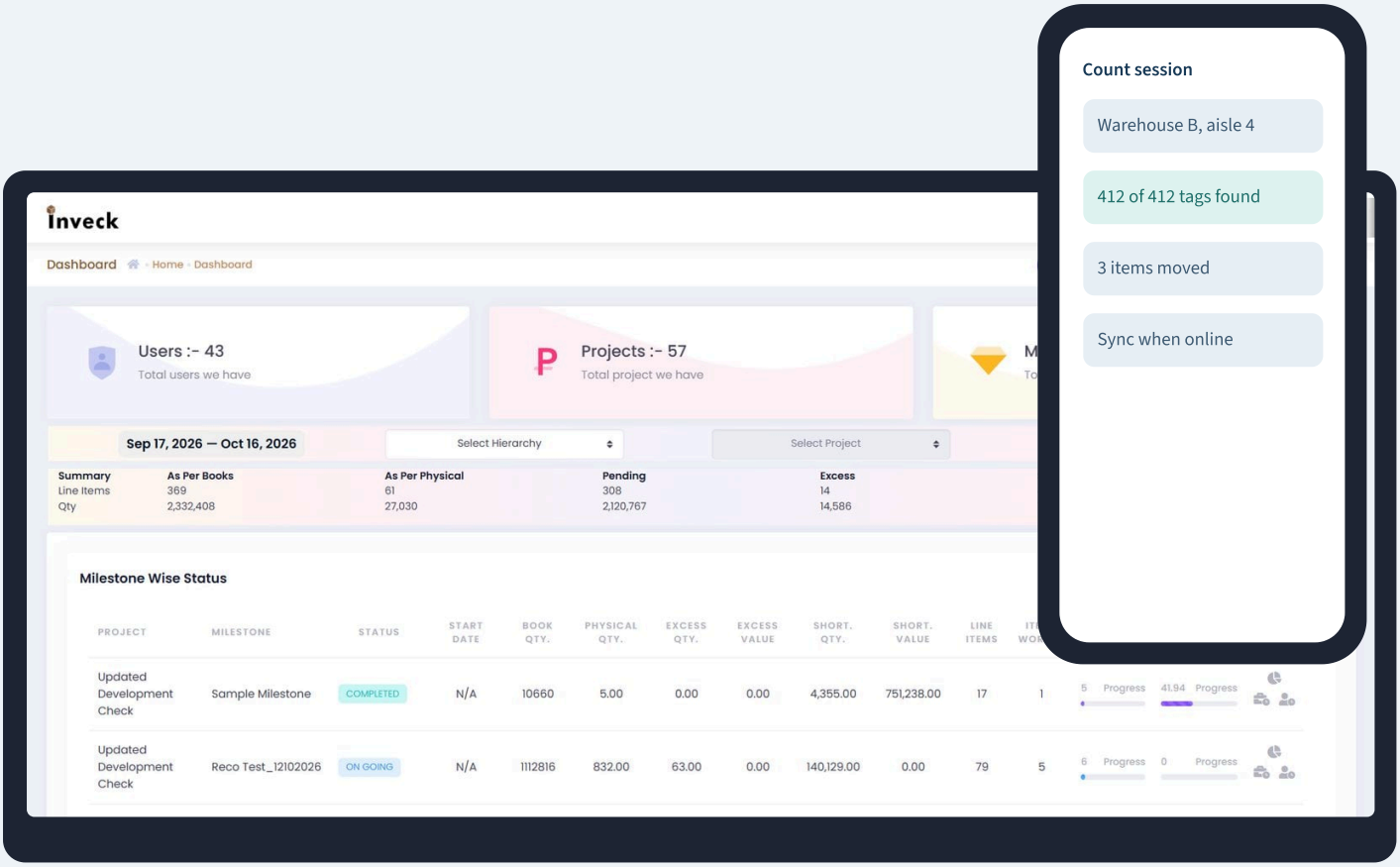
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ANALYSIS

When new aircraft are late, maintenance data becomes capacity

Record delivery backlogs and crowded engine shops are keeping older aircraft flying for longer. Operators that run maintenance as a data discipline will keep more of their fleet in the air.

For years, fleet planning rested on a simple assumption: new aircraft would arrive roughly when promised and older ones would retire on schedule. That assumption no longer holds. IATA reports that the aircraft order backlog reached 18,100 in May 2026, up from 17,000 in 2024 and equivalent to more than half of the active fleet.

The result is an older fleet doing more of the work. IATA puts the average age of the global fleet at a record 15.2 years, and says airlines are short of more than 5,000 fuel-efficient replacement aircraft they had counted on.

THE BILL FOR AN AGEING FLEET

A study by IATA and Oliver Wyman estimated that the slow pace of aircraft production would cost airlines more than $11 billion in 2025. Most of that is operational. Excess fuel from flying older aircraft accounted for about $4.2 billion, additional maintenance for $3.1 billion, extra engine leasing for $2.6 billion and surplus spare-parts inventory for $1.4 billion.

Engines are the tightest point in the system. Because engines are spending longer on the ground in maintenance, airlines are leasing more of them. A separate IATA study found that grounded aircraft powered by Pratt & Whitney GTF engines peaked at 648 in March 2025, 28% of that fleet.

Demand on engine shops will keep rising. The same study forecasts annual shop visits for LEAP engines climbing from around 600 to 800 in 2025 to more than 5,000 by 2040, and for GTF engines from about 1,000 to more than 2,000. Manufacturers are investing in extra capacity, but IATA's view is that capacity alone will not be enough.

MAINTENANCE AS A DATA DISCIPLINE

The industry's own prescription points towards better use of information. In its supply chain study, IATA recommended predictive maintenance, pooled spare parts and shared maintenance data platforms to cut inventory and downtime, along with visibility of risks across every tier of suppliers.

It has since named data, digitalisation and AI as one of four priorities for strengthening the supply chain, alongside supply chain visibility, a more open aftermarket and building human capacity. It is also making the core features of its MRO SmartHub platform available to airlines at no cost through a data participation programme.

For an airline, an MRO provider or a business aviation operator, the practical meaning is narrower than the phrase digital transformation suggests. It means knowing, component by component, how much life remains, where the next removal is likely to come from and which spares are worth holding.

An operator that sees a removal coming well in advance can book a shop slot, arrange a lease engine or move a serviceable part from elsewhere in the fleet. One that finds out at the gate pays whatever the market is charging that week, and loses the aircraft while it waits.

Good records also widen commercial options. IATA has pressed for fair access for independent MRO providers, quicker approval of repairs and alternative parts, and greater use of serviceable material recovered from engine teardowns. Each of those depends on paperwork good enough to prove a part's history. Clean, structured maintenance data is what makes a part tradeable.

Some of that opening is already under way. IATA's agreement with the engine maker CFM, first signed in 2018 and renewed in January 2026, includes a model for customer choice and fair access for third-party MRO providers. Operators with complete digital records will be best placed to use it.

Software alone will not close the gap. IATA lists building human capacity among its four priorities, and predictive tools only pay off when planners, engineers and technicians trust the output enough to act on it. That means investing in data skills inside maintenance organisations, and in the routines that

BY THE NUMBERS

18,100

Aircraft on order in May 2026, over half the active fleet

IATA, 2026

15.2 years

Record average age of the global airline fleet

IATA, 2026

$11bn

Minimum cost to airlines of supply chain failures in 2025

IATA and Oliver Wyman, 2025

turn an alert into a booked shop slot.

FUEL IS THE OTHER CLOCK

Older aircraft also lock in higher fuel burn at a time when the cleaner alternative is scarce. IATA estimates that sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) output reached 1.9 million tonnes in 2025, only 0.6% of total jet fuel consumption. SAF prices exceed those of fossil jet fuel by a factor of two, and by up to five in markets with mandates.

IATA expects the industry's fuel bill to rise by nearly 40% in 2026, from $252 billion to $350 billion, and the additional cost of airline SAF purchases to reach $4.3 billion. That makes efficiency in the existing fleet more valuable, not less. Maintenance that keeps engines performing close to specification reduces fuel burn on every flight, and lower consumption reduces the volume of SAF needed to meet a blending target.

The supply chain will recover in time. Until it does, the operators that come out ahead will be those that treat maintenance records as an operating asset, invest in the people and systems to use them, and plan capacity around what the data shows rather than what the delivery schedule promised.

Sources: iata.org. ■

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ANALYSIS

Why Europe's CISOs are rewriting their vendor contracts

DORA and NIS2 have moved supplier risk out of the procurement appendix and into the board pack. What has changed in the contracts, and the three clauses worth asking about this quarter.

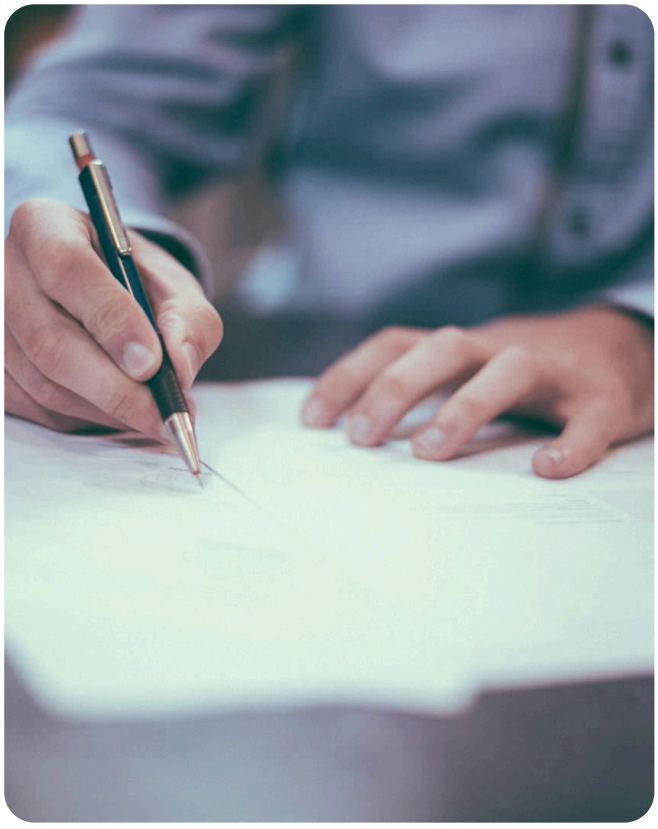
BY THE CIO TABLE EDITORS

For most of the past decade, supplier risk at a European bank or insurer lived in an appendix to the procurement file. A security questionnaire was sent, returned and filed, and the contract was negotiated by people who rarely spoke to the chief information security officer. Two pieces of EU law have changed that, and contracts signed under the old habits are being reopened.

WHAT CHANGED

The Digital Operational Resilience Act, Regulation (EU) 2022/2554, has applied to EU financial entities since 17 January 2025. It requires each of them to keep a register of information covering all of its contractual arrangements with ICT third-party service providers, and it specifies what those contracts must contain. The list includes a clear description of the services, the locations where data will be processed, arrangements for access to and return of data, assistance when an ICT incident occurs, cooperation with competent authorities and termination rights. Where a provider supports a critical or important function, more is required, including precise service levels, exit strategies, and rights of access and audit.

The NIS2 Directive, Directive (EU) 2022/2555, reaches further across the economy. Member states had until 17 October 2024 to transpose it into national law, and several were late. It requires



covered entities to manage supply-chain security, including the security aspects of their relationships with direct suppliers.

WHY IT REACHES THE BOARD

Both texts place responsibility with the management body rather than the security function. Under DORA the management body approves and periodically

reviews the policy on the use of ICT services from third-party providers; under NIS2 it approves the cybersecurity risk-management measures and oversees how they are implemented. A board that approves the policy is, in effect, vouching for the contracts that are supposed to put it into practice.

The register also makes gaps visible. Once every arrangement is listed in one place, a supervisor can ask why a provider supporting a critical function has no workable exit strategy, and the answer has to come from someone more senior than the procurement lead.

THREE CLAUSES TO ASK ABOUT

The first is the exit plan, and whether anyone has tried it. A typical exit clause runs to a paragraph: data will be returned in a standard format within a stated period. Because such clauses are seldom exercised, their weaknesses surface only when needed: an export that only the provider's own software can open, a transition period too short to move the workload, or a dependence on the provider's staff that the contract never mentions. DORA requires exit strategies for providers that support critical or important functions, and a strategy that has never been rehearsed is an assumption. The time to test it is before an insolvency, a dispute or a supervisor forces the question.

The second is incident notification. A financial entity under DORA must report major ICT-related incidents to its supervisor within deadlines measured in hours, and NIS2 requires an early warning within 24 hours of becoming aware of a significant incident. A supplier contract that allows three working days to report a breach on the supplier's side makes the customer's own deadline impossible to meet. The notification window, and the provider's duty to cooperate with the investigation and with the authorities, should be written to fit inside the regulated entity's own.

The third is audit and access rights, and how far down the chain they reach. Large cloud and software providers often deliver part of a service through their own suppliers. An audit right that stops at the first contract leaves the part most likely to fail out of view. Ask whether the provider's subcontracts carry equivalent rights of access, and whether the customer will be told before a material subcontractor changes.

WHAT TO ASK NEXT

Directors do not need to read every contract. They need three answers from management: which providers in the register support critical or important functions, which of those contracts have been revised since the rules took effect, and when an exit from any of them was last rehearsed. If the answer to the third is never, that belongs on the next agenda.

One refinement is worth adopting: let the board's risk committee, not the security team, choose which service is rehearsed each year. A team that picks its own test will, quite reasonably, pick the one it expects to pass, and the services most in need of a rehearsal are the ones nobody volunteers. ■

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LEADERS IN FOCUS

Mary Barra and the long road to an electric GM

A safety crisis in her first weeks, then a decade-long attempt to move a century-old carmaker to electric and software-defined vehicles. Why separating direction from pace keeps a transformation alive.

Photograph: official portrait, US government, Wikimedia Commons, public domain

Mary Barra joined General Motors at 18 as a co-op student at a Pontiac plant. In January 2014 she became its chief executive, the first woman to lead a major global carmaker. Her tenure has been defined by two very different tests: a safety crisis in her first months, and a decade-long attempt to move a century-old manufacturer towards electric and software-defined vehicles.

A CRISIS ON DAY ONE

Weeks after Barra took over, GM recalled millions of cars over a faulty ignition switch linked to deaths. She testified before the US Congress, commissioned an internal investigation and accepted its findings publicly. The episode set a tone: the company would name its own failures rather than wait for others to do it.

SHRINKING TO FOCUS

Barra then made a string of decisions that made GM smaller and more focused. It sold its European Opel and Vauxhall brands in 2017 and pulled out of several markets where it could not earn a return. In 2021 it set a goal of eliminating tailpipe emissions from its new light-duty vehicles by 2035 and invested heavily in its own battery and electric-vehicle platform.

Not every bet paid off on schedule. Electric-vehicle demand grew more slowly than many forecasts, and GM ended funding for its Cruise robotaxi business in 2024 after a serious incident and regulatory scrutiny. Barra's approach has been to adjust the pace without abandoning the direction.

WHAT OTHER LEADERS CAN TAKE FROM IT

- Own the failure early. Credibility spent on candour in a crisis is earned back many times over.
- Getting smaller can be a strategy. Leaving markets freed money and attention for the bets that mattered.
- Separate direction from pace. A long transformation survives bad quarters when leaders change the timetable rather than the destination.

For technology leaders running multi-year modernisation programmes, the GM story is a reminder that the plan will meet reality; what the board needs to hear is which parts are fixed and which can bend. ■

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