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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

Cathay Pacific Integrated Operations Centre

IMPLEMENTED NOT REPORTED; IN USE BY SEPTEMBER 2025 · TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS · HONG KONG · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY

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Cathay Pacific rebuilt how its Integrated Operations Centre plans for and recovers from disruption, with decision tools that BCG says were developed by its partnership with KLM. Cathay says its AI-supported tools cut decision time during Super Typhoon Ragasa in 2025, with people still accountable for decisions.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI and automation used: Machine learning delay prediction and decision optimisation tools supporting airline operations controllers.

Implemented: Not reported; in use by September 2025. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: Disruption-recovery tools cut decision time in a 2025 typhoon, by Cathay's account; no figure published

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Cathay Pacific. Hong Kong-based international airline and part of the Cathay Group, which also includes Cathay Cargo and HK Express, per Cathay's CEO as reported by Aerospace Global News. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 5. People and skills.

Business challenge

The challenge. Typhoons and other disruption leave aircraft and crews in the wrong places, and the airline's Integrated Operations Centre tracks every typhoon, per Cathay. BCG says the work was meant to change how the airline manages disruption on a daily basis.

Who implemented it

BCG (Consultancy): Worked with Cathay on the Integrated Operations Centre and, with KLM, developed Pathfinder and Sentry, per BCG..
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (Software vendor): Partner with BCG in developing the AI solutions, per BCG; Cathay's own account does not name KLM..
Cathay's interview describes the operations centre tools without naming BCG or KLM.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T8 Predictive / ML models. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: BCG, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Pathfinder, Sentry, Operations Decision Model.

Where it was built in: In Cathay's Integrated Operations Centre, combining previously siloed operational data into a single source used for tail allocation and same-day disruption decisions.

What changed

Before: previously siloed operational data, by BCG's description. After: a single source of data and tools that weigh options, with people accountable for the decision, by Cathay's account. Measured results: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported

What it saved

Not reported as a figure. BCG says the tools save millions of dollars in disruption costs and improve punctuality and customer satisfaction. Cathay says a disruption-recovery optimiser reduced decision time significantly in Super Typhoon Ragasa. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

A Cathay executive said humans remain accountable for decisions and that governance and guardrails matter. Accountable owner by name, monitoring and testing: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
A Cathay regional general manager said the tools support decisions with humans still accountable for them; a named owner is not reported. [2]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
The same executive said moving quickly does not mean moving without guardrails, and that robust governance and security controls create confidence. [2]

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
Cathay says AI supports decisions and people remain accountable, particularly when circumstances are unusual. [2]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Not reported
Not reported.

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
Not reported. BCG names itself and KLM as developers; contract and assurance terms are not reported. [1]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
Not reported. The interview discusses agentic AI as a future possibility and not as part of this deployment.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Faster decisions in Super Typhoon Ragasa, by Cathay's account.

– Cathay reported that more than 107,000 passengers were reprotected in just under 20 hours, though its page does not attribute this to the optimiser.

– Savings and better punctuality, by BCG's account.

DID NOT

– Not reported

UNPROVEN

– How much faster decisions became and what the tools saved in money.

– Whether the optimiser Cathay describes is the same system as BCG's Pathfinder and Sentry, which Cathay's interview does not say.

– Effect on punctuality and customer satisfaction, which BCG states without figures.

Timeline

Feb 2024 Cathay says it is exploring how AI can predict flight delays and mitigate disruption [5]

Sept 2025 Super Typhoon Ragasa; Cathay's CEO says AI is used to plan scenarios for cancelling and recovering flights [3]

Oct 2026 Cathay executive says a disruption-recovery optimiser reduced decision time in the typhoon and that humans stay accountable [2]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Route: Process-led.

Process change (Level 2, band C). Disruption management redesigned around prediction and optimisation tools. No operating model change is reported.

Graded C. Cathay and BCG describe a redesigned disruption-management process built on machine-learning prediction and optimisation. The only results are unquantified statements from BCG and Cathay, so the marker is Claimed only. Part of the technology is optimisation rather than generative AI.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

Cathay frames the value as a faster, better-informed operating rhythm with humans accountable, and it began with the problem before the technology. For a larger organisation, the transferable idea is to put better options in front of the people who must decide, and to measure decision time. No source gives a baseline or a figure, so the size of the gain is unknown.

1. Start with the delay or hand-off to remove, then choose the technology.
2. Measure decision time and cost against a baseline.
3. Keep people accountable for decisions in unusual events.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Self-reported: the consultancy's story and a Cathay executive's interview, with no figures or independent check.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company statements: a consultancy client story and an executive interview; no figures or baseline published.

Sources disagree. BCG says the tools save millions of dollars; Cathay's own account gives no money figure and says decision time fell significantly.

Status. Ongoing: Cathay describes the Integrated Operations Centre tools as in use in October 2026.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/cathay-pacific-operations-centre

[1] BCG X: Transforming airline operations with AI (Cathay Pacific client story)
https://www.bcg.com/x/mark-your-moment/transforming-airline-operations-with-ai

[2] Future Travel Experience: Cathay Pacific on AI ROI, customer experience and workforce empowerment (October 2026)
https://www.futuretravelexperience.com/2026/10/turning-ai-into-real-world-impact-cathay-pacific-on-ai-roi-customer-experience-and-workforce-empowerment/

[3] Aerospace Global News: Typhoon Ragasa, Cathay Pacific targets orderly recovery
https://aerospaceglobalnews.com/news/typhoon-ragasa-cathay-pacific-targets-hong-kong-airport-reopens/

[4] Cathay Pacific: What to do if a typhoon disrupts your travel plans
https://www.cathaypacific.com/cx/en_PH/inspiration/travel/hong-kong-typhoon-flight-disruption.html

[5] Cathay Pacific: How AI is changing the way Cathay Pacific flies (February 2024)
https://www.cathaypacific.com/cx/en_TW/inspiration/cathay-stories/ai-changing-way-cathay-pacific-flies.html

Cathay Pacific website: https://www.cathaypacific.com

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