

Comments:

As a frequent traveler with the airlines, being very familiar with the delays at Chicago O'Hare International Airport and as the principle of an operations consulting organization, I have several perspectives on the dilemma presently facing the traveling public, the airlines and the government organizations involved with and responsible for the operations as Chicago O'Hare Airport.

I offer these perspectives to assist all parties involved in exploring both short and long term solutions to the delays, reinforce operational safety and maintain economic viability for the commercial organizations operating at Chicago O'Hare Airport.

Abstract:

I am a Principle of an operations consulting business - G2E, LLC. My work takes me all over the country providing consulting services to private and public organizations alike. My consulting assignments involve problem solving business issues not unlike the situation facing Chicago O'Hare Airport (albeit the scope is larger).

As a traveling business person, I have to plan my business around the schedules of the various airlines. Flight availability (service and capacity) and now, flight reliability, are key considerations. Given the predominance of the delays now affecting Chicago O'Hare Airport (ORD), I attempt to organize my travel to avoid ORD at all possible. This, by definition, therefore affects the way in which I have to manage my business activities and schedules. My consulting team is similarly impacted as is the way we schedule and work with our clients.

The issues of delays at ORD of course are not limited to the flights and passengers transiting through ORD. The Hub and Spoke system, where ORD is a key hub, has the ability to impact flight schedule reliability throughout the entire country.

From the standpoint of a member of the traveling public, ORD plays a key and vital role. The effect of the delays can not be understated.

The problem facing the delays at ORD have to be defined in terms of short term and long term solutions. Talk of airport expansion is clearly one possible long term solution. Given the cost, social, political and environmental impact of such a long term solution, as well as the time it will take to impact the current problem, the airport expansion solution should be considered secondary to the more immediate problem. As such, my submission focuses on the short term rather than the long term options.

The issue of flight delays and associated symptoms at ORD is an issue of capacity - or rather systemic constraints. In our consulting practice, we often find business problems stem from systemic constraints and often organizations attempt to address the symptoms by increasing the level of resources, increase inventory, increase back orders, compromise quality, ship partial orders, fall behind project schedule, incur cost over runs etc all of which do not actually solve the problem, incur additional cost, and invariably do not improve customer satisfaction.

The constraint at ORD is the capacity at which the airport can accommodate incoming and departing traffic. This is based on numerous factors including weather, wind direction, available runways, traffic mix and separation requirements, mix of arriving and departing traffic etc. The capacity will therefore not be static but dynamic. What can be done to increase the capacity at ORD? The From a short term standpoint, there is perhaps little that can be done to increase the capacity. Having said this, it is still very worthwhile to analyze the capacity and the constraints using the