

→ LCF – the game changing conversion



LCF Conversions, which is headed by former BAE Systems executive Cliff Duke, has proposed a freight conversion solution that can be implemented in any third generation Medium Wide Bodied (MWB) Airbus and Boeing passenger aircrafts modifying them to freighters accommodating cargo on both the main deck and in the lower holds utilising the same pallets/containers that can be accommodated on the lower deck. The programme uses the standard belly hold freight doors and incorporates a pair of internal cargo lifts forward and aft to transfer payload between the lower and main decks.

The LCF patented lift systems installed in the lower holds enable freight to be moved between the lower and main decks avoiding the complexity and additional weight associated with the installation of a large main deck freight door and floor strengthening methods. The lift operating mechanisms are contained within the lift platform structure and are fully interchangeable across lifts and are identical across all the MWB applications. Therefore, the economies of scale that can be achieved across the third generation wide body fleets enables LCF to offer economically viable applications on multiple aircraft types and market applications. The payload range of the LCF converted aircraft is exceptional and extremely competitive. The LCF conversion will enable operators to develop niche market opportunities at a fraction of the cost currently involved deploying traditional new build and converted cargo aircraft.

In fact A380 leasing specialist Amedeo believes an A380 passenger-to-freighter (PTF) conversion could be developed a decade from now, and it may use an internal lift system for loading container to each deck rather than conventional main deck doors. The London-based lessor has 20 A380s on order and has also built a portfolio of in-service aircraft through sale/leaseback deals. CEO Mark Lapidus says Amedeo definitely sees a possibility for the development of a PTF conversion programme for the superjumbo which as a cargo aircraft would have three decks. It is said that if Amedeo adopts the LCF Conversions solution for the A380s, it would eliminate the need for bespoke ground handling equipment to service the upper deck.

While Duke has the "game changing conversion" programme ready to be rolled out he is yet to get an order.