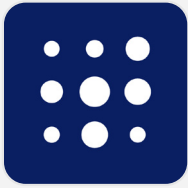## Staffbase

In the Air and Everywhere:
Brussels Airlines' One-Stop Shop for Vital Comms and Information

brussels AIRLINES

"You're in good company."

Brussels Airlines is Belgium's largest airline. Based and headquartered at Brussels Airport, it connects that European capital with more than 100 destinations in Europe, North America, and Africa.

Brussels Airlines employs 3,100 people and operates 41 aircraft. They also offer charter services, maintenance, and crew training. They are part of the Lufthansa Group, and a member of the Star Alliance, as well as the International Air Transport Association.

Their slogan is, **"You're in good company."**

Staffbase was very pleased to speak with Brussels Airlines' Digital Channels Officer Karina Arstanova and Internal Communications Manager Ilse Verhelst. They shared their insights about the factors that led Brussels Airlines to choose Staffbase as their internal communications management platform. They also talked about the value that their user-friendly, mobile communications tool has given their always on-the-go workforce, bringing the company an improved level of internal understanding, and driving a more relevant, employee-centered comms strategy.

3,100 employees

41 aircraft

Brussels Airport

Lauren Burgess, Staffbase: What brought you to the conclusion that you needed an internal comms platform? What were you looking for? What problems did you have?

Ilse Verhelst: All airlines have the same problem. Most employees aren't sitting behind a desk with access to a computer. They're either on the road or in the air. Or they're at home. All of this makes them difficult to reach. We had a communications platform before, but it was just to send emails.

Next to that, we had an intranet. But it soon became obvious that we needed an app. That's the way people communicate today, and we have to be there where people communicate.

Lauren: What was it about Staffbase that stood out?

Ilse: Our CEO comes from Lufthansa Cargo, where Staffbase is used. He was a big ambassador. But there are multiple apps available, and we did an analysis of the different ones that had been presented to us throughout the years.

We basically looked at the app that's used by Lufthansa, our mother company. We looked at the app used by our sister company, Eurowings. And we looked at a few other apps from the commercial world.

We primarily chose Staffbase because it was a proven success at Lufthansa Cargo. We talked a lot with the people there to understand the pros and cons of the app. They were really happy with it. That was, of course, a very convincing factor.

Then we looked at the functionalities, both for us and the audience we serve. It's important that the app is user-friendly. It needs to be a one-stop-shop where our employees don't have to worry too much about passwords expiring or having to log in every time they use it. Keeping track

Karina Arstanova
Digital Channels Officer at Brussels Airlines

Ilse Verhelst
Internal Communications Manager at Brussels Airlines

Lauren Burgess
Customer Marketing Manager UKI & NEMEA at Staffbase

of passwords is a nightmare for people on the move. So, it was very important to get them in and to keep them in.

After comparing the functionalities of all the apps, Staffbase just came out as the best solution for us.

Lauren: What was the process of implementation like?

Ilse: It was very smooth. I would rate the project management 10 out of 10. It was superb. I've never been part of a project that was as well managed as the app. The support we got was spot on. All timings were respected. Everything was really, really as it should be.

We wanted the app launch to coincide with the launch of our new branding. We developed it in about three months' time, very quickly, because it was our main project. But then we delayed the implementation a bit because we wanted to be in sync with new branding. From a project management point of view, I can only really applaud the team at Staffbase. Everything was perfect.

Lauren: Can you talk me through any training you had to do for staff to help bring them up to speed?

Ilse: We first gathered the content owners per department. We checked with them about who wanted to be a content owner, what the tasks would be, etc. Staffbase gave a few training sessions online where everyone could join, and we recorded them for the ones who couldn't attend.

I also made some screenshots to explain what to do in various situations, like how to post . . . really basic stuff. Because most content owners are in operations, their workload is high, so training had to be basic and to the point.

I also provided them with an image database so they wouldn't have to look for pictures but have them straight at hand.

We also gave them a few guidelines about tone of voice: how to talk to people, what words to use, some very frequently used words, how to spell them correctly in aviation terms, things like that. We made some tools available to them, but it's so intuitive that we didn't have to give that much training to them. It's quite straightforward. It's not rocket science.

Lauren: What was the process of the launch? How was it received? How did you let everybody know it was there?

Ilse: We used the opportunity of our rebranding to launch the app. We said,

❝ *This is the new Brussels airline. This is what we stand for.*"

One of our objectives is to modernize, to simplify, and to go the digital way. This was, of course, a perfect fit with the launch of the app. For us, the positioning was more like, "We're giving you what you asked for."

People asked for a one-stop channel for their communication. They wanted to know where to find information, but they also asked that the information be targeted and relevant to what matters most to them. That's how we conceived the app. We built various homepages per staff group.

The Ground Operations staff have a homepage called Airport Staff. Cockpit Crew and Flight Operations have a homepage called Cockpit. Everyone

over **90%**
of the cockpit crew are registered.

Around **75%**
of the maintenance and engineering staff are registered.
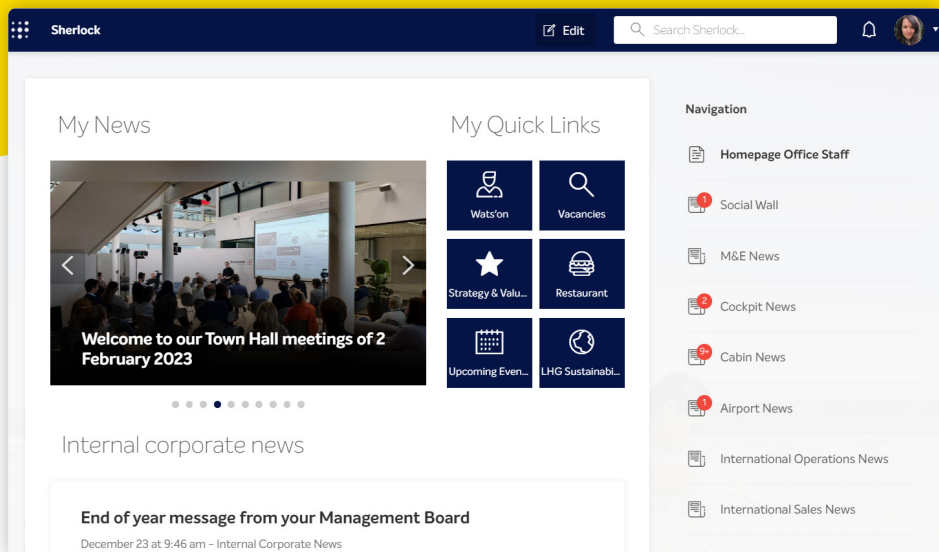
sees their relevant information first. That's how we positioned it. We listen to what your needs are, we know what you want, and we offer you an app that will hopefully solve a lot of the issues you encounter every day.

We called our app Sherlock because our intranet is called Wats'on.

We made little candy bags and put the name Sherlock on them, and we attached that bag to every locker. There was a card with the QR code to scan, and then they immediately could access the app with the same username and password that they use to open their computers. It was really straightforward. We had a great audience from the start. People really got into it.

For example, **more than 90% of the cockpit crew are registered in the app. For maintenance and engineering staff, registration is around 75%**. But the participation rate has been high from the start. We keep motivating people to join the app, and we made a clear cutoff with email communication. We no longer send any email. All information can be found in the app.

Lauren: Can you tell me a little bit about what you're using the app for? Has anything been especially popular so far?

Ilse: I think the most popular feature is the social wall. That's the place where people can post and like and comment and do whatever they want. That, for us, is very important because in the

past, people started to create their own company pages on Facebook. Outside of company channels. That was something that we really wanted to avoid. What we try to do is to bring those social media activities inside the company channels.

We want to bring all their exchange inside a company channel rather than have it sitting somewhere externally where it risks being leaked. The social wall is very well-visited.

Karina:

Northern Light during our return flight from JFK last night.

Published by Bart Hellenhaut in Social Wall on August 31 at 7:50 pm

111 • 5 comments

> **"** *I completely agree that social wall is the most popular. Also, it's great to see how all these cabin crew and cockpit crew members have nice content to share."*

Sometimes they just post pictures from different parts of the world, and it drives likes and engagement. Our cockpit and cabin crews are the most active groups on the intranet.

Lauren: What are the things the app is used for?

Ilse: We use it for our day-to-day communication. We have on average five or six posts per day, which is quite a lot throughout various channels. Sometimes, it's even a bit too much. We have to make sure that we don't over communicate because it's so simple.

We have a lot to communicate. We have a lot of projects ongoing. We have a lot of social negotiations ongoing. We have a lot of events, so people need to be invited to these things. Fortunately, we make very good use of forms we've made available now.

Operations use it for every update they want to announce. It's very operational stuff. I would say that a lot of topical information goes into the app.

For the permanent stuff — policies, documents, templates, rules, CLAs — we still have a separate intranet, but that's like a warehouse of information. But I don't think it's consulted that often. You only go to the intranet when you need to download a policy, or you need to update a certain document or a certain template about what's happening in the company.
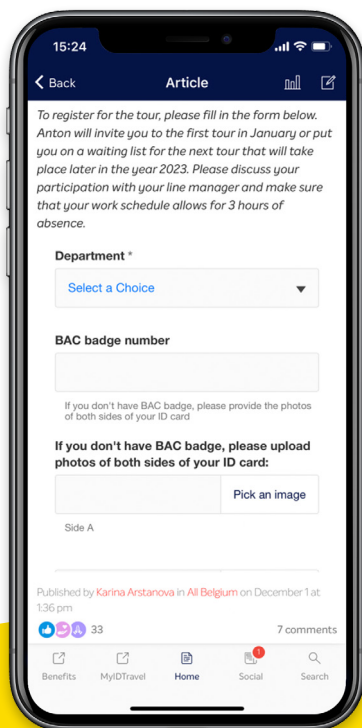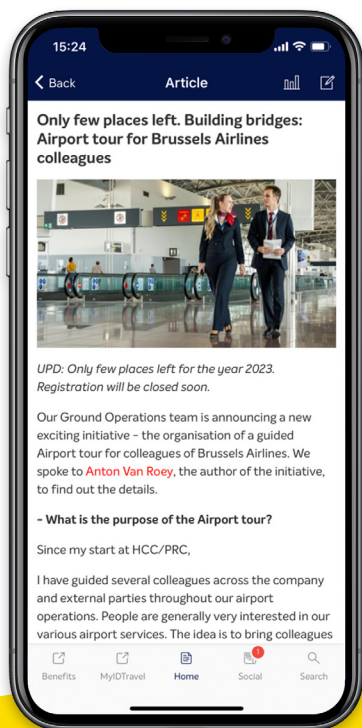
Staffbase: In some conversations with prospective customers, there's fear that people will say bad things or offensive things in the app. Have you experienced that? If so, what was the experience like?

Ilse: This is maybe a strange example, but every month we make a post about the people who've joined the company and those who've left it. Last month, there were a lot of people leaving the cabin crew community.

You see immediately three or four comments on that post saying, "Oh, so many cabin crew leaving. Why is that? I can only imagine why they're leaving." But we never delete such comments. On the contrary, they give us an opportunity to respond. My HR colleague responsible for the cabin crew was able to respond by saying, „Guys, this is the context. We've done exit interviews and 5% are leaving for this reason. 5% are leaving for that reason."

" *The advantage of the app compared to email is that when you answer, it's visible for everybody, and everybody who might have had the same comments or concerns gets the same reply. You reach a lot of people that way."*

Only few places left. Building bridges: Airport tour for Brussels Airlines colleagues

UPD: Only few places left for the year 2023. Registration will be closed soon.

Our Ground Operations team is announcing a new exciting initiative – the organisation of a guided Airport tour for colleagues of Brussels Airlines. We spoke to Anton Van Roey, the author of the initiative, to find out the details.

– What is the purpose of the Airport tour?

Since my start at HCC/PRC,

I have guided several colleagues across the company and external parties throughout our airport operations. People are generally very interested in our various airport services. The idea is to bring colleagues

Benefits   MyIDTravel   Home   Social   Search

To register for the tour, please fill in the form below. Anton will invite you to the first tour in January or put you on a waiting list for the next tour that will take place later in the year 2023. Please discuss your participation with your line manager and make sure that your work schedule allows for 3 hours of absence.

Department *
Select a Choice

BAC badge number

If you don't have BAC badge, please provide the photos of both sides of your ID card

If you don't have BAC badge, please upload photos of both sides of your ID card:

Pick an image

Side A

Published by Karina Arstanova in All Belgium on December 1 at 1:36 pm

33   7 comments

Benefits   MyIDTravel   Home   Social   Search

If someone is really rude, then we will call them and tell them, „Guys, this is not the way we talk to each other." Then they all delete their comments themselves.

Karina: I think it's also a good thing that these comments are not anonymous. Everyone understands that they might get some feedback.

*Lauren: Can you tell me a little bit about the social actions last year and how you used Staffbase during that time?*

Ilse: We used the Staffbase app to update everybody about what was going on in the negotiations. We tried to explain what was on the table and why it was on the table. We communicated on a daily basis what was happening, but we tried to do it in an as neutral way as possible.

People took the initiative to start writing open letters. We had an open letter from the ground staff to the flying staff, telling them, „Hey guys, sorry, we don't understand why you're going on strike. Can you politely explain your reasoning?"

They posted the open letter and then an open letter was sent from the flying staff to the ground staff explaining their point of view. **You really saw how the app was used for interdepartmental communication.** One group explaining to the other group why they went on strike and the other group challenging that.
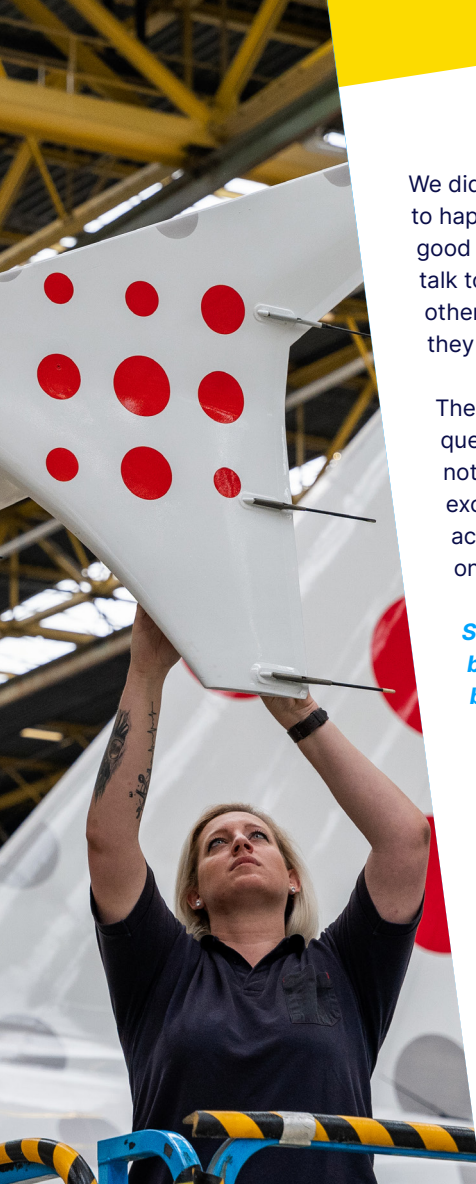
We didn't interfere. We knew upfront that it was going to happen, but we didn't do anything to stop it. It's good that this is happening because at least now they talk to each other, they explain the situation to each other. That was more difficult in the past because they didn't have a channel to talk to each other.

The interaction was huge. People asked tough questions and commented sometimes in a not very polite way. But okay. It was a rather exceptional situation. In the three days of social actions, the app was used intensely. And not only by us but more by the people themselves.

Staffbase: Do you think there might have been a bit more understanding between them because of the conversations going on?

Ilse: The strike was what it was. It was three days. We lost a lot of money. I think the understanding or the empathy towards each other was greater than on previous occasions. They had a platform to express how they felt, but also to explain why they did what they did.

Lauren: Can you tell me a little bit about the size of the team that works on Staffbase? How much effort is going into your internal comms every day, in terms of the content you're putting out? You said it was four to five posts every day, but do you feel like things have gotten a bit easier as a result?

Ilse: It's both easier and not easier. I think the workload is higher than before because there are many more functionalities available. For example, when we do an event, we have the event invitation and a link to the town hall.

Almost **75%** dispersed throughout the entire company who are adding or contributing to the app.

We need to get URLs for the town hall, for the webcast, for the live streaming. Then we create a form for the subscriptions. What you can do with the tool is so varied that it takes more time, but of course, your end result will also be much better than what we had in the past.

Does it take up a lot of our time? Yes, of course, but that's our job. Looking at the organization, Karina and I represent corporate comms. We're doing most of the work from the corporate sites. As for the content creators, I think there are almost 40 dispersed throughout the entire company who are adding or contributing to the app.

Lauren: Who are the other stakeholders for internal comms in the organization?

Ilse: The stakeholders are of course the employees themselves, both in Belgium but also in Africa. That segment is very important. We try to highlight Africa in our communications as much as possible. Certain communication to the employees also indirectly addresses the unions or the management. But it all stays in the app.

Lauren: Have you seen higher engagement now that you're using an app versus email?

Ilse: In the past, we didn't know what the engagement was. We had no clue. We were blind. Sometimes we only knew when they responded to an internal comment one-to-one. It was just an email, and once the email was gone, it was gone, and you didn't know what was happening with it. Now, you can really track and trace. The first thing I do in the morning is look at the dashboards and the second thing I do is read all the comments.

Of course, engagement is much higher and it's really tangible. Karina is now producing reports with the statistics so that management can really see what kind of progress is being made, what the engagement rates are, which KPIs are being met, where we still lag in terms of participation, etc.

We want to regularly present management with an overview of what we're doing, where we're heading, where extra energy is needed, things like that.

Lauren: Are there any specific plans or strategies in place for changes you want to make going forward?

Karina: We see that the engagement is really high with the forms, so maybe our next plan is to see how we can use other tools to increase engagement.

We're also creating different groups for different users. There was an experiment with an LGBTQ group, and it went really well. We see that they have a life of their own in the app, and we want to create a similar group for our pursers, who head the cabin crews. We're creating this group at their request because previously they had a physical space for communicating. After the Corona crisis, they couldn't be in one place together. Since they're always alone and isolated from their colleagues, they want to exchange their experiences with other pursers. So, we're creating a space where they can ask questions

and share some professional tips and information. If we see that going well, I think we'll also create other groups.

Karina: We are currently looking at reshaping our intranet. As Ilse said, in addition to Sherlock, we have Wats'on, a SharePoint-based platform mainly used for managing static content. We want to investigate how to re-organize static and dynamic content in the most efficient way.

Ilse: The first thing we want to do is ask the colleagues what they want. That, for us, is really important to pinpoint what people are looking for. How can we make your life easier when you're on the move all the time? What would you need from us? The ambition is to really figure out what to do with the current intranet. Do we keep it? Do we move it to another platform? If it's the latter, then what will that platform be? Will we put everything on Staffbase? Will we keep something else? For example, we have SharePoint right now, but only because it's included in our Microsoft office license free of charge.

Our technicians and crews hardly ever go to SharePoint because they can't find their way around. For them, it's not user-friendly. For us, it's clear what is on the intranet and what is on the app. For them, it's a total mess. Some things are on the app, some things are on the intranet. Where do I have to go for what? We really want

to make it very simple, but as I said, that process has not yet started.

Lauren: What would you say to a comms colleague who's considering a communications platform? What advice would you give them? Would you recommend Staffbase?

Ilse: I would definitely recommend Staffbase, and I have recommended it already many times to people in other companies because of its user-friendliness. For me, it's been life-changing when it comes to communication. You can't compare the way we communicated before — with static, boring emails — with how we are doing it today, with interactivity.

You really almost get to see who you're talking to because they react almost immediately, and you know what they like. You can add videos and pictures, and now, definitely also with the plugins we're experimenting with, it's so much more fun to work with all the content than it used to be. For me, it's been a life changer.
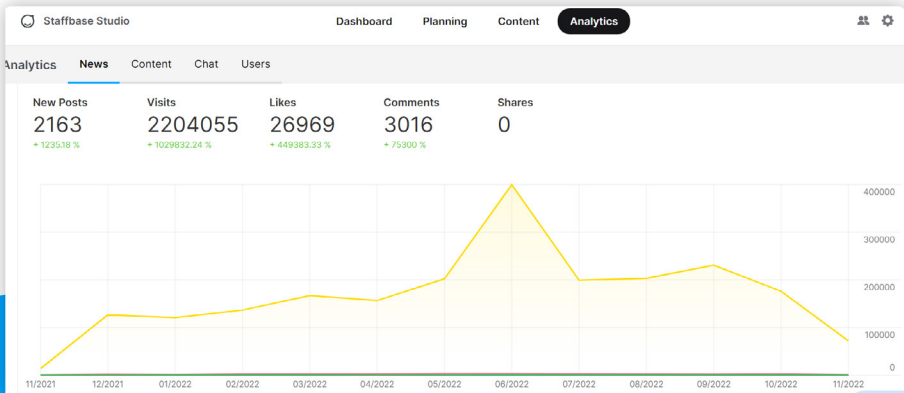
Karina:

" *I really like that the platform is user-friendly. And the analytics part is really helpful.*"

Overall, I think it's quite a nice platform and I really like that you have so many options for different requests. We use forms now a lot. I created five of them last week. It's a really popular tool. I do have some issues with forms, and I think there's some space for enhancement. But overall, I really like it.

Staffbase: Karina, would you say that the analytics help you in creating a data-driven internal comms strategy?

Karina: Yes, at the very least I can understand the status quo and see what really drives the interests of our employees. We can then plan our content strategy based on those insights, which really helps. For instance, we see that the most popular content is user-generated. That kind of knowledge is very useful.

	Staffbase Studio		Dashboard	Planning	Content	**Analytics**		

Analytics	**News**	Content	Chat	Users

New Posts	Visits	Likes	Comments	Shares
2163	2204055	26969	3016	0
+ 1235.18 %	+ 1029832.24 %	+ 449383.33 %	+ 75300 %	

Staffbase campus

Are you ready to grow? Check out Staffbase Campus – our on-demand learning platform for internal communicators

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https://campus.staffbase.com/

Staffbase

Interested in an employee app, newsletter or intranet?

Staffbase offers best-in-class communication channels to maximize reach and engagement. **Book a free demo** and see how our solutions can help you reach your goals. No commitment, just a conversation!