

How to Fail at TMS? **(And Live to Tell the Tale)**

Air Canada's Journey from Disaster to Delivery

Presented by: Capt. Dave Butler





Capt. Dave Butler

Director, NRFO & Operations Excellence

- Leading Air Canada's Non- Revenue Flight Operations, AC Jetz, Operations Excellence and Flight Operations Strategy.
- Business sponsor for MINT TMS implementation across the organization.

Air Canada Flight Operations

- Largest airline in Canada with 7 fleets
- 800+ instructors across fleets
- 5000+ active pilots
- Rigorous Transport Canada requirements
- AQP Training Program



Why We Needed a TMS?

- Transport Canada audit findings requiring immediate action
- Manual processes creating inefficiencies and compliance risks
- Physical documentation (yellow folders, Excel sheets)
- Duplicative data entry across multiple legacy systems
- Lack of real-time visibility into qualification status
- No automated compliance monitoring or expiry tracking

What We Tried (2018)

- Selected MINT as our Training Management System
- Ambitious goal
(Implement everything at once)
- Small team treating it as a side project
- Planned to go live with ALL fleets simultaneously
- Focused on building the 'perfect' product
- Expected quick wins with aggressive timeline

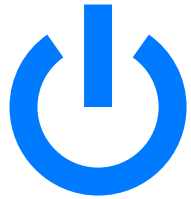


Why Did We Fail?

The Perfect Storm

- **Lack of Organizational Commitment**
 - Treated as IT-only initiative, not business priority
 - 3 people working as side project
- **Unrealistic Implementation Strategy**
 - Big bang approach: All fleets, all functionalities at once
 - Pursued “perfect” product instead of MVP
- **The Inevitable Outcome**
 - Project eventually abandoned after multiple failed attempts
 - Lost time, resources, and stakeholder confidence

Starting Over: A Different Approach



The Reset:

Project Cancelled- IT & business mutually agreed to restart

Critical question:
What needed to change?



The New Process:

RFP with 8 vendors (MINT not initially included)

Focused on fit-for-purpose, not feature- complete



The Decision:

Re-engaged MINT with clear requirements and business case

Selected based on flexibility, aviation expertise, and proven track record.

What Changed This Time?

REQUIREMENTS CLARITY:

Must-have vs. good-to-have classification

CLEAR GOVERNANCE:

Steering committee, decision-making authority

DEDICATED TEAM:

2 full-time + 3 partial resources + SMEs from each department

STAGED APPROACH:

Fleet implementation + Phase 1/2

AGILE MINDSET:

Continuous improvement, not one-and-done

Our New Strategy: Divide & Conquer

Phase 1: Records Management & Qualification Tracking

- Build the foundation with basic functionality
- Address Transport Canada audit findings
- Establish data integrity and compliance baseline

Timeline: Kickoff: *December 2023*
Go-Live: *October 2024*

Phase 2: Scheduling & Grading

- Add complex scheduling automation
- Implement grading and assessment tools
- Deploy FLEET-BY-FLEET for controlled rollout

Timeline: Fleet 1(B737): *November 2025*
Subsequent fleets every ~2 months
through *September 2026*

Success Metrics & Early Results

- Eliminated manual Excel tracking
- Real-time compliance monitoring
- Automated instructor assignments
- Complete audit trail & traceability
- Scalable for future fleet additions

Transport Canada
Compliance

100%

All audit findings addressed

Fleet 1 Go-Live

**Nov 1,
2025**

On-time delivery

Scheduling Time
Reduction

85%

Days → Hours

User Adoption Rate

95%+

100+ instructors trained for
fleet 1

What We Learned (The Hard Way)

DEDICATED RESOURCES:

Side projects don't work for critical systems

REQUIREMENTS FIRST:

Document current state before building future state

START SMALL:

MVP → Learn → Iterate beats building 'perfect' product

PHASED APPROACH:

Break complex deliverables into phases

CHANGE MANAGEMENT:

User adoption requires proper training & support

FLEXIBILITY:

Build systems you can modify as needs evolve

What's Next?

- Continuing fleet rollouts through September 2026
- Gathering feedback and optimizing after each launch
- Building advanced analytics and reporting capabilities
- Scaling to support organizational growth
- Potential to expand it across organization (e.g.: Maintenance, Dispatch, IFS)

Questions?



Thanks • Danke • Gracias