Synapse wants to give Aircraft Maintenance Software a Facelift and More

Atlanta has great history within the airline industry. Delta moved its headquarters to Atlanta from Monroe, Louisiana, in 1941, and has been a mainstay of the Atlanta community ever since. Atlanta Jackson-Hartsfield Airport is the world's busiest airport again this year. That is great history for the aviation industry, but Synapse Software wants to update the aviation industry. Specifically, Synapse is updating the software that controls the $8 billion annual operating expense that results from old, outdated airline maintenance software.

We spoke with Synapse co-founder Shane Ballman, who has more than 15 years in the airline maintenance space, and was recruited by Southwest to help modernize their maintenance program, but declined to start Synapse. "Airplane maintenance systems range from white boards to notes thrown over a wall to the most outdated software you can imagine. Synapse is going to disrupt this industry using our decades of combined experience and the latest generation of enterprise mobile and data software."

Ballman and his co-founders have self-funded the startup, and are now raising $750,000 to go to market and achieve product market fit. But, as Ballman notes, "this is not marketing automation software," meaning the airline industry is more established than other markets that are adopting new software, and their go-to market strategy will be different than the classic internet software startup.

Noting recent airline mishaps, Synapse points to the behind-the-times systems for managing maintenance of small and large airlines. Most recently, Southwest Airlines had to ground more

than 100 aircraft due to overdue maintenance inspections. This one incident cost the airline millions of dollars in FAA fines and penalties, lost passenger revenue, brand equity, and stock value.

Synapse is pursuing a market space consisting of 5,000 airline businesses who operate more than 23,000 commercial aircraft. Every year, more than half a million flights are delayed or cancelled due to maintenance problems that, according to Ballman, can be addressed using 21st century software and systems. Ballman and his co-founder, Malcom Burton, have the expertise in this space to make changes. Their team of five airline veterans is in negotiations with their first beta prospect, and intends to earn several more beta customers by the end of 2015.