

# CHARTING CHANGE

*Workers' Voices in an  
Automated World*



An IAM Canada Report

## AIR TRANSPORTATION



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## I INTRODUCTION

At the heart of our organization are our members, workers whose efforts, dedication and commitment to their jobs day in and day out sustains our economy, and builds our communities. Recent trends in this industry, combined with new pressures in the business environment raise concerns over the future direction of the industry, but also the future of work and the impact it could have on our members.

As several of the world's airports move closer to becoming fully automated, understanding the impact of these changes on workers is critical. Understanding automation from the perspective of workers will help our organization better represent members at the bargaining table, and advocate for policies and legislation that protect all working Canadians.

Information in this report is specific to air transportation, and includes a look at industry trends, and information gathered through focus groups with members in Transportation District Lodge 140.

## II INDUSTRY OUTLOOK:

- Manage pent up demand for travel and higher passenger volumes
- The need to provide a safe travel experience
- Limit contact and potential spread of communicable diseases
- Big DATA and the Amazon business model

## INDUSTRY TRENDS:

- Biometrics
- Self-service through automation
- Automation to improve efficiency in passenger processing and cargo
- Heathrow Airport: automated ramps, possibility of automated ground service equipment, jet bridges, cargo and baggage loading trucks.
- Changi Airport: Remote controlled vehicles that collect luggage from aircraft and move to baggage handling area in as little as 10 minutes
- Montevideo Carrasco International Airport: World's First Digital Airport with biometric scanning, eliminating the need for boarding passes and passports.



### III WHAT MEMBERS ARE TELLING US: “DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS”

- 40% of members said that over the course of their careers, they had seen a significant increase in automation
- 60% indicated they had experienced technological change in their positions, and 90% of those members needed upskilling and retraining, which usually happened on the job.
- More than 50% of members in air transportation believe that automation can replace workers in their workplace.
- Parts retrieval has become entirely automated, eliminating the need for people
- Members in cabin services indicated that automation is placing an emphasis on efficiency, schedules they’re provided with allowed for one minute in between flight, meaning they had one minute to get to the next aircraft.
- 90% of members in these types of jobs indicated their job could easily be automated, with remaining tasks being done by supervisors.
- For screening officers, the biggest change due to technology is remote screening; they are given 15 seconds to process an image while at the same time being in compliance with their regulator’s policies. The pace is set by a machine, making a noticeable difference in how quickly the work is done.
- More than other groups, technology is being used for tracking and surveillance purposes of screening officers.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Developing a Code of Ethics specific to the airport authority, just as the Port of Seattle has done. This is a targeted way to manage the use of new technology and AI, and most importantly, curb possibilities of misuse of those technologies.

For a closer look at recommendations and member experiences, you can download our report at:

Or scan the QR code on the inside cover.