Dubai Airports
Connecting the World

Engine
service design

SUBMISSION TITLE:
THE DUBAI AIRPORTS HOSPITALITY PROGRAMME

INDUSTRY SECTOR: **TRAVEL & LEISURE**

CLIENT COMPANY: **DUBAI AIRPORTS**

DESIGN CONSULTANCY: **ENGINE**

SUBMISSION DATE: **30/06/17**

FOR PUBLICATION

02/ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WORD COUNT: 298/300

Already the world's second busiest airport, with increasing passenger numbers, an existing infrastructure operating at near capacity and an opportunity to capitalise on its 'East meets West' location, it was clear Dubai needed a new airport.

Since 2013, Engine has worked with Dubai Airports (DA) to help turn one of the world's biggest airports into the world's best.

We started by co-creating an overarching customer experience vision for the airport of the future, but there was soon desire to sow the seeds of change through 'hero projects' within the existing airport.

So that's the subject of this award entry - a project that tangibly demonstrates DA's vision of the future through the airport of today - by delivering 'Modern Hospitality and Meaningful Connections'.

Rather than develop a series of discrete initiatives, Engine worked with DA to lead a more holistic approach and designed a blended service solution that included; defining a behavioural service style, training frontline staff, operational and environmental planning, digital tools and enablers, new ways of providing information and new approaches to wayfinding.

Aligned with the principles set out for the future experience, the Hospitality initiative was selected to demonstrate the positive value of multi-faceted service delivery by bringing together aspects of commercial, HR, operations, infrastructure and technology to deliver a single, customer-facing proposition.

There was also another important reason the programme was chosen. Within the confines of the existing airport, DA was no longer able to 'build' their way out of certain obstacles. The only way to make improvements was to find efficiencies and enhancements in frontline service delivery, with the challenge of doing so at scale and accommodating the myriad cultures of their passengers.

The Hospitality initiative combines frontline service and information provision, to create a new and distinctive passenger-centred service with remarkable results.
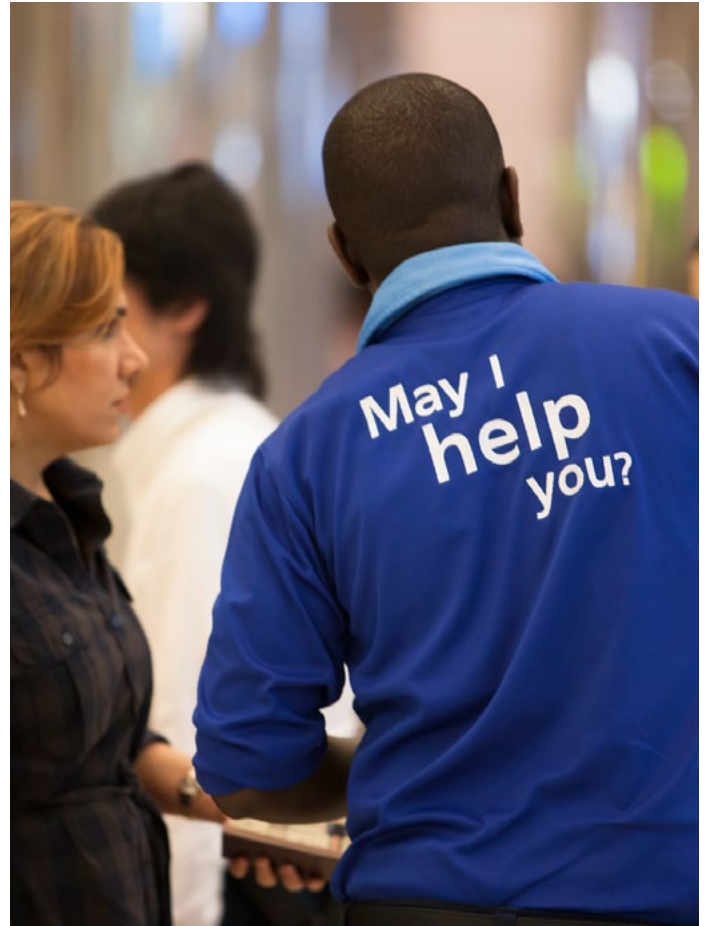
Designing a new and distinctive passenger–centred service

A customer experience vision for the airport of the future

03/ PROJECT OVERVIEW

WORD COUNT: 849/850

Engaging frontline staff in the hospitality service style in partnership with training providers - Clarity

OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

Traditionally, airports focus purely on capacity and income maximization, but Dubai Airports (DA) wanted to grow by putting customer service at the heart of its business, to help make Dubai a highly desirable destination for travellers worldwide and make DA the international hub of choice.

Engine initially worked with the senior team and partners at DA to establish a project brief that identified where efforts needed to focus to deliver its ambitious targets.

Across two days, over one hundred business leaders were engaged to connect where DA was today, to a vision of where it wanted to be tomorrow, declaring its intent to become a more customer-centric organisation.

From this, several future-facing options were developed that drew on its unique heritage and were distinctly attributable to Dubai Airports. A concept of experience was developed to articulate the vision of the target experience DA needed to deliver to become the biggest and best airport of choice, compared to its competitors.

A series of services and products were developed to inform investment and planning decisions. Dubai Airports' customer experience vision was revealed with the central idea of delivering *'Modern Hospitality and Meaningful Connections'*.

Concepts that supported becoming a more service-orientated organisation were prioritised and it became clear that in the future, frontline staff would play an ever-increasing role in responding to customers' ever-changing needs.

In response, the Hospitality Project was commissioned to design and specify frontline passenger support in accordance with the customer experience vision.

THE OBJECTIVES WERE TO:

- Deliver a step change in the way DA deliver frontline customer service

- Combine information & wayfinding enhancements alongside frontline service development to create deeper service improvements that enhance the passenger experience and accommodate the scale of the existing airport in serving 80m passengers per year

- Implement and pilot the Hospitality Customer Service Delivery Strategy

THE SCOPE OF WORK INCLUDED THE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF:

- **Branded service style** delivered by a frontline Hospitality team, with the look and feel inspired by Arabian Hospitality

- **A 'zonal' operating model** focused on delivering targeted customer service actions and behaviours, in line with the desired passenger journey

- Team assembled from the best frontline staff upskilled to deliver 24/7

- **Behavioural frameworks** to guide customer service actions and behaviours

- **A bespoke training and engagement programme,** coached-in to work in a Hospitality way

- Enhanced and effective, real-time disruption information

- **Instructional signage** to help passengers get prepared for key moments such as security and boarding

- **Large-format signage** at key 'touch-down' areas, using the existing infrastructure to improve passenger flow

DESCRIPTION

Dubai Airports owns and manages the operation and development of both of Dubai's airports – Dubai International and Dubai World Central. Its mission is to "create a great customer experience by running a great business".

Engine is a leading Service Design consultancy with a seventeen-year heritage of using engaging and actionable design methodologies to develop high-performing multichannel services and customer experiences for ambitious, global brands.

A service design approach meant both parties worked together in a highly collaborative way including Engine Director, James Samperi, being seconded into DA for six months as Head of Customer Experience.

To effectively service the work planned, Engine has set up a new office in Dubai with seven members of full-time staff.

OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

Dubai Airports has grown from a desert landing strip to the world's 2nd busiest international airport in a little more than fifty years. This is even more impressive because it has achieved this operating only two runways.

Continued growth means it must do more with less and look beyond infrastructure to deliver great services and experiences. DA's aim is to lead in all areas of business practice and service, working closely with strategic partners such as Emirates Airline.

Supporting nearly 63 million jobs and $2.7 trillion in global GDP, the aviation industry is a driver of the global economy, with a third of global trade sent by air.

Overcoming the challenge of delivering a consistent passenger experience at scale

MARKET CHALLENGES:

- It used to be just airlines competing for passengers but now airports must as well

- Some 70% of passengers have a choice of which hub they fly through

- Over 30% of Dubai's GDP is aviation reliant

- The range of customer nationalities presents challenges in meeting different cultural perceptions

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES:

- Building efficiencies into the service to get more for less – enhancing customer service but helping customers help themselves

- A constant need to find new revenue streams for airport and partners

- Different departments and 3rd party contributors own separate journey stages

- Building a new airport while operating the existing

PROJECT LAUNCH DATES:

Behaviours and zonal deployment planning	January 2016
Phase 1 planning, customer service training and App design	May 2016
Environmental touchpoint design	June 2016
Production design and on-the-job coaching	July 2016
Frontline launch	September 2016
Measurement	December 2016
Full roll-out	February 2017

SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET AND PRODUCTION COSTS:

Staff Behaviours:
Hospitality Service Strategy
Defining 'What & How'
Detailed design of behaviours, measures, uniforms and staff guides
Production of materials
Training and implementation

Passenger Information:
Information Strategy
Concepting and prototyping
Detailed design and production briefs
Production and installation

Total project costs:

X

Design of large format information assets for passengers connecting through Dubai Airports

Staff behavioural frameworks and training materials

The programme increased levels of engagement between customers and staff

04/ OUTLINE OF
DESIGN SOLUTION

WORD COUNT: 500/500

The Hospitality Programme was rooted in the opportunities identified to bring about significant and sustainable change in service delivery and information provision.

THE OPPORTUNITIES WERE TO:

- Instil a new approach and outlook centred on a customer experience vision

- Enhance the customer experience by raising levels of customer service on the ground

- Understand cultural nuances and the delivery of 'Arabian hospitality' as a style of customer service

- Introduce new products and services that demonstrate the value of customer experience through a programme of 'hero projects' including improving the experience for passengers with long transfers through the airport and developing a 'hospitality' focused service approach for frontline staff

- Address the challenge of customers helping themselves and deal with scale in a more effective way

Large format wayfinding applied to key touch down areas

OUR SOLUTION SET OUT TO ACHIEVE:

- A new approach to training & coaching that engaged all staff in delivering established key behaviours and included ongoing 'on-the-job' coaching

- A new approach to deploying airport staff based on characterising the key operational and service needs within each zone, creating a team with zonal specialities

- A new identity and uniform to make staff recognisable to customers and stakeholders and encourage different sorts of behaviour more akin to hospitality services

- Enabling staff to become walking information desks to help customers with their information requirements wherever they were through dynamic mobile data. Handheld devices carried the airport community App that included flight information alongside any disruption news

- A new suite of simplified and large format wayfinding and information points that supported passengers at key pinch-points within the airport. It included simplified maps, architectural elements to support wayfinding and passenger flow and low-fi information packs to support passengers without smartphones and those with lower literacy levels

- The creation of a sense of place by using work from local artists and photographers to welcome people to Dubai


Enabling staff to deliver a hospitality-focused service approach

THE PROJECT WAS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE IT:

- Secured the largest DA non-infrastructure budget for 2016 due to C-Suite support and the perceived impact of the programme for the short and longer term. This helped the business mature quickly in how it delivered a customer-centric service and was a real shift in how the organisation had previously worked

- Demonstrated how you can be led by an ambitious vision but start with today's service operation, in order to set out on the journey and use it as a reference point for the whole organisation

- Showcased a new way of working that broke the organisational silos and developed programme-based teams of multiple disciplines and departments into a single service delivery

- Delivered the first, direct-to-passenger, Dubai Airports operated service that would directly impact the quality of the service experience and ensure DA staff were accountable for its ongoing delivery and success

- The implemented solutions were informed by a clear strategy and service propositions, which were informed by customer and staff insights

- Zonal ways of working increased the efficiency of the operation when working 24/7. Resource could be better planned and allocated to handle the daily peaks and troughs of passenger footfall

Understanding zonal ways of working
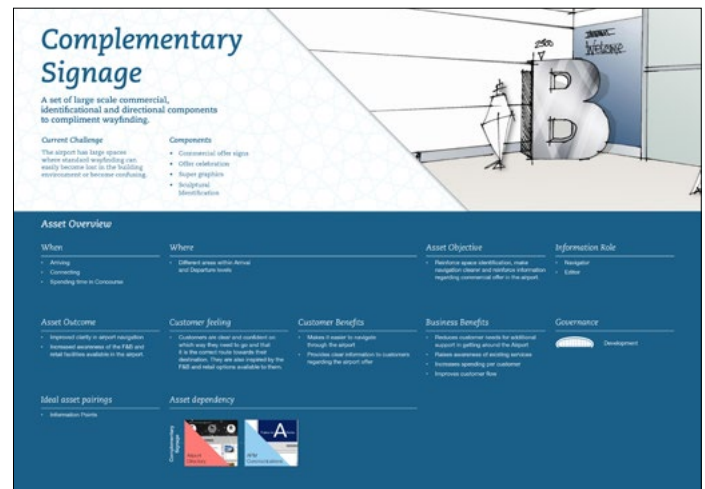
Concept specification brief to inform signage production

From concepting to realising a new approach to signage and wayfinding

05/ SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Hospitality initiative presented a step-change in the way Dubai Airports provided frontline customer service and information.

IMPACT:

The programme's positive impact has been widespread both in terms of improved commercials and customer perceptions.

Some of this has been a result of the improved passenger information and wayfinding that Engine designed and delivered including directional signage, airport maps, the airport App and printed collateral.

However, alongside these enabling tools and systems, a significant part of the programme's success is rooted in improved staff motivation, behaviours and the guidance they receive from managers.

THIS IS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTED TO:

- Improving the conditions and job satisfaction of frontline staff so their overall welfare was improved

- Staff felt they were developing valuable service skills and were given more of a career trajectory

- Operational/ service specialists were assigned to each part of the customer journey and helped terminal leaders resource and deploy their teams more effectively

- Frontline staff were motivated and managed by the leadership team and line managers who role modelled the desired behaviours

- Teams were selected and trained from the best existing frontline and customer services staff to set the standard from the start

- New uniforms and access to dynamic, real-time flight and airport information, via a basic tablet application, provided a more visible and professional frontline team. Staff became an obvious point of support for passengers which increased satisfaction amongst those who had a service interaction with them

- The way we carefully planned the prototyping, piloting, and evaluation helped create a robust benefits case for further investment and demonstrated the business value across a number of key factors including; service quality, commercial return and operational efficiency metrics
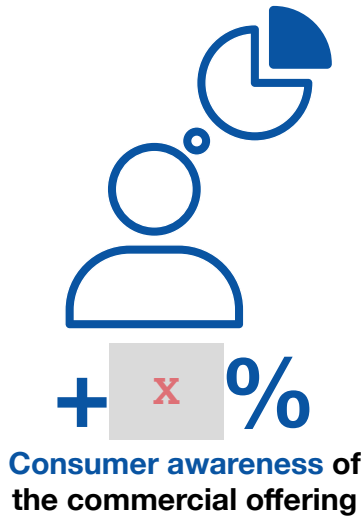
Improvements in staff morale:

+ x %

Higher levels of availablility
of frontline staff

+ x %

**Higher levels of engagement**
of staff with passengers

Increased levels of engagement:

+ x %

How often frontline staff deliver the right customer service actions

+ x %

Consumer awareness of the commercial offering

+ x %

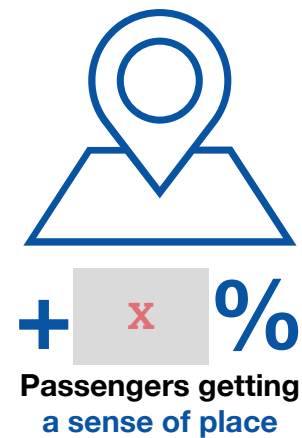**How often frontline staff portray the right behaviours**

> " *The difference in this programme compared to others is that before I only learned things in the classroom, but [this time] I got to practice what I learned so it has stuck.* "
>
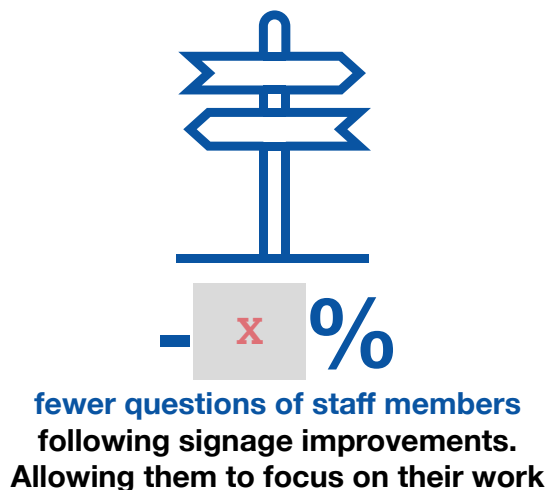> - Shift C, Terminal Duty Officer

Increase in sales:

+ x %

Spend in Food and Beverage

+ x %

Average spend in retail
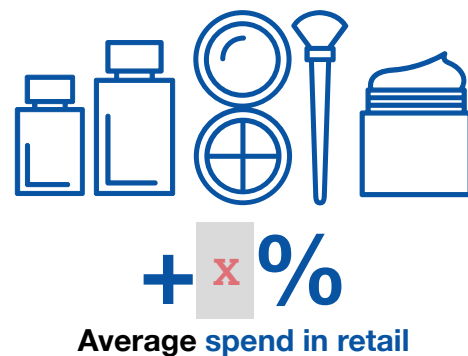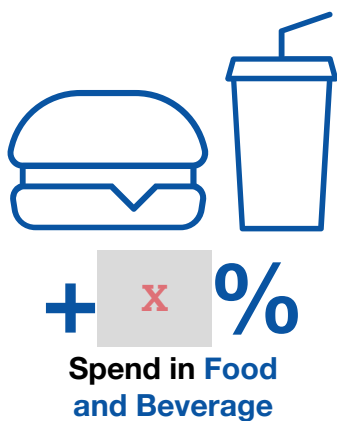
Improvements in consumer attitudes or behaviour:

+ x %

Passengers that felt welcomed

+ x %

**Passengers getting
a sense of place**

> " *It's an amazing airport. Just in the way people
> come over to ask you if you need help. Whereas at
> Gatwick you have to find everything out yourself.* "
>
> - UK Traveller

- x %

fewer questions of staff members
following signage improvements.
Allowing them to focus on their work

> " *The young man at the security queues was
> amazing...He showed us to a shorter queue that
> we hadn't really seen. That's so great isn't it.* "
>
> - Austrian Traveller

CLIENT QUOTES

> " *[The Airport Guide] supports staff to be able to serve the customers better by putting the right information in their hands.* "
>
> - Frank McCrorie (SVP of Customer Service Delivery)

> " *We get to give a better experience to our passengers, whilst also make the most in terms of commercial proposition, and really drive revenue through our airports.* "
>
> - Matthew Horobin (Head of Digital Media)

> " *Engine has had more impact in three months than we have had in five years.* "
>
> - Mazhar Butt (Head of Customer Experience)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

It's not easy to find environmental benefits when submitting a case study about the 2nd busiest airport in the world! However, we can certainly cite the very positive effect the Hospitality Programme has had on peoples' attitudes and behaviours.

In our results, we've shared statistics about the significant impact on staff engagement, morale, job satisfaction and effectiveness displayed in the right behaviours.

We've been able to accurately measure the benefits that passengers have experienced in terms of feeling welcome, understanding the offering of the airport, acknowledging a sense of place and needing to ask considerably fewer questions.

We used two methods of testing: surveys and interviews and have measured impact through established metrics such as ASQ (Airport Service Quality).

The surveys were a combination of Dubai Airports' Customer Engagement Survey providing the baseline vs. proof of concept (POC) results data and an engagement supplement which provided specific data about POC element categories (security, signage and commercial awareness).

The interviews focused on gathering qualitative information from customers and staff in relation to the effectiveness, ease and value benefits the Inform and Enable elements provided.

The sample sizes were 348 customers for the engagement survey, 179 customers for the engagement supplement and 663 customers in the revenue comparison.

06/ OTHER INFLUENCING **FACTORS**

In today's competitive environment, no airport can afford to stand still and we acknowledge other work streams of development and improvement were in progress during the development and pilot testing of the Hospitality Project:

Other factors in play included:

- Cross-airport consistency in signage with other airport partners

- Better performance management training

- The launch of the central airport App which was incorporated into helping staff improve information provision

- As part of 'The Dubai 10x' project, we hosted workshops attended by other contributing members of the police force, immigration, Tourism Dubai, passport control, Emirates Airline and other key partners to engage them in the future vision of customer experience.

- The pilot results were gathered in Terminal 3 which is a solus Emirates Airline terminal

- Our consultants worked in partnership with Clarity Business Coaching during the delivery of the training

That said, the results stated are all compiled by Dubai Airports research, operations, and customer experience teams and are specifically attributed to the success of the Hospitality programme.
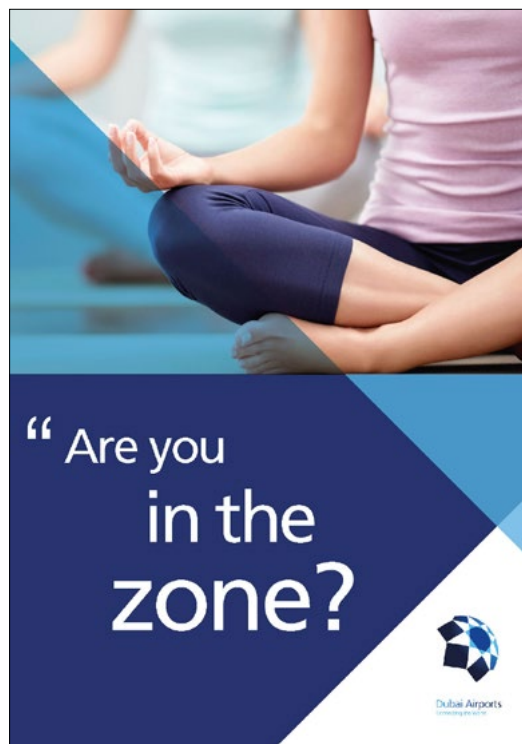
Highlighting the importance of different service requirements in different zones of the airport

07/ RESEARCH **RESOURCES**

- Dubai Airports Hospitality Phase 1 findings study

- Air Transport Action Group report on Economic Growth In Aviation