

PILOT UPDATES

Security meets customer service through TSA partnerships

BY JODI RICHARDS

Without a doubt, security remains a top priority for all of the nation's airports. And, in partnership with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), some airports have been able to combine security with customer service benefits, which have led to increases to the bottom line.

Bin Advertising

A bin advertising pilot program was launched roughly 18 months ago and includes some 14 airports, according to Ann Davis, a TSA spokesperson. Under the program, airport operators enter into agreements with participating advertising brokers who provide divestiture bins, tables, and bin return carts and sell advertising for the inside of the bins. "It's a contract entered into between the advertising brokers and the airport operator under some conditions that are TSA-approved," Davis said.

"We have been a strong supporter of this program," said Lydia Kellogg, ACI-NA's Senior Manager of Public Safety and Security. On Oct. 29, the TSA approved a nationwide expansion of the program. "We have been working with TSA and the participating airports to make this a permanent program," said Kellogg.

Reno/Tahoe International is one of the airports involved in the bin advertising pilot program. TSA-approved vendor Security Point Media sells the advertising space and provides the bins and return carts for the airport's two security checkpoints, said Public Affairs Manager Brian Kulpin.

The airport did not initially see this pilot as a revenue opportunity. "We saw it as customer service—a way to improve the way the bins go through the checkpoint," Kulpin said. Since the start of the program in Reno, the checkpoints are cleaner and the flow of passengers has improved.

Security Point Media is a subcontractor to the airport's advertising firm, Younger Agency. From July 2007 to July 2008, the airport earned about \$5,000 and will receive \$1,057 per month during the holdover period of the pilot program.

Denver International, which has three security checkpoints with a total of 28 lanes, is also involved in the bin advertising pilot and expects to receive approximately \$80,000 each year in advertising revenue.

Security Point Media, according to officials, has a patented technology with its carts and trays, which improves the security checkpoint process while also reaching customers through advertisements.

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Bin advertising at Reno/Tahoe International Airport.

Post-Security Shopping

A separate program, the Airport Access Authorization to Commercial Establishments Beyond the Screening Checkpoint Pilot Program, allows registered guests at airport hotels to gain access to post-security shopping. It is currently active at three airports: Pittsburgh International, Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County and Dallas/Fort Worth International.

According to Davis, the AAACE pilot is “moving along smoothly.”

From DFW’s perspective, the program is an “overwhelming success,” said Ken Buchanan, DFW’s executive vice president for revenue management. Guests of the Grand Hyatt Hotel, located in Terminal D, can shop or dine there or take the Skylink train to shop in the post-security area of any of the other terminals.

The program was approved by TSA in December 2006 for a one-year period and has been extended twice for six-month terms. The current term goes through the end of November, but the airport expects it will be extended in the same fashion. “We would be delighted to make it a permanent program, and we requested and supported that,” said Gary Hedges, assistant vice president for hotels. “I believe everybody is moving in that direction, but it’s not yet been approved permanently.”

If a registered guest of DFW’s Grand Hyatt wishes to revisit the terminals, he or she simply notifies the front desk and they in turn notify the airport’s department of public safety. An officer is sent out, within five to ten minutes, according to Hedges, and conducts the TSA-required

paperwork and security checks. “It’s very similar to what would happen at the ticket counter of an airline when you’re checking in,” he explained. The guest is then allowed to go into the terminal once any time that day.



“It’s a huge benefit to our hotel,” said Hedges.

Terminal D also features a walking tour of artwork and is working to bring a new pharmacy/medical facility to the terminal—both added benefits for hotel guests and airport passengers. Buchanan expects that these amenities will prove to be tremendous selling points for the airport and hotel when working to attract meetings and conventions.

Each month, between 600 and 1,000 people use the program, which makes a substantial impact on the concessionaires in Terminal D and throughout DFW. “Our concessionaires are excited about it,” said Buchanan. “It’s incremental business to them—a passenger that’s not flying at that time has the opportunity to come in and enjoy their services.”

Revenue per enplaned passenger in Terminal D is about \$12, according to Buchanan, and \$8 throughout the entire airport.

Hedges explained that the Grand Hyatt is a “business hotel” with an average length of stay of one day,

predominantly business women and men coming in for meetings during the week and flying out the next day. As such, most of the traffic under this pilot happens on the weekends, he says, when guests are staying over the weekend. “That’s really when the real value and benefit of the program is,” Hedges said.

When guests check in at the Grand Hyatt, they are notified verbally about the program. If guests are interested, materials are available detailing how to navigate around the airport, where the restaurants and shops are located and how to use Skylink.

Pittsburgh International (PIT) has also been pleased with the program at its AirMall and is interested in continuing it, said JoAnn Jenny, director of communications.

The Pittsburgh program has been operational since April



AAACE pilot; Gaining access to post-security shopping at Pittsburgh International.

2007 and in that time, she said, roughly 1,100 guests of the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International Airport have taken advantage of the opportunity. Average revenue per enplaned passenger is \$13. Jenny estimates the revenue for those utilizing the program is higher because “they are going to the AirMall specifically to shop.” ■